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POSTHUMOUS WORKS OF PROUDHON

THE POLITICAL CAPACITY OF THE WORKING CLASSES

BY
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Manuscripts edited and completed by Gustave Chaudey

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A WORKING TRANSLATION BY SHAWN P. WILBUR¹

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¹ This is a work that I have translated in several phases, over quite a number of years, so, despite some recent efforts to revise and standardize the draft, there are undoubtedly rather rough first-draft passages alongside others that have been revised multiple times. There is also work to be done, comparing the published version to the manuscripts. With those reservations, however, I am very pleased to be able to share at least a first complete draft of what is an interesting and potentially important work. — SHAWN

PREFACE

Some years before his death, I received from Proudhon the task of making, on this work left by him in proofs, and to which he attached a particular importance, the work of minute revision that he did with the editors of each of his publications. I need not say that I have acquitted myself of that task with all the care demanded of me by the memory of his friendship and my respect for his talent. Each line of this book has been compared, by M. Dentu and myself, with the manuscript text and the corrections indicated on the placards by Proudhon himself. The reader will have before their eyes only material from the text of the author himself, with the exception of the *Conclusion*, which he wanted, according to his custom, to write only at the last moment, after having composed on printed sheets all of his book. That was to form, in his intentions, twelve or fifteen pages, which doubtless would not have been the least eloquent of the work. These pages, alas! I have had to write them, and I don't know how to say how embarrassed I am to tell it to the reader. I have been expressly charged with it by Proudhon, which did not cease until his last instant to be preoccupied with his work, and have received from him to that effect, in a final conversation of several hours, recommendations of which I took notes under his gaze, and to which I have scrupulously conformed. I hope the public will indulge me for a collaboration so sadly imposed on my friendship, and of which I more than anyone sense the insufficiency.

GUSTAVE CHAUDEY

May 1865.

THE AUTHOR
TO SOME WORKERS OF PARIS AND ROUEN
WHO HAD CONSULTED HIM ABOUT THE ELECTIONS.

December 1864.

CITIZENS AND FRIENDS,

This work was conceived under your inspiration: it belongs to you.

You asked me, ten months ago, what I thought of the electoral Proclamation published by sixty workmen of the Seine. You especially wished to know if, after having received a negative vote in the elections of 1863, you must persist in this line, or if, under the circumstances, you might use your votes and your influence to press the candidacy of a comrade worthy of your sympathies.

On the thought of the Manifesto my opinion could not be in doubt, and, in my reception of your letters, I frankly expressed it to you. Admittedly, I was delighted by this awakening of *Socialism*: who in France would have had more right to be delighted?... Undoubtedly still, I agreed with you and the Sixty that the working class is not represented and that it has right to be it: how would I have been able to feel otherwise? Wouldn't workers' representation, if it were possible, be, today as in 1848, from the political and economic point of view, the official assertion of socialism?

But from there to take part in elections which had engaged, with the democratic conscience, his principles and his future, I did not dissimulate it to you, citizens, in my eyes there was an abyss. And I then to add that this reserve, from you perfectly accommodated, received the sanction since then of the experiment.

Where is the French Democracy, formerly so proud and so pure, and which, on the faith of some ambitious, thought suddenly that, with the help of a false oath, it was going to go of victory in victory? Which conquest did we record? By which new and strong idea our policy appeared? Which success for eighteen months has announced the energy of our lawyers and rewarded their fecundity? Weren't we pilot their perpetual defeats, their failures? Easily deceived of their vain parliamentarianism, did we see them, on almost all the questions, not beaten by the speakers of the Government? And at one time, when translated into justice for offense of association and unauthorized meeting, they at the same time in front of the Country and the Capacity, weren't they had to be explained confused by this legality to which they invited us and of which they were posed like the interpreters? What a pitiful intrigues! What a more pitiful defense still! I will make you judges of them... After so much of so noisy debates, can we deny, finally, than at the bottom our representatives do not have other ideas, other tendencies, of another policy that the policy, the tendencies and the ideas of the Government?

Also, thanks to them, in it from now on of the young democracy like old liberalism is, to which one endeavors to couple it: the world starts to be withdrawn from both the truth, thinks it, the right and freedom, is not more this side that other.

It is thus a question of revealing in the world, on authentic testimonies, the thought, the true thought of the modern people; to legitimate its reforming aspirations and its right to sovereignty. Is the vote for all a truth or a fiction? Again there was some discussion about restricting it, and it is certain that apart from the hard-working categories, very little take it with the serious one.

It acts to show with Democracy working, which, for lack of a sufficient conscience of itself and its Idea, carried the supplement of its votes on names which do not represent it, in which conditions a party enters the political life; how, in a nation, the higher class having lost the direction and the direction of the movement, it is with lower to seize some, and how people unable to regenerate themselves by this regular succession are condemned to perish. It, will I say it act? to render comprehensible with the French plebs that if, in 1869, it is warned to still gain for the account of its owners a battle like that which it to them gained in 1863-64, its emancipation can be deferred one half-century.

Because, and you do not doubt it, friends, this protest by blank vote, if little included/ understood, so badly accommodated, but about which the public always worries, and which the political world puts in practice on all sides; this declaration of absolute incompatibility enters an out of date system and our most expensive aspirations; this stoical *veto*, finally, launched by us counters presumptuous candidatures, was not nothing less than the advertisement a new order of things, the taking possession of ourselves like party of the right and freedom, the solemn act of our entry in the political life, and, if I dare the statement, the significance in the old world of its next and inevitable forfeiture...

I had promised to you, citizens, to explain myself to you on these things; I keep my promise today. Do not judge this volume by its extent, which I had been able to reduce to forty pages: you will find nothing more there than one idea, the IDEA of the new Democracy. But I believed it useful to present this Idea in a succession of examples, so that friends and enemies know once what we want, and with which they deals.

Receive, citizens and friends, my fraternal greetings,

P.-J. PROUDHON.

THE POLITICAL CAPACITY OF THE WORKING CLASSES

PART ONE

The worker democracy makes its entry on the political scene.

Chapter I. — Evening of June 1, 1863.

On Monday June 1, 1863, around ten o'clock in the evening, Paris was in a dull agitation, which recalled that of July 26, 1830 and February 22, 1848. If one had let oneself go with the impressions of the street, one would have believed oneself on the eve of a battle. Paris, you heard people say on all sides, returned to political life twenty days ago, was waking up from its torpor; it felt alive; the revolutionary breaths animated it. — Oh! exclaimed those who had posed as leaders of the movement, it was no longer at this hour the new, monotonous and tiring town of M. Haussmann, with its rectilinear boulevards, with its gigantic mansions; with its magnificent but deserted quays; with its saddened river, carrying only stones and sand; with its railway stations which, replacing the ports of the ancient city, have destroyed its *raison d'être*; with its *squares*, its new theatres, its new barracks, its macadam, its legions of sweepers and its frightful dust; a city populated by English, Germans, Batavians, Americans, Russians, Arabs; a cosmopolitan city where the native no longer recognizes himself. It was the Paris of the olden days, the phantom of which appeared in the light of the stars, to the whispered cries of *Vive la liberté!*...

Emphasis aside, there was some truth to this speech. However, the night ends in the greatest calm. More than eighteen months have passed since this apparition, and nothing testifies at this moment that before June 1869 Paris gives the slightest sign of life. After this great electoral effort, the spirit of the big city fell again.

So what had happened? What old novelty made the modern Athens wriggle? Who had the capital of the *Order*? A young and nice writer, M. FERRY, who wrote the history of the elections of 1863, thought he could tell us. According to him, the LEGAL OPPOSITION, buried for twelve years, had just been reconstituted by the ministry of the *Five* and the virtue of universal suffrage. This is what made Paris jubilant.

The *Legal Opposition*: I will tell you, reader, what it is; I will show you how it works. Suffice it for the moment to know that under this title and with the aid of this formula one works to re-establish, in the place of the Empire, either the republic of February or the constitutional, representative and parliamentary monarchy, so dear to the bourgeoisie, more or less as we had it from 1814 to 1848. Apart from that, the *Legal Opposition* has no political significance.

Paris, therefore, vigilant guardian of the liberties of the nation, had risen at the call of its orators, and had replied with the curtest *no* to the solicitations of the Government. The

independent candidates had obtained a formidable majority. The *democratic* list had passed in its entirety; we knew the result of the vote. The administration was defeated: its men were repulsed by 153,000 votes to 82,000. The People, who had done the trick, brooded over their success; the bourgeoisie was torn: one part showed concern; the other allowed its joy to burst out. — "What a blow!" said one; "what a slap in the face!" — "It's serious," added another, "very serious." With Paris in the Opposition, the Empire is without a capital...

This is how the supporters of the Legal Opposition explained this mysterious demonstration, and from the evening of June 1 claimed the benefit. Doubtless the thought of a return to the institutions of July, perhaps even some ferment of the constitution of 1848, existed among the voters: MM. Thiers and Garnier-Pagès, who came out of the ballot like two lottery numbers, showed it. But did the election contain only that? This is what we will examine later.

Now, on June 1, 1863, there was an eclipse of the moon. The sky was splendid, the evening magnificent. The breeze, amorous and light, seemed to take part in the restorative, otherwise harmless, emotions of the earth. All of Paris was able to follow the phases of the phenomenon, which, started at nine fifty-six, just as the polling stations had just completed their census, ended at one sixteen in the morning. — Thus, said the jokers, Despotism eclipses before Liberty. Democracy has stretched out its broad hand, and the shadow has fallen on the star of December 2... M. Pelletan, one of the elected officials, today the most annoying speaker in Parliament, both for those who read him and for those who listen to him, in the style of a hierophant, did not fail to draw on this menacing omen in one of his pamphlets. — Say rather, replied the crestfallen, that it is Parisian reason that is eclipsed. Ah! you resume your farces of 1830 and 1848; well! worse will happen to you than in 1830 and 1848!...

It is thus that the vanity of mortals interprets, according to its passions and its interests, the most innocent signs. We always put the gods in half in our adventures and in our alarms, then, when the event comes to chastise our illusions, we accuse the gods. But enough of omens and forecasts. We thirst for truth and justice; and neither the joy of the opponents nor the regret of the ministers contains a drop of it. What is certain, apart from any astrological correlation, is that on June 1, 1863, something up in the sky, and something down on the earth, at 48 degrees 50 minutes north latitude and 0 longitude, suffered an eclipse. Above, we know it was the moon. Below, what? The Empire, democracy, the parliamentary system, the opposition, the bourgeoisie, Socialism, or all these at once? We will learn that soon. Let us note, in the meantime and to reassure everyone, that neither empires nor democracies, neither absolute or moderate monarchies, nor the oppositions themselves, nor the bourgeoisie, nor the proletariat, no more than the sun and the moon, die of their eclipses.

Through the crowd circulated a few men who had protested, not against the vote, but against any nomination, and who had made public, with brief reasons, their protest. What

did they want? Nothing or everything, that was their watchword. Nothing, that is to say the status quo until extinction, without hypocrisy, without constitutional papering, without parliamentary mystification, without legal opposition; or all, that is to say universal suffrage with its conditions, its guarantees, its forms, its right, its philosophy; with its political and economic consequences, in a word with all its social reforms. They had had enough of the debate of the Chambers, and of the juste-milieu, and of the middle ground, and of the third parties, and of all the conciliations and doctrinaire *bascules*.

— Well! said the triumphant to them, you are beaten, enveloped in the defeat of M. de Persigny. — Beaten! How? speak some of the candidates of the administration, if you please: one abandons them to you. Speak for yourselves, who, sworn in, legalized, rallied although opponents, or rather because opponents, you have made solidarity with the fortune of the Empire. As for us, your real adversaries, the trial is just beginning. You wanted elections, we know for what purpose; we have repelled them: between you and us the future will decide. Are your 153,000 votes a response to our reasons? Is the question that divides us one of those that can be decided by a majority vote? We defer to you for six years. — So be it. In the meantime we have 133,000 votes representing the Parliamentary Opposition in Paris; and you, how many are you? — Eighteen at this hour; eighteen who, as it stands, weigh as much as your *one hundred and fifty-three thousand*.

Chapter II.

Plan of campaign formed by the godfathers of the Opposition, friends of the Government. — How the working plebs, following for the first time an idea of their own and doing as they please, thwart their calculations. — Numerical results of the ballot: meaning of the vote of the peasants.

Since the decree of November 24 had come to give voice, up to a certain point, to the Senate and to the Legislative Body, the Opposition of 1837 had been considered, in certain governmental regions, too weak even in the interest of Power. The victories of the Government in the Chamber were inglorious: it harmed the prestige of the personal prerogative. The country, enticed by a first concession, keenly regretted the political mores of the last monarchy; this fantasy could become dangerous. Some friends of the Empire therefore wished for it a more numerous opposition, moderate however, above all not hostile to the dynasty.

Coming from the obstinate supporters of liberal Bonapartism, this idea was seized on the fly in the world in possession of furnishing the Parliament with orators, especially *independent* orators. Hence the explosion of applications that was noticed in 1863 among journalists, lawyers, academics, men of letters, professors, etc. From both ends of the political horizon, dynastics and liberals, responding like the seraphim of Isaiah, sang the *Hosannah* of reconciliation. Finally, they thought, we were going to be able to measure ourselves against Parliament, if only for the building of the country and the honor of liberty. What had the imperial government to fear from candidacies supported by *La Presse*, the *Opinion nationale*, *Le Siècle*, *Le Temps* and *Les Débats*? On the other hand, how could these newspapers and their customers not have been delighted to see the Empire leaning towards a parliamentary regime? Satisfaction would be given to the bourgeoisie; homage would be paid to the politics and institutions of 1830; the always restless Democracy would be contained; finally, under the patronage of the Emperor, the alliance of the old parties formed in 1848, in the famous Rue de Poitiers, against the social revolution, would be consolidated. And all the idlers applauded.

The electoral campaign was opened according to this plan, the list of opposition candidates drawn up with this in mind. The Power counted on winning, as in 1857, at least half of the elections in Paris; it would have seen, without regret, thirty deputies of opposition nominated by the departments arrive in the Chamber. In the least favorable case, the list of candidates from the Seine was composed in such a way as to eliminate all anxiety.

The only difficulty, and that was the big deal, was to prevent the Democracy from engaging, either by mass abstention, or by blank votes, or finally by unconstitutional nominations, frankly and energetically hostile, in some exorbitant demonstration. As for abstention, it was almost certain to avert it with the help of the newspapers, which all

supported the vote; of the influence of the bourgeoisie, which by temperament prefers to parley than to be silent, and to whom its former leaders gave the example. As for the blank vote, which is much more redoubtable, it would also have against it the confusion that one would make of it with abstention. On the side of the people, finally, they did not think they had anything to fear: the people, in 1848, had elected Louis-Napoleon to the presidency; in 1851 they accepted the plebiscite and supported the *coup d'état*; in 1852 they had voted for the empire. Nothing proved that they had pulled back.

If this plan succeeded, and all the probabilities were that it would succeed, the transition from the autocratic empire to the constitutional and parliamentary empire could be consummated without shock, without danger for the Napoleonic dynasty, and at the most suitable moment. The bourgeoisie returned to these habits; the revolutionary upsurge was averted again, and there was time to be on guard, for the future, against the escapades of universal suffrage.

What happened, everyone knows. The Dynastic Opposition in Paris did things too well for itself; the administration, less well served, did not obtain an appointment in the capital; its minority was disastrous, and the result for the government was a considerable moral failure. However, it is this electoral defeat, unforeseen, unexpected, and until this moment unexplained, of which it is a question first of all of recognizing the cause and of appreciating the significance.

I. — *Elections in Paris.* — I ask permission to produce some figures. I confine myself, for what concerns the elections of the cities, to cite those of the Seine, the movement having been, with more or less force, everywhere the same. Here is first what was in December 1851, following the *coup d'état*, the vote of the voters of the Seine:

Registered,	392,026
Voting,	296,320
For the referendum,	196,530
Against the referendum,	96,407
Lost votes,	3,334
Absent,	95,636

Observations. — In this ballot, the government of December 2 won by 100,000 votes over the Opposition, which was composed principally of the bourgeoisie, or rather of the middle class belonging to the old party of the *National* and the *Réforme*, mixed with a fairly strong part of the *people*. The people, to whom universal suffrage had just been restored and who obeyed other inspirations, were generally favorable to the *coup d'état*.

I am not speaking of the national ballot of 1852 which gave the empire 300,000 votes more than that of 1851 had given to the *coup d'état*. At this time we are still too close to December 2. Popular opinion has not worked; then we know that the Democracy, for more or less plausible reasons, stood aside.

The elections of 1857 arrive, for which these are the figures:

Registered,	356,000
Voting,	212,899
For the candidates of the administration,	110,526
For the candidates of the Opposition,	96,299
Lost of unconstitutional votes,	6,074
Absent or abstaining,	143,170

Observations. — Although the number of registered electors was reduced, from 1851 to 1857, by 55,957, we first see that the number of abstentions increased by 48,134; — that that of the votes given to the administration fell from 196,539 to 110,526, that is to say by 86,013; — that that of the opposition remained the same, except for 198 votes. Thus, there existed in Paris, in 1857, an opposition of a little less than 100,000 votes which, for seven years, had not wavered; while the government suffered a considerable fluctuation, ranging from 196,359 to 110,526. What were these floating votes whose mass, numbering more than 44,000, was to swell in 1857 the number of abstentions? I do not hesitate to say it: they were above all popular voices, voices of workers, indifferent to the election of deputies or already tormented by discontent.²

The elections of 1865 gave the following result:

Registered, in round numbers	326,000
Voting,	240,000
For the candidates of the Government,	82,000
For those of the Opposition,	153,000
Blank ballots or lost votes,	4,556
Absent or abstaining,	86,000

² This proves, as I noted above, that among the voters of the Opposition there were from then on a certain number of socialist democrats, is the election of Mr. Darimon: a concession made, in the interest rallying point, to this fraction of the Republican Party.

Observations. — The number of those registered has undergone a further reduction since 1857: instead of 336,069, it is now only 326,000; a difference of about 30,000. Despite this, the number of ministerial votes falls from 110,526 to 82,000, difference, 28,000; — on the other hand, the 96,299 faithful of the Opposition received a reinforcement of about 57,000 votes, which suddenly passed from the ranks of the abstention to those of the Opposition. There is no doubt that these 57,000 votes were provided by the plebs, who since the vote on the *coup d'état* no longer appeared. According to the note on the preceding page, it is therefore permissible to affirm that, of the 153,000 votes given to the Opposition in 1863, half at least belong to the workers' democracy.

Now what meaning, what value are we to give to this vote?

It is perhaps without example in history that the People, as a People, distinguishing itself from the Nobility, the Bourgeoisie, the Church, has testified by any act whatsoever to an idea and a will of its own. The people have never known but one thing in politics, to shout: *Long live the Emperor!* — or *Long live the King!* — *Long live Monsignor!* or *Long live our Master!* — The Roman plebs, in creating the empire, founded nothing; on the contrary, it abolished everything; the only thing that it ever affirmed in its conscience was its hatred of the patricians; of itself it produced no idea. Its disputes with the nobility were only revolts of clients, of the exploited, not to say of serfs. By giving Caesar and his successors up to Augustulus the perpetual dictatorship, the Roman people disorganized the republic and replaced it with autocracy, with nothingness. — What have the popular votes been in France since 89? An imitation or rather an addition to the bourgeois votes. The people have played at politics like children at soldiers. Neither sans-culottism, nor Robespierism, nor Babouvism, nor Bonapartism, gave universal suffrage an originality, a meaning. In 1799, in 1804, in 1815, the people voted for their emperor, never for themselves. The charter of 1814-1830 takes away the right to vote from the multitude. What does it lose? What do public rights and liberty lose? Nothing. The people themselves do not seem to feel the slightest regret. The republic of February restores to them the electoral faculty: how does they use it first? Their chosen candidates are all bourgeois, Orleanists, Legitimists, Bonapartists and Republicans pell-mell; above priests, monks, singers, bishops. In the Constituent and the Legislative the majority is reactionary. Then the people nominate and renominate, up to three times, Louis-Napoleon. In all this, I ask where is the sovereign, autonomous thought?

And suddenly, after twelve years of imperial restoration, this same people, without apparent cause, turned around: 57,000 electors, of those who in 1851 applauded the coup d'etat, who since had remained silent, passed to the bourgeois opposition, and, by a swing, decide all the elections of Paris against the government! What do the people have against their great Chosen? What is he complaining about? To complain! This supposes that like the bourgeoisie, the old nobility and the clergy, the people would have class ideas and interests; that he would reason politically from a particular point of view, that he would

therefore aspire to direct the government according to his own views.³ But this is something that has never been seen, neither since nor before the Revolution.

And this is precisely what characterizes our nineteenth century, which should astonish us no more than polygamy and slavery in the time of the patriarchs, feudalism and the supremacy of the popes in the Middle Ages.

When between the monarchy of divine right and the working masses, rustic and urban, there existed intermediate classes, — a clergy, a nobility, a bourgeoisie or third estate, — the multitude could not figure on the political scene; it did not belong to itself. Every man of the people, according to his profession, depended on a patron, a lord, a bishop or abbot, or the tax authorities. The revolution of 89 broke this link: the People then found themselves abandoned to themselves; they formed the class of wage-earners, of proletarians, as opposed to that of owners and capitalists. In 1848, socialism, seizing this inorganic multitude, gave it the first outline; it made it a body apart, gave it a thought, a soul, created rights for it, suggested ideas of all kinds: right to work, abolition of wage labor, reconstitution of property, association, extinction of pauperism, etc. In short, the plebs, which until 1840 was nothing, barely distinguishable from the bourgeoisie, although since 1889 it had been separated from it *de jure* and *de facto*, suddenly became, by its very abandonment and by its opposition to the class of owners of the soil and exploiters of industry, *something*: like the bourgeoisie of 89, it aspires to become EVERYTHING.

Everything will be explained now, in the present and even in the future. First, in 1848, the People are far from having deduced from the knowledge of themselves the notion of their rights and interests. Their idea was not revealed to them, still less had they learned to draw from this idea a political system. Obeying their instinct as an enslaved multitude, they first thought of giving themselves a leader: it was Louis-Napoleon. Like the Roman plebs gave themselves Caesar; like the rebellious slaves who gave themselves Spartacus.

But the re-establishment of the Empire is not a formal solution: it happened, by a singular fortune, that the same Louis-Napoleon, representative of the plebs, was chosen as protector of bourgeois interests, curator of the ancient society, which the tendency of the modern plebs is obviously to recast. However, it is easy to see that after twelve years of waiting the plebs had turned around. Just as the bourgeoisie, which becomes rebellious and opposes its constitutional princes each time its interests are in abeyance, this plebs has begun to oppose its elected representative. We know the result, on which it is currently important not to take the change.

The People, by voting in 1863 and 1864 with a fraction of the bourgeoisie and giving their votes to bourgeois candidates, had no intention of rallying to the system of

³ The manifesto of the *Sixty* says it in a formal way: "We maintain that after twelve years of patience the opportune moment has come; we cannot accept that we have to wait for the next general elections, that is to say another six years. It would take, on this account, eighteen years for the election of workers to be appropriate. » As we see, the *Sixty* date their wait from 1851.

parliamentary monarchy and making an act of *legal opposition*. They do not want this regime, popularly known as *Orléanisme*, at any price. Also they were not fooled by the intrigue that aimed to make the constitution or the institutions of July a sort of reorganization of the empire, for the benefit of the Bonaparte family and to the exclusion of that of the Orleans. The people have perfectly unraveled the secret meaning of this *opposition*, recognized the masks, probed the conscience of the candidates. They felt the injury done to the liberty of the electors; certain palinodies, certain oaths had made them indignant; and in the men they were about to send to the Legislative Body they already saw nothing more than enemies of their thought, auxiliaries of reaction. Could they be unaware that M. de Girardin, a close friend of Prince Napoleon, loudly professing indifference to any kind of government, worked solely in the interests of the imperial status quo? — That M. Guérout joined the empire with the greater part of the Saint-Simonian school? — That an *entente cordiale* existed between MM. Havin and de Persigny? Perhaps they had forgotten that M. Jules Favre, ex-secretary of the ministry of the interior under the Republic, had supported in 1848 against the republican candidatures, with MM. de Girardin, Victor Hugo, Garnier-Pagès, etc., the election to the presidency of Louis-Napoleon; — that M. Emile Ollivier, alternately prefect under the Provisional Government and the Presidency, had shown himself at Marseilles to be very severe towards the Socialists. What did men matter to them at this moment, or their opinions, or their antecedents? A single passion dominated them: it was to make against Power, from which they had hoped so much, an act of separation and, to be more sure of his act, they forgot all of their insults down to the last one, the rejection of their candidates.⁴

No one took the trouble to examine whether in this great electoral demonstration, it suited the working class to confuse its ranks with the bourgeois class; if the taking of the oath, a pledge, if not of absolute devotion to the empire, at least of adhesion to the program of the Legal Opposition, did not imply abandonment of the principles of the social revolution; if the popular vote would not have more energy, would not strike a more decisive blow, by limiting itself to filling the ballot boxes with nameless ballots and by rendering the elections in Paris impossible. The ideas had not worked well enough; opinion was not formed; we imagined that the *election* of representatives was essential to the exercise of the right of suffrage, and the only thing concerned was to cast the votes for persons whose names, independent of the secret dispositions of the candidates, constituted an opposition to the government.

⁴ M. Tolain, in his brochure on the elections, reports the following: “A worker voter from the 9th constituency, before whom the titles of M. Pelletan were discussed, the writer who, according to the stereotypical advertisement of M. Pagnerre, having, as it were, taken the tour of human thought, replied, in a somewhat harsh form but which responded perfectly to the general thought: “Apple core or cabbage core, I don’t care, provided that the projectile that I will throw into the box says *opposition*.”

Let us say things in their harsh frankness: it seems that the working people, who for the first time were going to speak in their own and private name, more accustomed to blows of vigor than to the maneuvering of ideas, wanted above all to prove that in them there is number and strength; that to numbers and strength they would henceforth be able to join will and resolution; that it is as easy for them to break a majority as to make it, and that after having given, in 1848, *five and a half million* votes to Louis-Napoleon; in 1851, *seven and a half million*; in 1852, *seven million eight hundred and twenty-four thousand one hundred and eighty-nine*, nothing would prevent them from refusing them to the official candidates, if such were their pleasure.

II. — *Elections in the countryside.* — Here an objection is raised to which it is important that I respond, as much for the perfect understanding of elections in general as for the just appreciation of the popular movement, not only in Paris, but in the departments.

It is pointed out to me, and with good reason, that in the votes of 1848, 1851 and 1852, which I have just mentioned, the votes of the towns are grouped together and confused with those of the countryside; but that I cannot conclude from the dispositions of the working class of Paris and other centers of population those of the peasants loyal to the Emperor, who continue to march under his banner. Thus, in 1863, while Paris and the principal chief towns gave the Opposition 1,900,000 votes, the peasants gave the Government 5,500,000, which put it well above all attacks.

Regarding this, the Opposition and its newspapers say that these unfortunate votes come from the ignorance of the rustic classes, from their isolation, from their timidity; but that we would see something else, if they could be worked on and indoctrinated like the plebs of the cities... To which M. de Persigny, in the speech given by him in Roanne, responds, citing Roman history, that this difference in votes attests to the maturity of judgment, the wisdom, the spirit of consistency and conservation that at all times have distinguished rural populations, compared to the constantly restless multitudes of the cities.

We see here how much the parties love to flatter themselves and to recriminate against their antagonists, without worrying about the reality of the facts and the true feelings of the people. On what basis, I ask, should our plowmen be said to be less capable or wiser than our workingmen? Isn't it a hundred times more rational to assume that both of them, very subject to getting lost in the maze of politics, are driven above all by their private sense and their interests? In this respect, the considerations of the Parisian press have always seemed to me of the greatest impertinence, just as the historical rantings of M. de Persigny are of the highest fancifulness. So let us find out what the interest of the peasant is and what his intimate sense dictates to him,

The truth in this is that, for about forty years, the same movement of secession that we have pointed out above, in the population of the cities, between the worker and the

bourgeois, is manifested among the populations of the countryside, between the rustic plebs and the landowning aristocracy, especially those who live in the heart of the cities. As this antagonism has its principle in the depths of ideas, you will be grateful to me for bringing it to light.

While within the towns the old feudal principle has been maintained while being transformed and continues to develop — as testified to, on the one hand, by the industrial and financial feudalism that is so marvelously good at bringing the middle class and the proletariat to their senses; on the other hand, the ambition possessed by a crowd of bourgeois to add to their titles of civil servants, capitalists, entrepreneurs and merchants, the quality of great landowners, suzerains of the soil; thirdly, certain communist tendencies, certain ill-defined corporative ideas of the working classes — the peasants marched under the impulse of a fixed thought, that of ensuring their liberty more and more by the free possession of the soil. The conception of property, in a word, is not the same in the city-dweller and in the peasant: hence their evolution in opposite directions. One seeks above all rent, the pride of possession; the other aims at the independence of labor, at the suzerainty of agricultural life. For this one property is the freehold, for that one it is still the fief. It is understood that I only use these expressions to bring out my thoughts better, without wanting to lend anyone ideas far above the routine. In fact, there is perhaps not a peasant, not a bourgeois, with the exception of the jurists, who knows what these terms of our ancient language, fief and alleu, mean. But these words express two rights, two different orders of facts, two opposite tendencies, which are reproduced in our day as in the Middle Ages, and neither of which it is even possible, in my opinion, to put an end to entirely.

As before, the soul of the peasant is in the allodial idea. He instinctively hates the man of the town, the man of the corporations, masterships and jurandes, as he hated the lord, the man with feudal rights; and his great preoccupation is, according to an expression of the old law which he has not forgotten, to *evict the landlord*. He wants to reign alone on the earth, then, by means of this domination, to make himself master of the cities and to dictate the law to them. This idea of the predominance of agriculture over industry is the same as that which founded the supremacy of ancient Rome and decided the victory of this laboring people over all the industrial and commercial powers of the ancient world; which later supported feudalism itself: an idea adopted in the eighteenth century by the physiocrats, and which is certainly not yet exhausted. From there a secret struggle, which already lets itself be seen in certain regions, and which one of my friends from the provinces denounced to me not long ago in these terms: "We are marching towards a violent antagonism between the cities and the countryside...; three-quarters of the townspeople fairly needy; the former, attracted by the lure of mercantile and industrial profits, gradually invade the cities and become the masters there, while the latter remain crushed between this new competition and the upper bourgeoisie whose headquarters is Paris..."

Thus, the same thought directs the plebs of the countryside and that of the cities. In the cities the working class tends to supplant the bourgeois class by raising wages, association, coalitions, mutual societies, cooperative societies, etc.; — in the countryside, by the increase in labor and domestic wages, by the overbidding of the land, by the reduction of rents, by small cultivation and small property. The war is thus general: but until now, for want of a basic thought, of an organization and of tactics, it has not produced decisive results. We get in each other's way, we destroy each other, we exterminate each other; the peasant, neighbor or farmer, laborer or servant, does his best to disgust the bourgeois owner; but nothing advances, working class and bourgeois class, income and rent, are constantly reborn from each other.

The republic of 1848 conferred on the peasants, as on the workers, the right to vote. Now, while the latter learned from the bourgeois to oppose the Power and vote with them, the Emperor, rightly or wrongly, remained for the peasant the symbol of allodial right, made triumphant by the Revolution and the sale of the national goods. In the king, on the contrary, protector of the bourgeoisie or prince of the gentlemanship, he has never seen anything but the emblem of the fief, which reappears to his suspicious eye in the person of the capitalist bourgeois, head of industry, administrator of companies, merchant, man of letters or magistrate. Napoleon I knew it: that is what, in spite of his infidelities, made him popular for so long. One could judge of it in 1830, in 1840, and until 1852. It is about thus that the Italian peasants regret the Austrian government, enemy or natural adversary of the middle-class, and curse the constitutional Kingdom, monument of the victory of those accursed gentlemen, *maledetti signori*.

The establishment of the railways has developed great wealth in many departments, even those farthest from the center, especially those whose main production does not consist of wheat, such as Hérault, Gard, Jura, Doubs, etc.⁵ The universal rise in food prices, following the enormous industrial development, made the fortune of the peasant; the foreign market has been opened to him; a mass of subsistence, wines, fruits, vegetables, which formerly had to be consumed on the spot and at a low price, is now exported over enormous distances and with profit. The peasant does not discuss the causes: *Cum hoc, ergo propter hoc*; — these goods came to him during the imperial period; he thanks the Emperor for them. He wants the land, just as the worker wants the capital and the instrument of labor, and he will know how to have it, by paying for it.

Thus the cause of the peasants is the same as that of the industrial workers; the *Marianne* of the fields is the counterpart of the *Sociale* of the cities. Their adversaries are the same. Until 1863, the two great classes that represent labor, peasants and workers, had voted, without giving each other the word, for the Emperor; in 1863 and 1864, while the

⁵ Free trade prevents the rise in cereals, and keeps the peasant in check: we can say that almost everywhere in France, the price of wheat only represents production costs. In Beauce itself, the source of the farmer's profits is not in the wheat harvest; she is in the artificial meadow, in the herd.

peasants remained faithful to the imperial flag, the workers, without sufficient reason, passed over to the side of the bourgeois. I do not mean that they would have done better to imitate their brothers in the field; I only mean that it would have been worthy of them to give them an example, by declaring that in future they no longer intended to depend on anyone but themselves. It is up to the industrial democracy of Paris and the big cities, which has taken the lead, to seek the points of connection that exist between it and the democracy of the countryside, and not to give itself in the eyes of the allodials the appearance of soldiers of fief. Doubtless Napoleon III, like Napoleon I, is still for the masses the enemy of the old regime, the man who protects the countryman against bourgeois feudalism. Under the influence of this opinion, and the pressure from mayors, gendarmes, country guards, etc., the peasant, excited by the cabaret, voted for the candidate of the administration. But the Napoleonic idea wears out like everything else; the old regime is far from us; it has been covered with a thick layer of ideas, laws, interests; new needs are being felt, and one can already foresee, on a given day, a sudden reversal on the part of the countryside, similar to that which, last year, involved the department of Haute-Saone. As well, vast problems present themselves to be resolved in the face of which the authority is powerless: to marry agriculture to industry, and by this means to reconcile the populations of the towns and the countryside; to reconstitute property according to the principles of mutuality and federative right; to envelope the agricultural class in new institutions; to solve, to the advantage of the peasants as well as the workers, the questions of credit, insurance, rents, butchery, market garden foodstuffs and drinks, etc., etc.

The peasant has a horror of renting and share-cropping, like the laborer of the wage-earning system. It will be incomparably easier, by helping him to become a landowner, to draw from him a high tax, a legitimate share of society in the ground rent, than to make him consent to share eternally with a distant landowner the growth of the land and animals, obtained by his care and hard work.

Thus, however contradictory they may appear and in fact be, as to the immediate result, the elections of the working plebs, on the one hand in Paris and in the big cities, on the other in the countryside, the thought that produced them both is basically the same: it is the complete emancipation of the worker; it is the abolition of wage labor; it is the expulsion of the absentee landlord. Both parties voted (those who voted, for there were many abstentions everywhere) with the same reforming intention, with the same feeling of sovereign force, with the same blind impetuosity.

So see what was the result of all these elections, unintelligible to those who benefit from them and those who suffer from them, opponents and ministers. While the misunderstood vote of the peasants reassures power and distresses our so-called liberals, that of the workers, much clearer, has turned everything upside down. Not only was the power struck with terror by them, Bonapartism disconcerted and confounded, the officious go-betweens, who had flattered themselves to marry Caesarism and the plebs,

covered with shame, the mystifiers mystified; but, apart from the Bonapartist interest, everything has been crushed, the coalition list has become a dissolution list, parliamentarianism has been shown to be impracticable: make parliamentary monarchy with these hurricanes of universal suffrage! — the Legal Opposition reduced to nothing, vanities deceived, oaths withered. Oh! Certainly, if the people wanted only to give their masters a vigorous warning, they did not miss their aim. They behaved like the bull who, being hungry and wanting to wake the herdsman, pierces his side with a blow of its horn.

Thereupon, I have the honor to observe to the Sovereign People:

— Yes, Majesty, you have the numbers and the force; and from this fact alone that you have the number and the force it already results that you possess a right that it is just that you exercise. But you also have an Idea, from which you hold another right, superior to the first: why, in these elections in which you have so marvelously distinguished yourself, have you not taken it into account? Why, instead of affirming your Idea with the energy that distinguishes you, did you act, on the contrary, directly against it? Why, strongest of the strong, when you could still be reasonable, did you show yourself brutal? Do you know that with this electoral violence, instead of moving things forward, you threw us all into a mess? Now, hear well what I am going to say to you: As long as you are numerous and strong, without an idea, you will be nothing. The sovereignty is not yours; your candidates will be despised, and you will remain a beast of burden.

Chapter III.

Situation impossible.

The elections of March 1864, which carried MM. Carnot and Garnier-Pagès to the Legislative Body, were the confirmation of those of 1863. An intrigue had presided over these, another intrigue produced those. The list of candidates for the previous year had been the work of a council formed by the five outgoing deputies joined together with the directors of the *Siècle*, the *Presse* and the *Opinion nationale*; the candidacies that prevailed last March came out of another meeting held at the home of M. Marie, the man who, six months earlier, advised M. Carnot to seize the dictatorship of the elections, and in which figured at side of the master of the house MM. J. Favre, J. Simon and Pelletan. What this quartumvirate wanted the voters voted for, and, like the first time, without discussion, without discernment. Like the first time, the multitude went with energy to the ballot; like the first time, the worker candidates were sacrificed to the bourgeois candidates; finally, like the first time, the election thus obtained only has meaning because it is a popular blow; in itself it means nothing at all. Is it a resurrection, or a spontaneous generation? We cannot say. The only remarkable fact of this last convocation was the manifesto of the *Sixty*, to which we will return later. Let us therefore leave this confused arena of universal suffrage; and since it was in the elections of 1863-64 that the working plebs made, for the first time, an act of will and personality; since it is on this occasion that we have heard it stutter its idea, that we know the interest it pursues as well as that which animates the plebs of the countryside; since its debut was both a great victory and a great fault, let us begin by showing it the consequences of its first attempt.

I. Are nations doomed to know the truth about themselves only long after the fact, and can the lessons of history benefit only posterity? Who among us would dare to say that he believes in universal suffrage? It is not the republicans, its founders, abandoned by it for an imperial restoration, who confess, through the mouth of M. Jules Simon, in agreement in this with the government of the Emperor, that universal suffrage cannot be left to itself and needs to be directed. It is not the defenders of the Empire, who have just been disappointed in their turn by the popular vote in such a cruel way. It is not the partisans of the constitutional and bourgeois monarchy, incompatible with the great democratic institution, to whom the people have just declared clearly, by their choices, that they do not want to return to Orleanism. It was not the Opposition, finally, that had so much trouble getting the workers to give up their candidacies. There is so little confidence, in the political world, in universal suffrage; it inspires such anxiety that it has already been proposed from different quarters to modify it by bringing it back to the staggered system of the first Empire. Only the multitude of cities and countryside believes in the great conquest of 1848; it sticks to it: we begin to guess why. So that, on the very basis of our political order, there is complete divergence, a deep split, between the Power, the

Opposition, the upper classes, on the one hand, and the working and ignorant masses on the other: such is the unacknowledged truth about our times.

Suppose some Tacitus summarizing in the future the situation of our country for the year 1865-64, here are the terms in which he would express himself:

Extract from the Annals of the French People, March 1864. “From the elections of this year and those of the preceding year it follows: 1. That the government is by its nature incompatible with the temperament, the aspirations and the mores of the bourgeoisie; 2. That the people, on whom it could rely, seem in turn to want to withdraw from it, first in the cities, but without rallying to the bourgeoisie, while in the countryside they continue to vote with the Power, but in a sense of economic reform.

“From which it follows that unless the working classes, after having made known their idea, convert France to it, there is no chance of lasting, in this country, for any political combination, and for that which represents the Legal Opposition less than any other. So that the Country is in a chaotic situation, the State in an unstable equilibrium.”

Painful reflection! Of the nearly forty million souls who make up the population of France, thirty-six at least, that is to say all the plebs of the towns and the countryside, with a large part of the middle class, the most unfortunate of the nation, are carried away in a vast movement of political, economic and social reform. And to lead this multitude, to enlighten it, to appease it, whichever way you turn your eyes, not an Idea, not a man!...

Would the majority, for example, which the centers of population escape, which the bourgeoisie and the industrial plebs are abandoning, have the thought, with these five and a half million votes, of which about two-thirds are country voices, to express exactly the thought of the Country? It would be a dangerous illusion on its part. The democracy of the countryside has the same tendencies and aspirations as that of the cities; and if the first continues to vote for the government while the second has fallen behind the bourgeois, we can say that on one side as on the other, it is the effect of a misunderstanding; it is that the peasant and the worker have not yet come to understand the necessity, in order to establish their aim, of asserting themselves directly against all pressure, interest and influence. Would the Emperor's government dare to confess the motto of the peasant: *Eviction of the landlord?* No more than the bourgeoisie admits the *right to work*, reproduced by the worker candidacies. If the Emperor can attribute a meaning to himself, it is, today as in 1852, to save us from the revolution, by diverting popular passions. M. de Persigny, who puts rustic common sense above city imaginations, and who in this connection quotes Roman history in such a droll manner, forgets one thing: it is that it is the plebeians of the city who, with their agrarian laws, took the initiative of the imperial revolution and who involved those of the province. If later both remained faithful to the new order of things, it is because the Emperor of the Praetorians had at his disposal even more effective means of rallying than the division of the conquered territories, but which the Emperor of the French will never have at his disposal, I mean the spoils of nations,

Would the Legal Opposition, currently composed of fifteen or sixteen deputies more or less democratic, and twenty or twenty-two dynastics, have the claim in turn to represent the country, — what am I saying? — to represent its own voters?

On the one hand, it took an oath of obedience to the constitution and loyalty to the Emperor, which the electorate did not. In addition, it is made up of heterogeneous, disparate, contradictory elements: in what way it can be accepted as a more or less faithful expression of the past and its various eras, but in no way as an organ and synthesis of the future, of which it does not have not the slightest suspicion. The Opposition, too, has its face turned backwards; it is essentially conservative; like the majority, it is convinced that the working people pursue chimerical hopes, that universal suffrage, with its workers' candidacies, is mad; it can't see a foot away from its nose. It has no higher, common plan or idea, and it can be challenged to formulate one. Opposition to what? With regard to what? Who can tell? You speak of expenses: it is an article of the budget, a matter of administration, of practice; and it is a question of *emancipating labor*. No positive, fundamental thought, emerges from the assembly of these sixteen names: it is neither an affirmation, nor a negation, nor an objection, nor a petition, nor a summons. It will be, if you will, detailed criticism from all points of view, at the will of each deputy; basically nothing. In political language, the citizen elected by universal suffrage is an *agent*, the voters are said to be *principals*. Now, where is the mandate here? There is none: the deputies could not even produce a blank check. Besides, how would they know what the principal wanted, what the principal expects of them, when the principal himself, in the work of hatching his thought, does not yet know it?...

Therefore, by virtue of their purely fictitious mandate, and of their very explicit oath, and of their antipathy for social revolution, the deputies of the Opposition, speaking a little of all things, *de omni scibiñ*, represent nothing, mean nothing, know nothing. Made in the image of the Emperor, their sovereign, but refusing to be with regard to him, as the Constitution of 1852 implies, only simple auxiliaries, voluntary advisers, aspiring on the contrary to being everything, they are literally nothing; unless they are made conspirators, they escape any determination. If the two hundred and eighty-three members of the Legislative Body resembled them, in other words, if the entire Legislative Body were in the Opposition, the Emperor would be obliged to summon the electors again in order to find out from them, by an explicit vote, what they require of him and what they have instructed their representatives to communicate to him. But we would then have a very different spectacle: the electors would be obliged to admit that they cannot agree, and that what the nation knows least is what it thinks.

II. But here is what is sadder. Not only since the elections of 1863-64, the nation in immense majority cannot claim to be represented; not only is there a discord between the country and the state, between the secret thought of the masses and the official ideas, a thing full of perils, which suffices in itself to create an impossible situation; we are going to see, because of the Opposition, a sort of comedy organized to gain time, and wear out

the Revolution. While the people, consumed with the fever of reforms, girds up its loins and prepares for the great economic struggles, one dreams of giving them, for their whole satisfaction, who-knows-what doctrinaire refreshment.

Let us not forget that democrats and bourgeois, by taking part in the elections and giving themselves representatives, have placed themselves on the ground of imperial legality; so that if by the fact of the last votes a current of opposition has been established, this opposition does not indicate a rupture, but a simple divergence of views, a vague dissatisfaction that in no way alters the legal relations and does not allow any interference with the Constitution.

Barring exceptional events, suddenly displacing men and things, it is therefore according to existing legality that we must reason, especially in the face of a power that, if it took the fancy of anyone to deviate from it, would be entitled and would have the means to compel them.

Well! What emerges for the Opposition, for the Democracy, for the Country and for the Government, from this legality combined with the votes of 1863 and 1864? What have we to expect from the point of view of popular attractions, public liberties and progress?

The elections of 1857 had brought the number of Democratic representatives to 5; it is now, unless I am mistaken, 15. By bringing together in this imperceptible but noisy group, the Conservative deputies elected outside democratic action and administrative patronage, we arrive, in plain sight, at a minority of about 35 out of 283. Such is at this moment the legal, constitutional power of the Opposition. What have we to expect, between now and 1869, from the effectiveness of this Opposition, beyond what we have obtained from the *Five*, from 1857 to 1863? Absolutely nothing: far from it, I say that, by this regular play of the Constitution of 1852 for seventeen consecutive years, the imperial establishment, barring an unforeseen debacle, produced by extra-legal causes, will have had to naturally consolidate.

But let us suppose that in 1869 the number of the deputies of the Opposition rises by a quantity proportional to the increase that it received in 1863-64, that is to say sevenfold, a hypothesis that can be considered as very favorable: the democratic opposition, still in the minority, would then have 105 members; the conservative opposition, 140; together, 245. The Government having lost the majority should modify, according to the spirit of this new opposition, its policy and probably its Constitution. This would be done according to legal, constitutional forms; as for the modifications to be made to the Constitution of 1852, they could not be other than that demanded by M. Thiers in his first speech; it would be a return to the parliamentary system. The Democratic Opposition, because of its minority, and also because of its lack of a political plan, would have nothing to provide. At most it would be offered one or two ministries, pledges of the definitive rallying of democracy to the imperial government.

Napoleon III would therefore be clear, like Napoleon I in 1815, to change the Constitution; so that all the political progress of France, from 1814 to 1870, contained

within the limits of the Charter of Saint-Ouen, would be reduced to dynastic substitutions. Do we take this for a failure of the system? But Napoleon III was the first to foresee this reversal; he is not unaware that the extraordinary powers with which he was invested in 1851 were caused by the democratic and social agitation; that, this agitation appeased, he must expect to return to the constitutional mean. This is what he himself took care to announce to France with these words, *the crowning of the edifice*. Such, then, would be the result of so much suffering, discussion, opposition, voting, oaths: for the country and for the democracy a demotion of forty years; for the empire and the Napoleonic dynasty, instead of the autocratic prerogative, so perilous, the guarantee of parliamentary responsibilities.

And what proves to us that in 1869 the Opposition, both democratic and conservative, will number two hundred and forty-five members? Until then the Government has time to reflect and prepare its revenge, and the advantages of its position are enormous.

A Constitution sworn to by the Opposition, and which it, the Government, has made; an accepted legality of which it is the interpreter; a Senate, a kind of upper chamber, unanimous in the Emperor's thoughts; in the Legislative Body or House of Representatives, an overwhelming majority; to answer the harangues of the Opposition, in addition to the orators of the majority, councilors of State of consummate skill, who, in their recent contests with the advocates of the Democracy have been much more often victors than vanquished; in the departments, each commune became a branch of the prefecture; a rustic plebs full of prejudices against the Opposition of the *Messieurs*; a chosen national guard, supported by an innumerable, invincible, faithful army; finally, an electoral mass that, until the future ballot of 1869, cannot be estimated at less than 5,500,000 electors against 1,900,000: who is it who, with such forces, would not undertake within five years to crush the Opposition?

Thus, not content with deceiving the thinking of the people, they themselves would be held back in immobility; there would be, by way of progress, all the parliamentary amusements; we would start again, from scratch, the comedy of fifteen years, then that of eighteen years, of course with hope of greater success. Admittedly, those who in 1863-64 voted for the Opposition do not have a word to say here: but I ask it of any man of common sense, is this not to call upon us revolutionary wrath, and will reform, even the most radical, ever cost as much as what the obstinacy of naked saviors threatens to make us pay?

III. After mystification, usurpation. Those who made the Democracy vote against its principles and against its conscience will spare it no shame. It was not enough, this almost impregnable position that sworn legality gives to the imperial government; it was necessary that the Opposition add to it by its professions of faith, its newspaper articles, its speeches and its votes, a faculty of absolutism without bounds. Without the majority of parliament, without these ministerial deputies sent by the peasants, I really don't know where we would be today.

As far as foreign policy is concerned, the Emperor has the power, according to the Constitution, to adopt alone, against the advice of his ministers, of the Council of State, of the Senate, of the Legislative Body, the most serious resolutions. He can, at will and on any occasion, make alliances or break them, declare war and cheerfully place the heart of all of Europe in his hands. Let us leave aside the more or less plausible motives for such a prerogative, and consider it only from the point of view of public liberties, constitutional guarantees, legal forms, rights, finally, and the sovereignty of the nation. Until now it is permissible to believe, according to the testimony of the newspapers of the empire, that if Napoleon III has not yet embarked on an enterprise of this nature, either with regard to Poland, or on the occasion of Holstein, or of Hungary, or of Italy, etc., it has been in deference to the devoted councils around him, to the majority of the Legislative Body and the Senate; because he felt that, if in fact and according to the letter of the articles the Constitution grants him unlimited powers, common sense indicates that he must use them only with the most extreme circumspection; that his autocracy is more in form than in substance; in short, that if the text of our ancient republican constitutions has been abrogated, the spirit remains, and that the first duty of a head of state is to march in accord with the opinion of his country.

Now, what have the deputies and newspapers of the Opposition been doing for a year? What do they still do every day? In their devotion to the cause of the Polish aristocracy, they never ceased to urge the Emperor to reject the warnings of the Senate and the Legislative Body; they recall him to his omnipotence; they push him to act on his own, *motu proprio*, without any other advice than his personal will and good pleasure; they preach arbitrariness to him; they give him a receipt for his duties towards the representatives of the country, elected like him by universal suffrage; they associate themselves, as much as it is in them, and in spite of their quality of democrats, with this absolutism, which sometimes they seem to fight. They tell him that the justice of the cause covering the irregularity of the form, the arbitrariness of the resolution, he must not hesitate, that the most jealous liberalism will have nothing to reproach him with. They thus prove that what they blame in the prince's policy is not, as was done before 1848, its personal character, it is his lack of skill or audacity, in the sense that His Majesty does not do what they want.

Here, then, is the absolute power justified by the Opposition emerging from the elections of 1863-64; here, on this famous question of the right of war and peace, is the tradition of 89 abolished. We recognize here the electoral dictators of 1863-64. Never did Mirabeau, when the people of Paris cried treason against him, demand for the constitutional king the hundredth part of what our so-called democratic deputies offer to Napoleon III.

Suppose now that the Emperor, yielding to these insane wishes, declares war on Russia, on Prussia, on Austria, on the Germanic Confederation; that to be agreeable to 200,000 Polish nobles, to Kossuth, to Klapka, to Garibaldi, he raises against them 140

million souls, and that without further notice he engages France, at the first attempt, for a contingent of 400,000 men and three billion. It is in vain that the Senate, the majority of the deputies, the Country as a whole, peasants and townspeople, will testify to their terror: the Emperor will be within his rights, no one will be able to accuse him of despotism; moreover, according to the Opposition, we will owe him thanksgiving... — Once war has been declared, two cases can arise: the Emperor will be victorious or vanquished. Winner, he harnesses the Opposition to his triumphal chariot, and here is liberty postponed again. Defeated, he is an unfortunate hero, worthy of all our respects.

Suppose, on the contrary, that the Emperor, better inspired, disdains these chauvinistic excitations and rallies decidedly to the policy of peace. First of all, he assures himself of the recognition, or at least the silence, of all those who, in the country, democrats or non-democrats, do not swear by the genius of the Opposition; and sooner or later that Opposition, back from its belligerent craving, will be forced to admit that he was wiser than they. What glory then for our representative morals! What an honor for the democracy! And how we will have good grace, red republicans and socialists, to declaim after that against absolute power! So dare to blame the expedition to Mexico, undertaken without advice, but no doubt with good intentions, when it is proposed to undertake, also without advice, that of Poland!...

Thus, adjournment granted for six years of all democratic hopes; — commitment made in the name and face of the people to respect and maintain the existing legality, first during these first six years, and later until the displacement of the legislative majority decides otherwise; — in the event of the displacement of this majority, as it could have no other object than the return to the constitutional monarchy, the Country led to a most dangerous demotion; — in the meantime, the Revolution fought, popular thought denied, the aspirations of the working class repressed, the Emperor continuing to dispose sovereignly of the forces and destinies of France, urged by the Opposition to seize the military dictatorship and to declare war on two-thirds of Europe: such is the final result, rational, normal, demonstrated by the facts, by the figures, by the proper names, by the newspaper articles and the professions of faith of the candidates, of the elections of 1863-64. Ah! People of Paris, you are certainly the most intelligent and the most spiritual of peoples. Fortunately you possess, with these rare faculties, the privilege of recanting and contradicting yourself; otherwise you would have to despair of yourself.

So be it, say our entrepreneurs of the legal Opposition, bastards of universal suffrage and the doctrinaire shift, the revolution of December 2 and what followed until March 20, 1864, will have been for the Country like a long insanity: an immense misfortune without a doubt. Was that a reason to stagnate in inertia, to remain bent under the iron hand of despotism, to renounce all political life, and to keep our cities and our countryside in a sort of state of siege indefinitely? Was it not better to return, as quickly as possible, to those institutions of liberty and order that marked the most beautiful period of our history, and should we repel the efforts of those who were working to bring us back to them, even at

the price of a new consecration of the Bonaparte dynasty? Let the Country be reborn, and let the parties resign themselves: this must be the thought of all of us at this time. Consider it good therefore that in this respect we take note of your own confessions in favor of the elections of 1863-64, and of this generous Opposition that came out of it.

Well, this last illusion I am forced to take away from you. Returning to the 1830 system and any analogous constitutional monarchy or bourgeois republic has become as impossible as returning to the 1788 system or the 1804 system. So do not forget that with universal suffrage we are no longer dealing only with a high and middle bourgeoisie, with the France of July, unanimous in its political views as well as in its economic maxims. We have before us the multitude of February, which feels distinct from the bourgeoisie and asserts itself outside and in the face of its elder; — which in social economy professes quite different maxims, and already tends to nothing less than to supplant and absorb the old Third Estate; — which in politics has not yet been able to deduce a Constitution from its economic and social principles, but which will not fail in this task, and on this ground will find itself further removed from the constitutional bourgeoisie than on the ground of labor, association and salary; — which, finally, after having held the Presidency and the Second Empire, has just brought part of its troops abruptly to the side of the Opposition, not out of love for the ideas that the Opposition represents, but out of resentment of the impotence of the government so far to fulfill its wishes. It is to be expected that one day or another peasants and workers will come to an understanding. Now, this people of workers, this socialist party that dreams of legally acquiring land and capital, which you cannot henceforth eliminate from the political scene, is fundamentally antipathetic to bourgeois institutions, expressed either by the constitution of 1814-1830, or by that of 1848 or that of 1852 modified. So much so, I repeat to you, that you can neither keep the status quo nor retrograde, and that your only chance of salvation is to march forward, in company and under the direction of a plebs whose strength you more or less know, but whose system nothing has yet revealed to you.

This is why I maintain that the elections of 1863-64 are a real dirty trick, and the situation created by them a dead end where no one can move or even recognize one another, no more Democracy and the Opposition than the Government. The popular invasion in the ballot has disturbed everything. The Government, which thought it had before only a liberal and parliamentary opposition; the Opposition, which imagined that it only had to fight the policy of the Government, now both find themselves having before them this social question that they believed to be buried; and neither can the Opposition take advantage of its victory, nor the Government strengthen itself, by accepting or asserting the consequences, even constitutional and legal, of the vote.

The men of *action* and the statesmen of the Workers' Democracy, rarely in agreement, have created this imbroglio which they hardly seem to suspect, and which, moreover, they in no way care about. They wanted to stand out, to make an act of influence, to lay the cornerstone of their new destiny, some to show off their eloquence in a parliament. They

got the success they were looking for: now, come what may! Nothing is as bold as ignorance: these would not shrink from chaos...

I am going to try, by exposing in broad daylight the thought and tendencies of the workers, by revealing certain incompatibilities of the present regime, affirmed and defended by the Opposition, with this thought and these tendencies, to abridge as much as it is in me an unparalleled situation. And take this for granted, reader: we can no longer escape difficulty through ignorance, denial or mockery; we must, whether we like or not and sooner rather than later, embrace the IDEA.

SECOND PART

Development of the Worker Idea: Creation of Economic Rights

Chapter I.

Of political capacity and its conditions: real capacity and legal capacity.— Consciousness and Idea.

The question of worker candidacies, resolved in the negative by the elections of 1863 and 1864, implies that of the political capacity of the workers, or, to make use of a more generic expression, the People. The People, to whom the revolution of 1848 accorded the ability to vote, are they, or are they not, capable [d'ester] in politics, that is to say: are they capable of forming an opinion on those questions that concern the social community in accordance with their condition, their future and their interests; then, to render on the same questions, subject to its arbitration, direct or indirect, a reasoned judgment; and finally, to constitute a center of action, the expression of their ideas, opinions and hopes, and to be responsible for pursuing the execution of their aims?

If yes, it means that the People, at the first occasion that is furnished to them, should give proof of this capacity:—*a*) by enunciating a principle truly their own, that summarizes and synthesizes all their ideas, as is always done by the founders of societies, as the authors of the manifesto attempted to do in the last instance; *b*) by testifying to their principle by voting accordingly; *c*) if necessary, and in the case where they must take a role in the country's representative councils, by electing to office those men who know how to render their thought, [porter son verbe], support their right, who represent body and soul, and who can say so, without risk of being denied: These are the bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.

Without this, the People will do wisely to confine themselves to their age-old silence and abstain from the ballot; they will render service to the Society and to the Government. By resigning the powers conferred on them by the institution of universal suffrage, and thus proving their devotion to public order, they will do something more honorable, more useful, than voting, in the manner of most bourgeois, for illustrious empiricists, boasting of directing a society they do not know, by means of perfectly arbitrary formulas. For if the people do not have the intelligence of their own idea or if, having acquired it, they fail to understand this idea, it is not for them to speak out. Let them leave the *blues* and the *whites* to vote against each other; as for they, like the donkey in the fable, they are content to carry their pack.

Such, I repeat, is the inevitable question raised by workers' candidacies, which must absolutely be answered: Are the people capable, yes or no? — The Sixty, they must be congratulated, have declared themselves bravely in the affirmative. But what a

contradiction they raised, in the newspapers, so-called organs of democracy, among the candidates and even among their comrades! What was most distressing was the attitude of the working masses themselves toward such a decisive occasion. There appeared a counter-manifesto, signed by eighty workers, loudly protesting against the presumption of the Sixty, declaring that they in no way expressed the thought of the people, reproaching them for raising a social question inappropriately, when it was only a question of politics, of sowing division when it was necessary to preach union, of re-establishing the distinction of castes when it was only necessary to concern themselves with their fusion, and concluding that, for the moment, the only conquest to pursue was freedom. "*While we do not have liberty,*" they said, "*let us think only of conquering it.*" I want to believe that these workers, as citizens and workers, were as good as the others; they certainly didn't have the originality, much less the momentum. And one could judge, from the considerations on which they were based their response, that they were only repeating the lessons of the *Presse*, the *Temps* and the *Siècle*. They also received congratulations from M. de Girardin and others.

The French people have access to unparalleled humility. Sensitive and vain beyond all expression, they go, when they get mixed up with moderation, to abasement. How is it that these masses, so jealous of their sovereignty, so eager to exercise their electoral rights, and around which so many candidates in black coats swirl, their momentary sycophants, — how is it, I say, that they are so reluctant to produce their men? What! There are in the Workers' Democracy, and in good number, educated subjects, capable of holding the pen as well as of handling speech, knowledgeable in business, twenty times more capable, and above all more worthy of representing it, than the lawyers, journalists, writers, pedants, schemers and charlatans on whom they lavishes their votes, and they reject them! They do not want them for their agents! The Democracy hates truly democratic candidates! It takes pride in giving itself as leaders individuals with an aristocratic tint! Does it therefore think by this to ennoble itself? Why is it, finally, if the people are ripe for sovereignty, that they constantly conceal themselves behind their ex-guardians, who no longer protect them and can do nothing for them; that before those who pay them they lower their eyes like a young girl,⁶ and that, called upon to express their opinion and make an act of will, they only know how to follow the lead of their former bosses and repeat their maxims?

All this, it must be admitted, would create an unfortunate prejudice against the emancipation of the proletariat, if the thing were not explained by the very novelty of the

⁶ The comparison will perhaps not seem fair after the period of coalitions that we have just witnessed. But apart from the fact that the law on coalitions is not a popular initiative (see below, part III, ch. ix), it appears that in a number of cases the workers were supported in their requests to the bosses by the government.

Furthermore, I would have nothing but praise to give to the electoral deference of the workers towards the bourgeois class, if, as the Manifesto of the Sixty suggested, this deference had been inspired by a motive of high political fantasy. Unfortunately this is not the case, and we can see that egoism is still, after fantasy, the only political reason of the masses.

situation. The working masses have lived, from the origin of societies, in dependence on the class that possesses, and consequently in a state of intellectual and moral inferiority of which they have retained the deep senses. It was only yesterday, since the revolution of 89 shattered this hierarchy, that, feeling isolated, they acquired self-awareness. But the instinct of deference is still strong in them; the opinion they have of what is called *capacity* is singularly false and exaggerated; those who formerly were their masters, who have preserved over them the privilege of the professions called *liberal*, from which it is time to remove this name, always seem to them to be 30 centimeters taller than other men. Add this ferment of envy that seizes the man of the people against those of his fellows who aspire to rise above their condition: how can we be surprised after this that, already transformed in their conscience, in the necessities of their life, in the fundamental ideas that direct their, the People have preserved their habits of self-denial? It is with manners as with language: they do not change with faith, law and right. We will remain face to face with each other for a long time yet, *gentlemen and very humble servants*: does that prevent there being no longer gentlemen or servants?

Let us therefore seek in ideas and in facts, apart from adorations, genuflections and vulgar superstitions, what we must think of the capacity and the political suitability of the working class compared to the bourgeois class, and of its future advent.

Let us first observe that the word capacity, when speaking of the citizen, is taken from two different points of view: there is the *legal* capacity, and the *real* capacity.

The first is conferred by law and presupposes the second. We would not allow the legislator to recognize the rights of subjects affected by natural incapacity. For example, before 1848, it was necessary, in order to exercise the electoral right, to pay 200 fr. in direct contributions. It was therefore assumed that property was a guarantee of real capacity: consequently the censitaires at 200 fr. and above, to the number of 230 or 500,000, were reputed to be the true controllers of the Government, sovereign arbiters of its policy. It was obviously only a fiction of the law: there was nothing proving that among the voters there were not, and even many, in spite of their monetary value, really incapable; as also there was nothing allowing us to think that outside this circle, among so many millions of citizens subjected to a simple individual tax, there did not exist a crowd of respectable capacities.

In 1848, the system of 1830 was, so to speak, overturned: universal and direct suffrage, without any condition of qualification, was established. By this simple reform, the entire male population, over the age of twenty-one, born in France and domiciled, found itself vested by law with political capacity. It was therefore still assumed that the right to vote, and to a certain extent political capacity, was inherent in the quality of being a male man and citizen. But it is obvious that this is still only a fiction. How could the electoral faculty be a prerogative of native status, age, sex and domicile, rather than property? The dignity of an elector in our democratic society is equivalent to that of a noble in the feudal world. How would it be granted without exception or distinction to all, while that of noble

belonged only to a few? Is it not the case to say that all dignity made common vanishes, and that what belongs to everyone belongs to no one? Moreover, experience has pronounced itself in this respect: the more the electoral right has multiplied, the more it has lost the importance attached to it. The 36 percent of abstentions in 1857, the 25 percent in 1863 are proof of this. And it is certain that our ten million electors have shown themselves, since 1848, in intelligence and character, inferior to the 300,000 censitaires of the July Monarchy.

Therefore, and willy-nilly, when we deal as historians and philosophers with political capacity, we have to leave behind the fictions and come to the *real* capacity: it is also the only one that will concern us.

For there to be political capacity in a subject, individual, corporation or community, three fundamental conditions are required:

1. The subject must be *conscious* of himself, of his dignity, of his value, of the place he occupies in society, of the role he fulfils, of the functions to which he is entitled, of the interests that he represents or personifies;

2. As a result of this consciousness of himself in all his powers, said subject must affirm his *idea*, that is to say that he knows how to represent himself through the understanding, to translate by speech, to explain by reason, in its principle and its consequences, the law of his being;

3. From this idea, finally, posed as a profession of faith, he can, according to need and the diversity of circumstances, always deduce practical conclusions .

Observe that in all this there can be no question of more or less. Some men feel more keenly than others, have a more or less exalted sense of themselves, grasp the idea and expound it with more or less happiness and energy, or are endowed with a power of implementation to which very often the keenest intelligences do not reach. These differences of intensity in the consciousness, the idea and its application, constitute degrees of capacity; they do not create the capacity itself. Thus any individual who has faith in Jesus Christ, who affirms his doctrine by profession of faith, and who practices his religion, is a Christian, as such capable of eternal salvation: which in no way prevents the fact that among Christians there are doctors and simple people, ascetics and lukewarm people.

Similarly, to be politically capable is not to be endowed with a particular aptitude for dealing with affairs of state, for exercising a particular public employment; it is not to testify to a more or less burning zeal for the city. All of this, I repeat, is a matter of talent and speciality: it is not what founds in the citizen, — often silent, moderate, outside of employment, — what we mean here by political capacity. Possessing political capacity means having *consciousness* of oneself as a member of a community, affirming the resulting *idea* and pursuing its *realization*. Anyone who meets these three conditions is capable. So we all feel FRENCH; as such, we believe in a constitution, in a mission of our country, in view of which we favor, with our wishes and our votes, the policy that seems

to us to best reflect our feelings and serve our opinion. Patriotism may be more or less ardent in each of us; its nature is the same, its absence a monstrosity. In three words, we have *consciousness*, an *idea*, and we pursue a *realization*.

The problem of political capacity in the working class, as well as in the bourgeois class and formerly in the nobility, therefore boils down to asking: *a*) whether the working class, from the point of view of its relations with society and with the State, has acquired consciousness of itself; if, as a collective, moral and free being, it is distinguished from the bourgeois class; if it separates its interests from it, if it insists on no longer confusing itself with it; — *b*) if it possesses an idea, that is to say if it has created for itself a notion of its own constitution; if it knows the laws, conditions and formulas of its existence; if it foresees its destiny, its end; if it understands itself in its relations with the State, the nation and the universal order; — *c*) if from this idea, finally, the working class is in a position to deduce, for the organization of society, practical conclusions that are its own, and in the event that the power, by the decline or the retirement of the bourgeoisie, would devolve to it, to create and develop a new political order.

This is political capacity. It is understood that we are speaking of this *real*, collective capacity, which is a fact of nature and of society, and which results from the movement of the human spirit; which, save for inequalities of talent and conscience, is found the same in all individuals and cannot become the privilege of any one; which one observes in all religious communions, sects, corporations, castes, parties, states, nationalities, etc., a capacity that the legislator is incompetent to create, but which he is bound to seek, and which in all cases he assumes.

And it is according to this definition of capacity that I respond, as far as the working classes are concerned, and independently of the failings and sheepish manifestations of which they still give the sad spectacle every day.

On the first point: Yes, the working classes have acquired consciousness of themselves, and we can assign the date of this blossoming to the year 1848;

On the second point: Yes, the working classes possess an idea that corresponds to the consciousness they have of themselves, which is in perfect contrast with the bourgeois idea: only one can say that this idea has still only been revealed only in an incomplete manner, that they have not pursued it in all its consequences and have not given the form thereof;

On the third point, relating to the political conclusions to be drawn from their idea: No, the working classes, sure of themselves, and already half-enlightened on the principles that make up their new faith, have not yet succeeded in deducing from these principles a consistent general practice, an appropriate policy: witness their vote in common with the bourgeoisie, witness the political prejudices of all kinds that they obey.

Let us say — in a style that smacks less of school than of the working classes that are only being born into political life — that if, by the initiative they have begun to take and by their numerical strength, they have been given the opportunity to shift the center of

gravity in the political order and to agitate the social economy, on the other hand, by the intellectual chaos to which they are prey, especially by the governmental *fantaisisme* that they received from a bourgeoisie *in extremis*, they have not yet succeeded in establishing their preponderance; they have even delayed their emancipation and up to a certain point jeopardize their future.

Chapter II.

How the working class has distinguished itself since 1789 from the bourgeois class, and how from this fact it has acquired consciousness. — Deplorable State of the Bourgeois Consciousness.

In order to deprive the working classes, in fact, of the capacity that has been granted to them, in right, by universal suffrage, the newspapers, especially those of the Democratic Opposition, have had recourse to the grossest confusion. Scarcely had the manifesto of the Sixty appeared than the whole press in chorus protested against the claim of the workers to be represented as a *class*. It was recalled in a doctoral tone, affecting great zeal for the oracles of the Revolution, that since 89 there had been no more castes; that the idea of worker candidacies tended to resuscitate them; that, if it was rational to admit to the national representation a simple worker, as one admits an engineer, a scientist, a lawyer, a journalist, it was insofar as the said worker would be like his colleagues in the Legislative Body an expression of the society, not of his class; that otherwise the candidacy of this worker would have a divisive and retrograde character; that it would go against the liberties and rights of 89, and would become subversive of public law, of public order, of public peace, by the mistrust, the alarms and the anger that it would arouse in the *bourgeois class*. The manifesto of the Sixty, which, by its thought and its conclusions, tended, in fact, to disorganize the Opposition, was nearly treated as a counter-revolutionary police machination.

The authors of the Manifesto had foreseen this objection from their adversaries, and they had protested in advance against the calumny: however, it must be said that their justification left something to be desired. If they affirmed the distinction of the two classes, they raised the policies of the party against them and felt lost; if they denied it, they were then asked: Why a workers' candidacy! Such was the dilemma, which I now ask permission to answer.

By arguing the discontent of the *bourgeois class*, the opponents of the Manifesto unwittingly contradicted themselves, and implicitly recognized a profound truth, which the Manifesto should have loudly affirmed. We readily recognize, nowadays, a bourgeois class, although there is no longer any nobility and the clergy is only a category of civil servants: how can we deny the reality? On what, then, would the Orléanist system be based? What would monarchy, constitutional politics be? Why this hostility of certain people against universal suffrage?... But we refuse to admit the correlative of the bourgeois class, the working class. Will someone deign to explain this inconsistency?

Our Opposition publicists failed to see, despite their devotion to the ideas of '89, that what created the entirely new distinction, unknown even in feudal times, between the bourgeois class and the working class or proletariat, just when the old categories of Nobility, Clergy and Third Estate disappeared, is precisely the right inaugurated in 89.

They did not see that before 89 the worker existed in the corporation and in the dominion, like the woman, the child and servant in the family; that then, indeed, we would have been loathe to admit a class of workers in the face of a class of entrepreneurs; since one was supposed to contain the other; but that since 89 the bundle of corporations having been broken up, without the fortunes and conditions between workers and masters having become equal, without anything being done and nothing planned for the distribution of capital, the organization of industry and the rights of the workers, the distinction was established by itself between the class of the bosses, holders of the instruments of labor, capitalists and large proprietors, and that of the simple salaried workers.

To deny today this distinction between the two classes would be to do more than deny the split that brought it about, which was itself only a great iniquity; it would be to deny the industrial, political and civil independence of the worker, the only compensation he has obtained; it would be saying that the liberty and equality of 89 were not made for him as well as they were for the bourgeois; it would be, consequently, to deny that the working class, which subsists under completely new conditions, outside of bourgeois solidarity, is susceptible of a consciousness and of an initiative of its own and to declare it, by nature, without political capacity. Now, it is the truth of this distinction that it is above all important to affirm here, because it is this distinction that gave all the value to the workers' candidacies: beyond that, these candidacies lose their meaning.

What! Is it not true, in spite of the revolution of 89, or rather precisely because of this revolution, that French society, previously composed of three castes, has remained, since the night of August 4, divided into two classes, one that lives exclusively by its labor, and whose wage is generally below 1,250 fr. per family of four persons and per year (I suppose that the sum of 1,250 fr. is the approximate average, for each family, of the income or total product of the nation); the other who lives from something other than its labor, when it works; that lives on the income of its properties, its capital, its endowments, pensions, subsidies, shares, salaries, honors and benefices? Is it not true, from this point of view of the distribution of capital, work, privileges and products, that there exist among us, as before, but on a completely different footing than before, two categories of citizens, vulgarly called *bourgeoisie* and *plebs*, *capitalism* and *salarial*? Is it not true that these two categories of men, formerly united and almost confounded by the feudal bond of patronage, are now profoundly separated and have no other relation between them than that determined by chapter iii, title viii, book III, art. 1779 to 1799 of the Civil Code, relating to the contract of lease of work and industry? But all our politics, our public economy, our industrial organization, our contemporary history, our literature itself rests on this inescapable distinction, which only bad faith and foolish hypocrisy can deny.

The division of modern society into two classes, one of wage-laborers, the other of proprietors-capitalists-entrepreneurs, being therefore flagrant, a consequence must ensue, which has no right to surprise anyone: it has been asked whether this distinction was the effect of chance or of necessity; if it was in the true data of the revolution; if it could be

legitimized in right, as it was found in fact; in short, if, by a better application of the rules of justice and economy, we could not put an end to this dangerous division, by reducing the two new classes to a single one, perfectly level and in balance?

This question, which is not new to philosophers, was to arise among the working classes on the day when a political revolution would put them, through universal suffrage, on a level with the bourgeois classes, where they would thus perceive the contrast of their political sovereignty with their social status. Then, and only then, through the position of this great economic and social question, could the working classes arrive at a consciousness of themselves; they had to say to themselves, as it is said in the Apocalypse, that he who has the reign must have the advantages, *Dignus est accipere divitiam, et honorem, et gloriam*; they would present their candidature for the deputation and their claim to the government. This is how the working masses began sixteen years ago to rise to political capacity; it is in this that the French democracy, in the nineteenth century, is distinguished from all previous democracies: Socialism, as it has been called, is nothing else.

On this, what did the Sixty say and do? Their Manifesto is there to prove it: they placed themselves in the situation that events and public law right had made for them, and they spoke from the abundance of their workers' consciousness. Convinced for their part that the question can and must be resolved in the affirmative, they pointed out with moderation, but with firmness, that for quite a long time this question had been removed from the agenda, and that the moment seemed to have come to take it up again. For this purpose, and without examining whether their proposal was the surest way of claiming their right, and above all if it agreed with their idea, they posed and proposed, as a sign and pledge of this recovery, the candidacy of one of their own who, because of his character as a worker, and especially because he was a worker, they judged to represent the working class better than anyone.

I say that this fact, joined to so many others of the same nature that have occurred over the past sixteen years, attests among the working classes to a hitherto unexampled revelation of their corporate consciousness; it proves that half or more of the French nation has entered the political scene, carrying with it an Idea that sooner or later must transform society and government from top to bottom. And because some sixty men tried to make themselves the interpreters of this consciousness and this idea, they are accused of aiming at the restoration of the *castes*! They are eliminated from the national representation as retrogrades, professing dangerous opinions. There are those who go so far as to denounce their manifesto as an incitement to hatred among the citizens. The newspapers fulminate; the so-called Democratic Opposition lets its discontent burst out; counter-manifestos are solicited; one asks, with an affectation of disdain, if the Sixties claim to know their interests and their rights better, to defend them better than MM. Marie, J. Favre, E. Ollivier, J. Simon, Pelletan. A social fact, of incalculable significance, is produced within society: it is the advent to political life of the most numerous and

poorest class, hitherto disdained because it didn't have consciousness. And the witnesses, the heralds of this fact, all from the working class, are denounced to bourgeois animadversion as troublemakers, rebels, instruments of the police! Derision!

The principle that we have just laid down — and this adds to the solemnity of the event — of the necessity for a human collectivity, caste, corporation or race, to be aware, either in order to constitute itself as a State, or to participate in the government of the society of which it forms part and to rise to political life, can be considered as a general law: it has its application in the history of all peoples. For a time the Latin plebs had no consciousness. They formed the clientele of the patricians, and were governed by them according to the rules of familial right. When the plebeians demanded participation in marriage, sacrifices and honors, when they had their tribunes, whose *veto* could stop the resolutions of the Senate; when they obtained the communication of *formulas*; when, finally, the division of the conquered territories and the *ager publicus* made it necessary to grant them property, it is because they had arrived at the full conscience of themselves, and because, by this demonstration of consciousness, they judged themselves the equals of the patriciate. Their misfortune was, as I have previously observed (part I , chap. ii , no. 1), that they did not know how to rise from the consciousness of themselves to the knowledge of a new law. This was the work of Christianity.

A similar phenomenon has just taken place in Russia. We would be making a serious mistake if we imagined that the ukase of the Emperor Alexander, who conferred liberty, property and the exercise of civil rights on twenty-three million peasants, was an act of his good pleasure, a fact of gracious jurisdiction. The event had long been anticipated; the Emperor Nicholas, of such terrible memory, had entrusted its execution to his heir. The principle of this emancipation was in the consciousness of the rustic class, which, without abjuring its habits of patriarchy, without showing either envy or hatred towards its lords, nevertheless demanded more powerful guarantees, and insisted that the interest of the Empire was to admit it to political life.

A similar movement is taking place in England. Here too the working classes, following the example of those of France, have come to realize their position, their rights and their destiny. They club together, organize themselves, prepare for industrial competition and will not be long in claiming their political rights, in the decisive institution of universal suffrage. According to a writer whom I have before me, the working population of England, using a faculty guaranteed to them by English law, which the legislation of our country has thought fit to introduce among us recently, the faculty of *coalition*, would be regimented to the number of six million. Our workers' associations do not number a hundred thousand individuals!... What a race are these Anglo-Saxons, tenacious, indomitable, advancing to their goal slowly, but with certainty, and to whom, if one cannot always grant the honor of invention, we cannot very often refuse, in the great economic and social questions, the priority of realization!

The history of the French bourgeoisie, for about a century, bears witness, but from another point of view and in the opposite direction, to the same law. Early on, from the origin of feudalism, the urban populations, industrious and commercial, came to self-consciousness, — *sui-conscience*, please forgive me the word, — and in this way to the establishment of the communes. As long as the bourgeoisie faced the first two orders, clergy and nobility, this consciousness maintained itself vigorously: the bourgeois class distinguished itself, defined itself, felt itself, affirmed itself by its opposition to the privileged or noble classes. The convocation of the Estates General of 1789, where it first figured only in the third rank, decided its victory. From this moment, the clergy and nobility were politically nothing; the third estate, according to the expression of Sieyès, was everything. But notice this: from the day when the bourgeoisie became everything, when there no longer existed either class or caste outside of it that defined it, it began to lose little by little its sense of itself; its consciousness grew dark, and today it is close to extinguished. This is a fact that I observe, without claiming otherwise to make a theory of it.

What is the bourgeoisie since 89? What is its meaning? What is its existence worth? What is its humanitarian mission? What does it represent? What is there at the bottom of this equivocal, semi-liberal, semi-feudal consciousness? While the working masses, poor, ignorant, without influence and without credit, pose, assert themselves, speak of their emancipation, of their future, of a social transformation that must change their condition and emancipate all the workers of the globe, the bourgeoisie, which is rich, which possesses, which knows and which can, has nothing to say about itself; since it left its old environment, it seems without destiny, without historical role; it no longer has either thought or will. Alternately revolutionary and conservative, republican, legitimist, doctrinaire and *juste-milieu*; for a moment enamored with representative and parliamentary forms, then losing even intelligence; not knowing at this hour which system is its own, which government it prefers; esteeming power only for profits, clinging to it only through fear of the unknown and for the maintenance of its privileges; seeking in the public functions only a new field, new means of exploitation; eager for distinctions and salaries; as full of disdain for the proletariat as the nobility ever was for the common folk, the bourgeoisie has lost all character: it is no longer a class, powerful in numbers, work and genius, that desires and thinks, that produces and reasons, that commands and governs; it is a minority that traffics, that speculates, that agitates, a mob.

For sixteen years, it seems to have come to itself and regained consciousness; it would like to define itself again, to affirm itself, to recapture its influence. *Telum imbelles sine ictu!* No energy in consciousness, no authority in thought, no flame in the heart, nothing but the coldness of death and the impotence of senility. And notice this. To whom does the contemporary bourgeoisie owe this effort on itself, these demonstrations of vain liberalism, this false renaissance in which the Legal Opposition would perhaps lead people to believe, if their original vice were not known? To whom can we relate this glimmer of

reason and moral sense, which does not enlighten and will not revive the bourgeois world? Only to the manifestations of this young consciousness that denies the new feudalism; to the affirmation of this working mass that has decidedly taken a foothold on the old employers; to the demand of these workers to whom inept politicians deny, at the very moment when they receive their political mandate, capacity!...

Whether the bourgeoisie knows it or not, its role is finished; it cannot go far, and it cannot be reborn. But may it give up its soul in peace! The advent of the masses will not have the result of eliminating it, in the sense that the masses would replace the bourgeoisie in its political preponderance, consequently in its privileges, properties and enjoyments, while the bourgeoisie would replace the masses as its employees. The present distinction, moreover perfectly established, between the two classes, worker and bourgeois, is a simple revolutionary accident. Both must reciprocally absorb themselves into a higher consciousness; and the day when the plebs, constituted in the majority, will have seized power and proclaimed, according to the inspirations of the new right and the formulas of science, economic and social reform, will be the day of the final merger. It is on the basis of new data that the populations, which for a long time lived only on their antagonism, must henceforth define themselves, mark their independence and constitute their political life.

Chapter III.

Clarification of the working-class idea. — 1. Communist or Luxembourg system.

I read in issue No. 1 of *l'Association: Bulletin international des sociétés corporatives*, the following words:

“There is nothing more to say today about community, considered as an economic force. It is a truth that has become vulgar that ten, twenty, a hundred workers, working together and combining their labor and skills for a common purpose, produce more and better than ten, twenty, a hundred workers working alone. What is a newer question, and now more interesting, is whether a group of workers, forming spontaneously, can constitute itself, and release from its own bosom and by its own resources the initiating force that sets the workshop in motion, and the directing force that regulates its activity and provides for the commercial exploitation of its products.

“In other words, the economic problem that arises today, which it is a question of examining with particular care, of discussing under all its aspects and of thoroughly elucidating, is to know whether the working classes, already supported by recognized political rights, can aspire to autonomy even in labor and claim, like the classes that dispose of capital, the advantages of association.

“We are among those who think that the problem must receive an affirmative solution. We believe that the working classes can, too, form free groups, pool forces, appropriate the contract of society, constitute in a word, associations of which labor is the basis, and thus gain a living from their industrial and commercial autonomy. We go so far as to be of the opinion that while awaiting the legislative reforms, which will one day or another have to complete their civil liberties, they can usefully, from today, practice on their own behalf the current texts of the legislation.”

If I am well informed, the passages that have just been read are not the idle phraseology of a lawyer; it is the collective thought, deliberated in council, of the hundred founders of the newspaper *l'Association*.

Following this masterly thought, will I be permitted, as a private individual, to add, as a corollary, that one of the things that matters most to the Workers' Democracy is, at the same time that it affirms its *Right* and releases its *Force*, to also posit its idea, I would say more, to produce its body of Doctrine, such as it is, so that the world learns at the same time that those who of their own fund possess the Right and the Power, also have, because of their intelligent and progressive practice, Knowledge. Such is the object that I have proposed to myself in this writing. I wanted, by a preparatory work, and subject to democratic opinion, to judge in the last resort, from now on to give to workers' emancipation the high sanction of science: not that I intend to impose on anyone my formulas, but convinced as I am that if science, especially that one which has taken for its object the spontaneous demonstrations and the thoughtful acts of the masses, does not

improvise itself, it has no less need, for its constitution of incessantly renewed synthetic outlines, which, by their personal character, compromise no principle, no interest.

After the blossoming of consciousness, that is to say of right, comes, therefore, in human collectivities, the revelation of the idea. This march is indicated by nature, and psychology explains it. Intelligence, in the thinking being, has sentiment as its basis and first condition. To know oneself, one must feel oneself: hence the care with which Power, in aristocratic and absolutist societies, pursues and represses popular gatherings, councils, assemblies, associations, reunions, in a word, everything that can excite consciousness in the lower classes. We want to prevent them from reflecting and consulting one another; for this the means is to prevent them from feeling themselves. They will be family, like horses, sheep, dogs; they will not know each other as a class, and hardly as a race. Let them remain impenetrable to the idea: unless a revelation comes to them from outside, their servitude may be prolonged indefinitely.

In France, the people, of the same blood and dignity as the bourgeoisie, having the same religion, the same mores, the same ideas, differing only in the economic relationship indicated by the words *capital* and *salariat*, the people, I say, found themselves standing up, in 1789, at the same time as the bourgeoisie. The burning of the Reveillon house, so many other acts of deplorable violence, testify that the people had the presentiment that the Revolution would not be accomplished primarily for their benefit as much as for that of the bourgeois class. From this all too well justified suspicion of the masses were born, alongside the *Feuillants*, the *Constitutionnels*, the *Girondins*, the *Jacobins*, etc., all bourgeois parties, the popular parties or sects known under the names of *Sans-Culottes*, *Maratistes*, *Hébertistes*, *Babouvistes*, which have acquired such terrible celebrity in history, but which, from 92 to 96, had at least the merit of giving the plebeian consciousness such a shock that since that moment it has not slept.

Then also began the work of repression against the people. As they could no longer stifle their feelings, attempts were made to contain it through strong discipline, strong power, war, labor, exclusion from political rights, ignorance, or else, failing the ignorance of which we blushed, a primary education that did not cause anxiety. Robespierre and his Jacobins, the Thermidorian faction after him, then the Directory, the Consulate, all the governments that have succeeded one another up to our time have made the policing of the masses, the *status quo* of the working classes, the object of their constant preoccupations. M. Guizot had shown himself to be relatively liberal: the two assemblies of the Republic were resolutely obscurantist. Insane conspiracy! The plebeian consciousness once awakened, the proletarian had only to open his eyes and prick up his ears to acquire his Idea; it would come to him through his own adversaries.

The first who posed the social question were not, in fact, the workers: they were scholars, philosophers, men of letters, economists, engineers, soldiers, former magistrates, deputies, merchants, heads of industry, landowners, who all at will began to point out the anomalies of the new society, and came imperceptibly to propose the most daring reforms.

For the record, let us mention the names of Sismondi, Saint-Simon, Fourier, Enfantin and his school, Pierre Leroux, Considerant, Just Muiron, Hippolyte Renaud, Baudet-Dulary, Eugène Buret, Cabet, Louis Blanc, Mesdames Rolland, Flora Tristan, etc. For several years the conservative bourgeoisie flattered themselves that the workers remained deaf to the provocations of these innovators: 1848 proved them wrong.

Modern socialism has had many schools; it was not founded as a sect or a church. The working classes gave themselves up to no master: Cabet, the dictator of the Icarians, had the sad experience of this in Nauvoo. They followed their inspiration, and are unlikely to give up on their own now. This is the guarantee of their success.

A social revolution, like that of 89, which the Workers' Democracy continues before our eyes, is a transformation that takes place spontaneously in the whole and in all parts of the body politic. It is a system that replaces another, a new organism that replaces a decrepit organization; but this substitution does not take place in an instant, like a man who changes his suit or cockade; it does not arrive at the command of a master who has his theory ready made, or at the dictation of a revelator. A truly organic revolution, the product of the universal life, though it has its messengers and executors, is really no one's work. It is an idea, at first elementary, which springs up like a germ, an idea that at the first moment does not offer anything remarkable, borrowed as it seems from vulgar wisdom, which suddenly, like the acorn buried in the earth, like the embryo in the egg, takes on an unexpected growth, and with its institutions fills the world.

History is full of such examples. Nothing could be simpler at first than the Roman idea: a patriciate, clientele, property. The whole system of the Republic, its politics, its agitations, its history flow from there. The same simplicity in the imperial idea: the patriciate placed definitively on the level of the plebs; all the powers united in the hands of an emperor, exploiting the world for the profit of the people, and placed under the hand of the praetorians. Out of this came the imperial hierarchy and centralization. Christianity begins in the same way: Unity and universality of religion, founded on the unity of God and Empire; intimate union of religion and morality; charity posed as an act of faith and as duty; the presumed author of this idea declared the son of God the Redeemer: that is the whole Christian idea. In 89, the Revolution arises again entirely in the *right of man*. By this right, the nation is sovereign, royalty a function, nobility abolished, religion an opinion *ad libitum*. — We know what development the religion of Christ and the rights of man have received in turn.

This is how it is with the worker-idea in the nineteenth century: it would have no legitimacy, no authenticity, it would be nothing, if it presented itself under other conditions.

So what happened? The People had acquired self-consciousness; they sensed themselves; the noise around them, because of them, had awakened their intelligence. A bourgeois revolution came to confer on them the enjoyment of political rights. Put, so to speak, on notice to release their thoughts without the help of interpreters, they followed

the logic of their situation. First, posing as a class henceforth separated from the bourgeoisie, the People tried to turn its own maxims against the latter; they made himself its imitator. Then, enlightened by failure and renouncing their first hypothesis, they sought their salvation in an original idea. Two currents of opinion have thus produced themselves in turn among the working masses, and still maintain a certain confusion there today. But such is the march of political conversions, the same as that of the human mind, the same as that of science. One sacrifices to prejudice, to routine, in order to arrive more surely at the truth. It is ridiculous for the opponents of workers' emancipation to make themselves the trophy of these divisions, as if they were not the condition of progress, the very life of humanity.

The system of Luxembourg, the same basically as those of Cabet, R. Owen, the Moravians, Campanella, Morus, Plato, the first Christians, etc., a communist, governmental, dictatorial, authoritarian, doctrinaire system, starts from the principle that the individual is essentially subordinate to the community; that from the community alone he holds his right and his life; that the citizen belongs to the State like the child to the family; that he is in its power and possession, *in manu*, and that he owes it submission and obedience in all things.

By virtue of this fundamental principle of collective sovereignty and individual subalternization, the school of Luxembourg tends, in theory and in practice, to reduce everything to the State or, what amounts to the same thing, to the community: labor, industry, property, commerce, public instruction, wealth, as well as legislation, justice, police, public works, diplomacy and war, to then all be distributed and apportioned, in the name of the community or of the State, to each citizen, member of the extended family, according to his aptitudes and his needs.

I was saying earlier that the first movement, the first thought of the worker democracy, seeking its own law and posing as the antithesis to the bourgeoisie, must have been to turn its own maxims against the latter: this is what emerges at first glance from an examination of the communist system.

What is the fundamental principle of the old society, bourgeois or feudal, revolutionized or by divine right? It is *authority*, either that one makes it come from the sky or that one deduces it with Rousseau from the national collectivity. Thereby said in turn, so did the Communists. They reduce everything to the sovereignty of the people, to the right of the collectivity; their notion of power or the state is absolutely the same as that of their former masters. Whether the state is titled empire, monarchy, republic, democracy or community, it is obviously always the same thing. For the men of this school, the rights of man and of the citizen depend entirely on the sovereignty of the people; his very freedom is an emanation from it. The Communists of Luxemburg, those of Icaria, etc., can with a clear conscience take the oath to Napoleon III: their profession of faith is in agreement, in principle, with the Constitution of 1852; it is even much less liberal.

From the political order let us pass to the economic order. From whom, in the old society, did the individual, noble or bourgeois, derive his qualities, possessions, privileges, endowments and prerogatives? From the law, and ultimately from the sovereign. With regard to property, for example, it was quite possible, first under the regime of Roman law, then under the feudal system, lastly under the inspiration of the ideas of 89, to allege reasons of convenience, of appropriateness, of transition, of public order, of domestic mores, of industry itself and of progress: property always remained a concession of the State, the sole natural owner of the soil, as representative of the national community. So did the Communists again: for them the individual was supposed, in principle, to hold from the State all his property, faculties, functions, honors, even talents, etc. The only difference was in the application. By reason or by necessity, the former State had more or less withdrawn; a multitude of families, noble and bourgeois, had more or less emerged from the primitive joint possession and had formed, so to speak, small sovereignties within the great one. The aim of communism was to bring back into the state all these fragments of its domain; so that the democratic and social revolution, in the system of Luxembourg, would be, from the point of view of principle, only a restoration, which means a retrogradation.

Thus, like an army that has taken away the enemy's guns, communism has done nothing but turn its own artillery against the owners' army. Always the slave aped the master, and the democrat cribbed from the autocrat. We will see new proofs of it.

As a means of realization, independent of the public force which it could not yet dispose of, the party of Luxembourg affirmed and advocated *association*. The idea of *association* is not new in the economic world; moreover, it is the States of divine right, old and modern, that founded the most powerful associations and gave their theories. Our bourgeois legislation (civil and commercial codes) recognizes several kinds and species. What have the Luxembourg theoreticians added to it? Absolutely nothing. Sometimes the association was for them a simple *community of goods and gains* (art. 1836 et seq.); sometimes it was made a simple participation or *cooperation*, or a general and limited partnership; more often we have understood by workers' associations, powerful and numerous companies of workers, subsidized, sponsored and directed by the State, attracting to them the multitude of workers, monopolizing work and enterprises, invading all industry, all culture, all commerce, all functions, all property; emptying private establishments and farms; crushing, wrecking around them all individual action, all separate possession, all life, all liberty, all fortune, exactly as the great anonymous companies do today.

It is thus that, in the conceptions of Luxembourg, the public domain was to bring about the end of all property; the association brings about the end of all the separate associations or their resorption into one; competition turned against itself, leading to the suppression of competition; collective liberty, finally, encompassing all corporate, local and particular liberties.

As for the government, its guarantees and its forms, the question was treated accordingly: no more than association and the right of man was it distinguished by anything new; it was still the old formula, except for the communist exaggeration. The political system, according to the theory of Luxembourg, can be defined: A compact democracy, apparently based on the dictatorship of the masses, but where the masses have only enough power to ensure universal servitude, according to the following formulas and maxims, borrowed from ancient absolutism:

Undivided power;

Absorbent centralization;

Systematic destruction of any individual, corporate and local thought, deemed to be divisive;

Inquisitorial Police;

Abolition or at least restriction of the family, *a fortiori* of inheritance;

Universal suffrage organized in such a way as to serve as a perpetual sanction to this anonymous tyranny, by the preponderance of mediocre or even worthless subjects, always in the majority, over capable citizens and independent characters, declared suspect and naturally in small numbers. The school of Luxembourg declared it loudly: it is against the *aristocracy of abilities*.

Among the partisans of communism, there are some who, less intolerant than the others, do not absolutely proscribe property, industrial liberty, independent and initiating talent; who do not prohibit, at least by express laws, the groups and meetings formed by the nature of things, speculations and particular fortunes, not even competition with the working class societies, privileged by the State. But these dangerous influences are combated by devious means; they are discouraged by annoyances, vexations, taxes and a host of auxiliary means of which the old governments provide the types, and which the morality of the State authorizes:

Progressive tax;

Inheritance tax;

Capital tax;

Income tax ;

Sumptuary tax;

Tax on free industries.

On the other hand, franchises to associations;

Assistance to associations;

Incentives, grants to associations;

Retirement institutions for disabled workers, members of associations, etc., etc.

It is, as we see, and as we have said, the old system of privilege turned against its beneficiaries; aristocratic exploitation and despotism applied to the profit of the masses; the *servant state* become the cash cow of the proletariat and fed in the meadows and pastures of the proprietors; in short, a simple displacement of favoritism; the classes from above

thrown down and those from below hoisted up; as for ideas, liberties, justice, science, nothing.

There is just one point on which communism separates itself from the bourgeois state system: the latter affirms the family, which communism tends inevitably to abolish. Now, why did communism declare itself against the institution of marriage, inclining with Plato and the first Christian sects to free love? It is because marriage, because the family is the fortress of individual liberty; because that Liberty is the stumbling block of the State, and because in order to consolidate itself, deliver itself from all opposition, embarrassment and hindrance, Communism has seen no other way than to bring back to the State, to give back to the community, along with everything else, women and children. This is what is still called by another name: *Emancipation of women*. Even in its deviations, we see that communism lacks invention and is reduced to a pastiche. A difficulty presents itself: communism does not resolve it, it slices through it.

Such is in summary the system of Luxembourg, a system that, let us not be surprised, must retain numerous partisans, since it is reduced to a simple counterfeiting and reprisal of the masses, substituted in rights, favors, privileges and employments for the bourgeoisie; a system whose analogues and models are found in the despotisms, aristocracies, patriciates, priesthoods, communities, hospitals, hospices, barracks and prisons of all countries and all centuries.

The contradiction of this system is therefore flagrant; this is why it has never been able to generalize and establish itself. It constantly crumbled at the slightest try.

Imagine for a moment the power in the hands of the Communists, the organized *workers' associations*, the tax aimed at the classes that today the taxman saves while he presses the others, and all the rest to match. Soon every individual possessing some fortune will be ruined; the State will be the master of everything. And after? Is it not clear that the community, overloaded with all the unfortunates whose fortunes it will have destroyed or confiscated, encumbered with all the labor previously left to free entrepreneurs, gathering less strength than it destroys, will not suffice for a quarter of its task; that the deficit and the famine will bring about a general revolution in less than a fortnight, that everything will have to be started over, and that to start over we will proceed by means of a restoration?

Such, however, is the antediluvian absurdity that has crawled for thirty centuries, like a snail on flowers, through societies; that seduced the finest geniuses and the most illustrious reformers: Minos, Lycurgus, Pythagoras, Plato, the Christians and their founders of orders; later Campanella, Morus, Babeuf, Robert Owen, the Moravians, etc.

However, there are two things that we must note in favor of communism: the first is that, as a first hypothesis, it was indispensable to the blossoming of the true idea; the second, that instead of dividing, as the bourgeois system did, *politics* and *political economy* and making them two distinct and contrary orders, it affirmed the identity of their

principles and tried to carry out their synthesis. We will return to this subject in the following chapters.

Chapter IV.

2. Mutualist system, or system of the Manifesto. — Spontaneity of the idea of mutuality in the modern masses. — Definition.

What it is important to note in popular movements is their perfect spontaneity. Do the people obey an excitement or suggestion from outside or rather a natural inspiration, intuition or conception? That is what we don't know how to determine with too much care in the study of revolutions. Without doubt the ideas that have agitated the masses in all eras were hatched previously in the brain of some thinker; in terms of ideas, opinions, beliefs and errors, the priority has never been with the multitudes, and it could not be otherwise today. The priority, in every act of mind, is with individuality; the relation of the terms indicates it. But it is far from every thought grasped by the individual that later grips populations; among the ideas that follow those, there are not many that are even just and useful; and we say precisely that what is especially important to the philosophical historian is to observe how the people attach themselves to certain ideas rather than others, generalize them, develop them in their manner, as institutions and customs that they follow traditionally, until they fall into the hands of the legislators and upholders of the law, who make of them in their turn some articles of law and rules for the courts.

Thus, it is with the idea of mutuality as with that of community; it is as old as the social state. Some speculative minds have glimpsed, here and there, its organic power and revolutionary significance; never, until 1848, had it assumed the importance and the role it really seemed on the eve of playing. In this, it had remained far behind the communist idea, which, after casting a great glare in antiquity and the Middle Ages, thanks to the eloquence of the sophists, the fanaticism of the sectarians and the power of the convents, has seemed today to be gathering new force.

The principle of mutuality was first expressed with a certain philosophical loftiness and a reformer's intent, in that famous maxim that all sages have repeated, and that our Constitutions of the year II and year III, following their example, place in the *Declaration of Rights and Duties of the Man and Citizen*:

“Do not do unto others what you would not have done to you;

“Do constantly to others the good that you would receive from them.”

This double-edged principle, as it were, admired through the ages and never contradicted, *engraved*, says the writers of the Constitution of the Year III, *by nature in all hearts*, supposes that the subject to whom the intimation is made, 1) is free; 2) that he has the discernment of good and evil, in other words, that he has justice within him. Two things, I mean Liberty and Justice, that place us very far beyond the idea of authority, whether collective or from divine right, on which we have just seen that the system of Luxembourg is based.

So far this fine maxim has been for the people, in the language of moralist theologians, only a kind of counsel. Because of the importance it receives today and by the manner in which the working masses demand that it is applied, it tends to become a precept, to take a decidedly binding character, in a word, to achieve the *force of law*.

Let us first note the progress accomplished in this regard in the working classes. I read in the Manifesto of the Sixty:

“Universal suffrage has made us adults politically, but it still remains to us to emancipate ourselves socially. The liberty that the Third Estate was able to win with so much vigor [...] must be extended in France [...] to all the citizens. Equal political right necessarily implies an equal social right.”

Let us note this manner of reasoning: “Without social equality, political equality is only a vain phrase; universal suffrage is a contradiction.” We set aside the syllogistic and proceed by assimilation: Political equality = social equality. That turn of mind is new; furthermore it supposes, as a first principle, individual liberty.

“The bourgeoisie, our elder brother in emancipation, had, in 89, to absorb the nobility and to destroy unjust privileges; it is a question for us, not of destroying the rights that the middle classes rightly enjoy, but of winning the same liberty of action.”

And farther along:

“Let no one accuse us of dreaming of agrarian laws, chimerical equality, which would put each on a Procrustean bed, division, maximum, forced taxation, etc., etc. No! It is high time to be done with these slanders propagated by our enemies and adopted by the ignorant. *Liberty* [...], *credit*, and *solidarity*, these are our dreams.”

It concludes with these words:

“The day when they (these dreams) are realized, [...] there will be no more bourgeois nor proletarians, no bosses nor workers.”

All this writing is a bit dubious. In 1789 we did not strip the nobility of its property; the confiscations that came later were an act of war. We were content to abolish certain privileges incompatible with right and liberty, which the nobility had unjustly assumed; abolition determined its absorption. Now, it goes without saying that the proletariat does not demand any more the stripping of the middle class of its acquired property, or of any of the rights it *justly* enjoys. We only want to realize, under perfectly legal names of *liberty to labor*, *credit*, and *solidarity*, some reforms whose result will be to abolish... What? The rights, privileges, and what have you, that the bourgeoisie has enjoyed exclusively; by this means of making it so that there is neither bourgeois nor proletarians, that is to say to absorb it itself.

In short: as the bourgeoisie did to the nobility during the Revolution of 1789, so it shall be done to them by the proletariat in the new revolution; and since in 1789 there had been

no injustice committed, in the new revolution, which has taken its elder for a model, there will not be any either.

That said, the Manifesto develops its thought with a growing energy.

“We are not represented, we who refuse to believe that poverty is a divine institution. Charity, a Christian virtue, has radically proven and has recognized itself its powerlessness as a social institution. [...] In the times of the sovereignty of the people, of universal suffrage, it is no longer, can no longer be more than a private virtue.... We do not want to be *clients* or to be *assisted*; we want to become equals; we reject alms; we want justice.”

What do you say to that declaration? As you have done for yourselves, bourgeois, our elders, so we want it done for us. Is this clear?

“Enlightened by experience, we do not hate men, but we want to change things.”

That is as decisive as it is radical. And the so-called Democratic Opposition has hounded some of the candidacies preceded by a similar profession of faith!...

Thus the Sixty, by their dialectic as well as by their ideas, escape from the old communist and bourgeois routine. They do not want privileges or exclusive rights; they have abandoned that materialist equality that puts man on the bed of Procrustes; they assert the *liberty of labor*, condemned by the Luxembourg in the question of piecework; that accept, although also condemned by the Luxembourg as spoliatrice, *competition*; they proclaim at once *solidarity* and *responsibility*; they want no more *clienteles*, no more *hierarchies*. What they want is an equality of dignity, incessant agent of economic and social equalization; they reject *alms* and all the institutions of *charity*; in its place, they demand justice.

Most of them are members of the societies for *mutual credit*, for *mutual aid*, of which they teach us that *thirty-five function secretly* in the capital; managers of industrial societies, from which communism has been banished and which are founded on the principle of *participation*, recognized by the Code, and on that of mutuality.

From the point of view of the jurisdictions, the same workers demand workers' chambers and chambers for employers completing, checking and balancing one another; *executive syndicates* and *prud'hommies*; in sum, an entire *reorganization of industry under the jurisdiction of all those who compose it*.⁷

In all that, they say, universal suffrage is their supreme rule. One of its first and most powerful effects must be, they say, to reconstitute, on new relations, the natural groups of labor, the *corporations ouvrières*. — That word *corporations* is one of those that most accuse the workers: let us not be afraid of it. Like them, let us not judge by words; let us examine things.

That is enough, I think, to show that the mutualist idea has penetrated, in a new and original way, the working classes; that they have appropriated it; that they have more or

⁷ Response to an article in the *Siècle*, March 14, 1864, by four workers.

less deepened it, that they apply it with reflection, that they anticipate its whole development, in short, that they have made it their faith and their new religion. Nothing is more authentic than this movement, which is still very weak, but is destined to absorb not only a nobility of a few hundred thousand souls, but a bourgeoisie who number in the millions, and to regenerate the whole of Christian society.

Let us now see the idea in itself.

The French word *mutuel*, *mutualité*, *mutuation*, which has for synonyms *réci-proque*, *réciprocité*, comes from the Latin *mutuum*, which means (consumer) loan, and in a broader sense, exchange. We know that in the consumer loan the object loaned is consumed by the borrower, who gives the equivalent, either of the same nature or in any other form. Suppose that the lender becomes a borrower on his side, you would have a mutual service, and consequently an exchange: such is the logical link that has given the same name to two different operations. Nothing is more elementary than this notion: so I would not insist any more on the logical and grammatical side. What interests us is to know how on these ideas of mutuality, reciprocity, exchange and Justice were replaced by those of authority, community or charity, one has come, in politics and political economy, to construct a system of relations that tends to nothing less than fundamentally changing the social order from top to bottom.

By what title, first, and under what influence has the idea of mutuality taken possession of minds?

We have seen previously how the school of Luxembourg understands the relation of the man and the citizen with regard to society and the State: according to them, that relation is one of subordination. Hence, the authoritarian and communist organization.

To this governmental conception comes to oppose itself that of the partisans of individual liberty, according to which society should be considered not as a hierarchy of functions and powers, but as a system of equilibrations between free forces, wherein each is assured of enjoying the same rights provided they perform the same duties, to obtain the same benefits in exchange for the same services, a system therefore essentially egalitarian and liberal, which excludes any sense of wealth, rank and class. Now, here is how these anti-authoritarians or liberals reason and conclude.

To that governmental conception is opposed that of the partisans of individual liberty, according to which society must be considered, not as a hierarchy of functions and faculties, but as a system of equilibrations between free forces, in which each is insured of enjoying the same right on the condition of fulfilling the same duties, of obtaining the same advantages in exchange for the same services, a system that is, consequently, essentially egalitarian and liberal, which excludes any distinction of fortunes, ranks and classes. Now, this is how these anti-authoritarians or liberals reason and conclude.

They maintain that human nature being the highest expression in the universe, not to mention the embodiment of universal justice, the man and the citizen holding his right directly from the dignity of his nature, just as later he will take his welfare directly from

his individual labor and the good use of his faculties, his consideration of the free exercise of his talents and virtues. They say then that the State is nothing but the result of the union freely formed between equal, independent subjects, all upholders of the law; that thus it only represents the grouped liberties and interests; that any dispute between the Power and any particular citizen is reduced to a debate between citizens; that consequently there is not, in the society, any other prerogative than liberty, no other supremacy than that of Right. Authority and charity, they say, have had their day; in their place we want justice.

From these premises, radically contrary to those of the Luxembourg, they decide on an organization, on the largest scale, of the mutualist principle. — Service for service, they say, product for product, loan for loan, insurance for insurance, credit for credit, security for security, guarantee for guarantee, etc.: such is the law. It is the ancient talion, *an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life*, somehow returned, transported from the criminal law and the atrocious practices of the vendetta into economic law, the works of labor and the good offices of free fraternity. Hence all the institutions of mutualism: mutual insurance, mutual credit, mutual aid, mutual education; reciprocal guarantees of markets, exchange and labor, of the good quality and fair price of goods, etc. That is what mutualism claims to do, with the aid of certain institutions, a State principle, a State law, I would even venture to say a kind of State religion, as easy to practice for the citizens as it is advantageous; which requires neither police nor repression, nor compression, and can in no case, for anyone, become a cause of disappointment and ruin.

Here, the laborer is no longer a serf of the State, engulfed in the ocean of community; he is a free man, truly sovereign, acting on his own initiative and individual responsibility; certain to obtain a fair price for his products and services, sufficiently remunerative, and meet among his fellow citizens, for all the objects he consumes, loyalty and the most perfect security. Similarly the State, the Government is no longer a sovereign; authority is not here the antithesis of liberty: State government, power, authority, etc., are expressions used to designate, from a different point of view, liberty itself; some general formulas borrowed from the ancient language, by which is meant, in some cases, the sum, union, identity and solidarity of interests.

Therefore there is no need to ask ourselves, as in the bourgeois system or that of Luxembourg, if the State, the Government or the community must dominate the individual or be subordinate to him; if the prince is more than the citizen or the citizen more than the prince; if the authority takes precedence over liberty, or if it is its servant: all these questions are pure nonsense. Government, authority, State, community and corporations, classes, companies, cities, families, citizens, in short, groups and individuals, legal persons and real persons, all are equal before the law, which alone, sometimes through the mechanism of this one, sometimes through the ministry of that, rules, judges and governs: *Despotès ho nomos*.

Whoever says mutuality suppose sharing of the soil, division of properties, independence of labor, separation of industries, specialization of functions, individual and collective responsibility, as labor is individualized or grouped; reduction to the minimum of general costs, suppression of parasitism and poverty. — Whoever says community, on the other hand, says hierarchy, indivision, says centralization, supposes multiplicity of jurisdictions, complication of machines, subordination of wills, loss of forces, development of unproductive functions, indefinite increase of general costs and, consequently, the creation of parasitism and the growth of poverty.

CHAPTER V

Historical destiny of the Idea of mutualism.

The idea of mutuality leads to prodigious consequences, among them the social unity of the human race. Jewish messianism made that dream: none of the four great monarchies announced by Daniel fulfilled the program. Everywhere the weakness of the State was because of its extent: the end of the Roman conquest was the signal for the grand dissolution. The emperors, by dividing the purple, went on their own ahead of the reestablishment of nationalities. The Church did not succeed any better than Cyrus, Alexander and the Caesars: the catholicity of the Gospel does not embrace even half of the population of the globe. Now, that which could not be accomplished by the power of the great empires, nor by the zeal of religion, the logic of mutualism tends to accomplish; and, as it proceeds, from low to high, beginning with the servile classes and taking society in reverse, one can predict what that logic will accomplish.

Every society forms, reforms or transforms itself with the aid of an idea. Thus, one has seen in the past, and we still see in our days the idea of paternity found the ancient aristocracies and monarchies: patriarchate or oriental despotism, Roman patriciate, Russian czarism, etc.; — the Pythagorean fraternity to produce the republics of Crete, Sparta, Krotona, etc. — We know, from having practiced them, Praetorian autocracy, papal theocracy, the feudalism of the Middle Ages, bourgeois constitutionalism. And why not name here Fourier's passional attraction, Enfantin's sacerdotal androgyny, the epicurean idealism of our Romantics, Comte's positivism, the Malthusian anarchy or negative liberty of the economists? All these ideas aspire to render themselves dominant: their pretension to omniarchy is not in doubt.

But, in order to found that new and unfailing unity, a necessary, universal, absolute principle is required, anterior and superior to every social constitution, which cannot be separated from it without its instantaneous collapse. We find this principle in the idea of mutuality, which is nothing other than that of a synallagmatic justice, applying it to all human relations and in all the circumstances of life.

It is a fact well worth remarking on that justice, up to now, has remained seemingly alien or indifferent to many things that require its intervention. Religion, politics, metaphysics itself relegated it to the second or third rank; each nation has provided it with a protective deity named Dominion, Wealth, Love, Courage, Eloquence, Poetry or Beauty; none has come to think that Right was the largest and most powerful of the gods, superior even to Destiny. Justice is the daughter, at most the wife, albeit the divorced wife, of Jupiter, a mere attribute of Jehovah.

At the origin of societies, there was nothing in them but what was natural. Under the influence of imagination and sensitivity, man first affirms the beings that affect him; ideas only came to him much later; and among the ideas, the most concrete, the most complex,

the most individualized appeared first of all; the most universal and the simplest, which are at the same time the most abstract, only appeared last. The child begins by loving and respecting his father and mother; from there he raises himself to the conception of the patriarch, prince, pontiff, king or czar; from these figures he gradually draws the idea of authority: it would take him thirty centuries to conceive of society, the great family of which he is a part, as the incarnation of Right.

It is clear, however, that whatever the principle on which the city has been established, whatever name it gives its sovereign divinity, it will only subsist through Justice. Remove Justice and society is corrupted; the State collapses in a moment. The most paternal of governments, if justice is lacking, is only an odious and insupportable tyranny: such has been, until the reforms begun by Alexander II, the power of the czars. It is the same with every other idea, taken as the basis of a social constitution: it cannot occur, not even cut off from right, while right subsists by itself, and has absolutely no need of assistance from anything else.

Now, if Justice is implied by every political system, if it is its supreme condition, it follows that it is the very formula of society, it is the greatest of gods, its worship is the highest of religions and its study the theology par excellence. It gives the seal to science and art: and all truth, all beauty that is proposed against or apart from Justice, will become in this way lies and illusion.

A religion conceived, by hypothesis, without justice, would be a monstrosity; an unjust God is the synonym of Satan, Ahriman, the genius of evil; a revelation, even accompanied by miracles, that did not aim at the perfecting of man by Justice, should be attributed — and it is the Church itself that teaches it — to the Spirit of darkness; a Love without respect is shamelessness; and every art, every ideal, that claims to be emancipated from justice and morals, should be declared an art of corruption, an ideal of shame.

Search now in the multitude of human ideas, scan the domain of sacred and profane science, and you will not find a second idea like Justice. Well, it is that Justice that the workers' Democracy, in its wholly spontaneous, but still murky intuition, attests and invokes today under the name of mutuality. This new order, which the French Revolution, according to popular tradition, was called to found by reuniting all peoples in a confederation of confederations, there it is; this religion of the future, which should complete the Gospels, is the religion of Justice.

Jesus, like Moses, once spoke of the principle of mutuality, and especially of the *mutuum*; then he never returned to it. Neither of them could have done more.

In the times of Moses, the Hebrew masses could only be gripped by an emotional idea, paternal authority or patriarchate, connecting itself to the authority of the Most High God, celestial father of Israel. This is why the Mosaic law, while desiring Justice, subordinated it in the application of paternal, royal and pontifical authority, to the worship of Jehovah.

In the times of Jesus, the clergy, the royalty and the aristocracy had abused; nevertheless, the people had not raised themselves to the spirituality of justice: the apostle himself declared it to us. For paternal and priestly authority, become prévaricatrice and pagan, Jesus substituted fraternal charity; he founded the evangelical fellowship, the Church.

But Jesus himself has announced that after him would come a third person, the Paraclet, in Latin *advocatus*, the advocate, or as the men of law might say, the Justicier. This Paraclet, whose coming the apostles awaited, whom we have awaited from century to century, and about whom we have poured out so many reveries, why would I not say that we have a manifestation of it today in the regenerative movement of the modern masses? The same reason that made the prophet of Nazareth understand, eighteen centuries ago, that the charity he preached was not the last word of the Gospel, is the one that illuminates our Democracy, when, expressed through the mouth of the Sixty, it says to us: "We reject alms; we want justice."

I regret holding the reader so long on these somewhat taxing questions. But, I repeat, this is a revolution that runs through the veins of the people, the most profound and decisive that has ever been seen, about which I would be ashamed to flutter and be witty, when we do not have too much of all the seriousness of our intelligence. Let those who need to be entertained when one speaks to them of their greatest interest settle for reading, every day after dinner, ten of my pages, and then let them go to the theater or take their paper. As for me, I declare it, it is impossible for me to gamble with justice, nor joke with poverty and crime. If sometimes a satiric tone mingles with my reformist exposition, it is not my fault; blame my indignation as an honest man.

After having followed as closely as we have the emergence of mutualist the idea, it is appropriate to examine its nature and scope. If I am not as brief as I would like, I will at least try to be clear and conclusive.

Chapter VI.

Power of the mutualist idea; universality of applications. — How the most elementary principle of morals tends to become the foundation and economic right and the pivot of new institutions. — First example: insurance.

The working classes have not delivered up their secret. We know from that that having been stopped for a moment in 1848, by the ideas of life in common, labor in common, family-state or servant-state, they have abandoned that utopia; that, on the other hand, they have not come down with less force against the system of *juste-milieu* politics and economic anarchy of the bourgeois, and that their thought is concentrated on a single principle, equally applicable, in their thought, to the organization of the State and the legislation of interests, the principle of mutuality.

This idea presented in broad daylight, we no longer need to question the working classes on their thoughts for the future. Their practice has not advanced much in six months; as for the doctrine, the principle being given, we know it, with the aid of logic, as well as they. As well and better than they, we can, by reasoning, interrogate the universal consciousness, reveal its trends and put their destiny before the eyes of the masses. We can even, if they were to go astray, note their contradictions and inconsistencies, and consequently their mistakes; then, applying their idea to every political, economic or social question, draw up for them, in case they lack one, a plan of action or formulaire. This will indicate to them in advance the conditions for their success and the causes of their losses, and write in advance, in the form of a dialectical deduction, their history. Civilization is today. Humanity begins to know itself and possess itself enough to calculate its long-term existence: a precious source of consolation for those saddened by the brevity of life, and who would at least know how the world will go a hundred years after their death.

Let us take up again this idea of mutuality, and let us see what, under the pressure of events and according to the laws of logic, the worker Democracy is ready to do.

Let us first observe that there is mutuality and mutuality. You can return evil for evil, as we return good for good. We can return risk for risk, chance for chance, competition for competition, indifference for indifference, alms for alms. I consider the mutual aid societies, as they exist today, as simple transitions to the mutualist régime, still belonging to the category of charitable foundations, of true surcharges that the worker must impose if they do not wish to be exposed to desertion in case of sickness or unemployment. I put on the same line the pawnshops, charitable lotteries, savings and retirement funds, life insurance, the nurseries, asylums, orphanages, hospitals, hospices, foundling homes, *quinze-vingts*, retirement homes, public *chauffoirs*, etc. We can already see, by what the charity of Christ did or tried to do, what task falls to modern mutuality. Possible that these establishments will not disappear for awhile, so deep is the social evil, so slow are the transformations that aim at the improvement of masses so numerous and so poor. But

these institutions are no less monuments to poverty, and the Manifesto of the Sixty has told us: "We reject alms; we want justice."

The true mutuality, we have said, is that which gives, promises and assures service for service, value for value, credit for credit, guarantee for guarantee; which, substituting everywhere a rigorous right for a languid charity, the certainty of contract for the arbitrary nature of exchanges, dismissing every mere wish, every possibility of agiotage, reducing to its simplest expression every random element, making risk common, tends systematically to organize the very principle of justice in a series of positive duties and, so to speak, of material pledges.

Let us clarify our thought with some examples. I begin with the best known and the most simple.

Everyone of has heard of the companies providing insurance against fire, hail, epizootic, the hazards of navigation, etc. What is less known is that these companies are in general highly profitable: some of them bring their shareholders, 50, 100 or even 150 percent interest on the capital deposited.

The reason for this is easy to understand.

"An insurance company does not need capital: there is no work to do, no merchandise to see, no workforce to pay. Some proprietors, as great a number as you wish, — more will be better, — agree among themselves, each in proportion to the values that he wishes to insure, to cover one another reciprocally for the losses that could come to them by force majeure or unforeseen circumstances: this is what we call mutual insurance. In this system, the premium to be paid by each associate is only calculated at the expiration of the year, or of still longer periods, according to the rarity or mediocrity of the casualties. So it is variable, and does not produce profit for anyone.

"Or else capitalists gather and offer to individuals to reimburse them, with an annual premium of x per 1000, the amount of the possible damage caused in their properties by fire, hail, shipwrecks, epizootic, in a word by the disastrous object of the insurance, that is what is called insurance at fixed price." (*Manuel du spéculateur à la Bourse*, by P.-J. Proudhon and G. Duchêne, Paris, 1857, Garnier frères.)

Now, no one is bound to guarantee another for anything, and as *supply* and *demand* are the law of the commercial world, we understand that the companies, in coming to an agreement among themselves, calculate their risks and their premiums so that the losses will be covered at least two times by the profits, double or triple their capital each year.

So how is it that mutual insurance has not long since replace all the others? Ah! Is it because there are very few individuals who want to concern themselves with the things that interest everyone, but return nothing to anyone; it is because the government, which could take that initiative, refuses it, as if the thing did not concern it, because, it said, it is a matter of political economy, not of Government; let us say instead, because it would harm some companies of parasites, fat men, living large on the tribute paid to them by the insured; it is finally because the attempts that have been made, either outside of the

sanction of the State or on a very small scale, at mutual insurance, either by the state itself, but with a view to sinecureism, have finished by repelling the most zealous, so well that the institution has remained in the planning stage, mutual insurance, abandoned by public authority, to whom it belongs to take it in hand, is still only an idea.

“When the spirit of initiative and the sentiment of collectivity that slumbers in France take flight, insurance will become a contract between citizens, an association whose earnings will profit all the insured and not a few capitalists, earnings that are transformed into a reduction of the premiums to be paid. That idea is already produced, in the public and in the deliberative assemblies, in the shape of insurance by the State.”⁸ (*Ibid.*)

What there is to fear here, as always, is that the Government, under the pretext of public utility, will create a great monopoly, as it has done with the Railways, Gas, Omnibuses, Horse-Drawn Cabs, etc.; monopoly which would serve to endow more than one faithful servant whom the scarcity of the Treasury does not allow to reward for his long services. Thus in the regime of mutual insolidarity in which we live, we go from the exploitation of the companies to exploitation by the Government, all because we do not know how to get along, and that it pleases us better to see some of us grow rich by the privilege of protecting ourselves against spoliation and pauperism.

These facts are well known, and I do not pretend to teach the reader anything in this respect. So what are the supporters of mutuality asking for?

They willingly recognize, with the economists of the purely liberal school, that liberty is the first of economic forces; that whatever can be accomplished by it alone must be left to it; but that where freedom cannot reach, common sense, justice, the general interest command the intervention of collective force, which here is none other than mutuality itself; that the public offices were established precisely for these sorts of needs, and that their mission is for no other purpose. They therefore intend that their principle, admitted in theory, with regard to insurance, by everyone, but hitherto discarded in practice by the negligence or connivance of governments, finally receives its full and entire application. They point out in the opposite system this triple evil, which their decided will is to make disappear as soon as they have the power:

1. A principle of public and economic right violated;
2. A portion of the public fortune sacrificed in the form of a bonus;
3. With the help of this bonus, a corrupting parasitism created and maintained.

We are not at the end. Iniquity attracts iniquity. A fact that it would be difficult for us to prove because we have not gone through the books of the Companies, but which

⁸ Some years ago, a complete system of mutual insurance was organized by M. PERRON, division chief in the Ministry of State, and presented to the public under the protection of the Government. Great was the murmur among the Companies. I do not know what happened, if the Government withdrew its protection, if the new administration lacked the skill, or if it was an effect of the intrigues of these rival Companies: in any event, the new system was abandoned, the operations liquidated, and it is no longer in question.

everything leads us to consider as certain, is that in matters of insurance the small pay for the big, absolutely as in taxation. Indeed, claims are proportionally rarer for small apartments, small pieces of furniture, small industries, than for large factories and large stores, which does not prevent the premium, with the help of certain accessories, from being higher for insurance of the first category than for that of the second.

An abuse of another kind is that the Companies form between themselves for the keeping of the premiums a committee of understanding that is nothing other than a coalition of the kind formerly forbidden by law, and now authorized by a vote of the Legislative Body. Also while the Mutual Insurance Company would take from 0 fr. 15 c. per 1000, fixed premium companies take no less than 10.

But why are we talking about mutuality here? We are assured that the Companies constituted according to this principle tend much less to develop by the reduction of premiums than to make themselves similar to others by entering the paths of monopoly. We aim for capitalism. The voluntary inertia of the latter is the true support of the former.

The insurance premium, say the mutualists, is in the present conditions, for the most part, only a tribute paid by the country to the general insolidarity. A day will come when the mere fact of the possibility of such speculations will be blamed as a prevarication and offense to any government that neglects to such an extent the protection of the general interests.

CHAPTER VII

Economic law of supply and demand. — Correction of that law by the principle of mutuality.

What we have just said about insurance could serve as the model for a general critique of the economic world. Indeed, all is found here to be in violation of justice by reason of contempt for the principle of mutuality; abandonment of the rights of society through government indifference; extortion of the public fortune in the form of subsidies; inequality and thus iniquity in transactions, where we see the small sacrificed to the great, the poor pay more than the rich; creation of monopolies and annihilation of competition; parallel development of parasitism and poverty.

The hypocrisy of our philanthropists strives to seek the causes of pauperism and crime: it has not found them; it was too simple. These causes reduce to one alone: economic right violated everywhere. The remedy was no more difficult to discover: to return to economic right by observing the law of mutuality. I shall not tire of drawing the attention of the reader to this point until a full and whole conviction has been reached.

Earlier, in speaking of insurance, we have cited the law so often invoked of *supply* and of *demand*. To each petition for reform, conservative and Malthusian economics never fails to oppose the supreme law of *supply* and *demand*: it is its great warhorse, its last word. Thus, let us try to make the critique of it, and prove that all is not equally respectable and infallible in that famous law.

One designates by *supply* and *demand* the debate that takes place between two individuals, the one a seller, the other a buyer, over the price of a good, of a service, of a building or of any other value.

Political economy teaches, and it demonstrates, that the exact price of a product is an indeterminable quantity, varying from minute to minute; consequently that the price, not being able to be settled, remains more or less arbitrary; that it is a fiction, a convention.

The seller says: My merchandise is worth 6 fr., consequently I will supply it to you for that sum. — No, responds the seller: Your merchandise is only worth 4 fr.: I demand it at that price: it is up to you to see if it suits you to deliver it to me.

It may be that both parties are in good faith: in this case, respecting their own statement, they will separate without concluding anything, unless, by individual considerations, they come to split, as is commonly said, the difference, and by common accord fix the price of the thing at 5 fr.

But most often it is two knaves who seek to cheat each other reciprocally. The seller, who knows the cost of the fabrication of his merchandise and for what it can be used, says to himself that it is worth, for example, 5 fr. 50. But he is careful not to admit the truth. In the event that the state of the market, or the simplicity of the regular customer encourages it, he demands for it 6 fr. and even more: that is what one calls *overrating*. Similarly the

buyer, who knows his own need and breaks down the cost-price of the object, says to himself: That can be worth 5 fr.; but he hides and feigns to want to give only 4 fr., which is called *reduction*.

If both were sincere, they would quickly agree, one would say to the other: Tell me what you consider to be the fair price, and I in turn will do the same. That done, they would separate without doing anything, unless one succeeded in convincing the other of an error in his assessment. In no case would they try to supplant one another, the seller, by relying on the demander's need for the goods; the buyer, by speculating on the need felt by the seller to recoup his capital. Such a calculation, formulated in words with the accent of good faith, is, on one side or the other, disloyal and as dishonorable as a lie. It is therefore not true that the law of *supply* and *demand* is absolutely irrefutable, tainted as it almost always is by a double deceit.

It is in order to escape that ignominy, insupportable to all generous characters, that certain merchants and producers refuse to debate supply and demand, neither being able to bring themselves to lie nor tolerating someone trying to deceive them, or that by exaggerated discounting they are accused of overselling; he sells at fixed price: it is to be taken or left. Let a child present himself or a grown man, they will be treated in the same manner: the fixed price protects, among them, everyone.

It is certain that the sale at fixed price supposes more good faith, presents more dignity than the sale by bargaining. Suppose that all merchants and producers engaged in it, we would have, in supply and demand, mutuality. Without doubt the one who sells at fixed price can be mistaken about the value of the merchandise; but notice that he is restrained, from one side by competition, from the other, by the enlightened liberty of the buyers. No merchandise sells very long above its just price: if the contrary occurs, it is because, for some reason, the consumer is not free. Public morality and the regularity of transactions would therefore benefit if this were so; business would have been better for everyone. And do we know what would have followed from a similar principle? Doubtless there would have been less of so grosses and so rapid fortunes; but there would also have been less failures and bankruptcies, less of ruins and despairs. A country where things are only given for what they are worth, without seeking a premium, would have resolved the double problem of value and of equality.

Thus I am not afraid to say it: Here as in that which concerns insurance, public conscience demands a guarantee, which means a better definition in science and a reform in the habits of commerce. Unfortunately, this reform can only be obtained by means of an initiative superior to any individuality; and the world is full of people who, when we try to bring light into the obscurities of science, the axe into the thickets of mercantilism, cry out for utopia; who, when fraud and ambiguity are threatened, complain that their freedom is being threatened.

Chapter VIII.

Application of the principle of mutuality to labor and wages. — Of truthful trade and agiotage.

Before the revolution of 89, society and government, both constituted on the principle of authority, had the form of a hierarchy. The Church itself, despite the sentiments of democratic equality with which the Gospel is punctuated, had given its sanction to this scaling of conditions and fortunes, outside of which we could only conceive of nothingness. In the priesthood as in the State, in the economic order as in the political order, there reigned without question a law that had come to be taken as the expression of justice itself, that of a universal subordination. Not a single protest was raised, as the law seemed so rational, even divine; and yet we were not happy. The embarrassment was general: the worker and the peasant, reduced to the minimum wage, complained of the harshness of the bourgeois, noble or abbot; the bourgeois in turn, despite his rights of control, his monopoly privileges, complained about taxes, the encroachments of his colleagues, people of justice and people of the Church; the nobleman was ruined, and, once his property had been invested or sold, his only resource was the favor of the prince and his own prostitution. Everyone was looking for, asking for an improvement of their bad fortune: increase in wages and salaries, increase in profits; the former demanded a reduction in rent which the latter found insufficient; the best endowed were those who shouted the most, beneficiary and treating abbots. In short, the situation was intolerable: it ended in revolution.

Since 89 the company has made a huge turnaround, and the situation does not seem any better. More than ever, the world demands to be well housed, well clothed, well fed, and to labor less. Workers band together and go on strike for reduced working hours and higher wages; the bosses, obliged, it seems, to give in on this side, seek economies of production at the expense of the quality of the products. There are not even parasites who do not complain that their sinecures are not enough to sustain them.

To ensure the reduction in service to which above all they aspire, to keep their wages rising and to perpetuate themselves in a comfortable *status quo*, the workers are not content with uniting against the entrepreneurs; they combine in certain places against competition from workers from outside, to whom they prevent entry to their towns; they consult against the use of machines, warn against the admission of new apprentices, monitoring the bosses, intimidating them and constraining them with a secret, irresistible police force.

For their part, the bosses are much like the workers: it is the struggle of capital against wages, a struggle in which victory is assured not to the big battalions, but to the big purses. Who will resist unemployment longer, the master's coffers or the worker's stomach? As I write these lines, the war is so intense in certain parts of Great Britain

that people fear that free trade, imagined for the triumph of English capitalism, of big English industry, turns against England, whose people, organization and tools do not have the flexibility that distinguishes them in our country of France.

However, we should get out of trouble, seek remedy for this distress. What does science say — I mean official science? Nothing. It repeats its eternal law of *supply* and *demand*: a lying law, in the terms in which it is posed, an immoral law, suitable only to ensure the victory of the strong against the weak, of those who have against those who have not.

And can mutuality, which we have already used to reform insurance and make a successful correction to the law of *supply* and *demand*, give us nothing? How are we to apply it to labor and wages?

In wooded countries, when at the onset of winter it is time to cut down the woods, the peasants get together and they all go to the forest together. Some cut down trees; others make the bundles, staves, etc. The children and women collect the shavings. Then, the batches made, they draw by lot. This is labor in common; it will be association, if you wish. That is not what we are asking for with these words: application of mutuality to work and salary.

A village was destroyed by the fire; everyone devoted themselves to averting the disaster: some furniture, provisions, livestock, tools were saved. The first thing to do is to raise the houses. We unite again; we share the work; some dig new foundations, others take the building for themselves, others take care of the structural work, carpentry, etc. Everyone putting their hand to work, the work is progressing visibly, and once again each family finds its house, larger and more beautiful. Each having worked for each, and all for all, the assistance having been reciprocal, we discover in the work a certain character of mutuality. But this mutualism could only occur under one condition, namely the union of all efforts, and the fusion, for a time, of all interests, so that here again we have a temporary association rather than a a mutuality.

For there to be perfect mutuality, it is therefore necessary that each producer, by making a certain commitment towards the others, who for their part commit themselves in the same way towards him, retains his full and complete independence of action, all his freedom of appearance, all his individuality of operation: mutuality, according to its etymology, consisting rather in the exchange of good offices and products than in the grouping of forces and the community of works.

The grouping of forces, like the separation of industries, is a powerful economic means; and it is the same, in certain cases, with association or community. But none of this is mutuality; none of this could resolve the problem of free labor and fair wages — and it is this problem, it is a special application of mutuality that we have to concern ourselves with at the moment.

To achieve this goal, we have to travel quite a long road, and have more than one idea to implement.

1. Since 1789, France has become a democracy. All are equal before the law, civil, political and economic. The ancient hierarchy has been destroyed; the principle of authority vanished in the face of the declaration of rights and universal suffrage. We all have the right to property, the right to business, the right to competition; lastly, we were given the right to combine and strike. This acquisition of new rights, which formerly could have been considered rebellion; this democratic progress is a first step towards the mutualist constitution of the nation. More acceptance of people; no more racial or class privileges; no more rank prejudices: nothing in short that opposes free transactions between all citizens, who have become equal. The equality of persons is the first condition for the leveling of fortunes, which will only result from mutuality, that is to say from liberty itself.

But it is also no less clear that this great political equation does not give us the answer to the enigma: what is the relationship between the right of suffrage, for example, and the fixing of a fair salary? Between equality before the law, and the balance of services and products?

2. One of the first ideas that democratized France conceived was that of price system. *Maximum* laws are essentially revolutionary. The instinct of the people wants it this way, and this instinct has its eminently legal and judicious side. It has been a long time since I first asked, and I never got an answer: What is the right price for a pair of clogs? How much is a wheelwright's day worth? That of a stonemason, a marshal, a cooper, a seamstress, a brewer's boy, a clerk, a musician, a dancer, a digger, a jobber? Because it is obvious that if we knew this the question of labor and wages would be decided: nothing could be easier than doing justice, and by doing justice we would have security and well-being for all. How much, for the same reason, will the doctor, the notary, the magistrate, the professor, the general, the priest have to cost? How much for a prince, an artist, a virtuoso? How much is it fair for the bourgeois, supposing there to be a bourgeois, to gain over the worker? How much to allocate to him for his mastery?

Supply and *demand*, responds imperturbably the economist of the English school, the disciple of A. Smith, Ricardo and Malthus. Isn't that impatience with stupidity? Every profession must produce enough to at least make a living for those who practice it; otherwise it will be abandoned, and that will be right. Here then, for the wages, and consequently for the labor, a first limit, a *minimum*, below which we cannot retreat. It is neither *supply* nor *demand* that holds: you have to be able to *live by working*, as the Lyon workers said in 1834. If this minimum can be improved on, so much the better: let us not envy the worker the good he obtains through labor. But in a society where industries are all dismemberments of each other, where the prices of things exert a constant influence on each other, it is clear that improvement through increases will not go far. Everyone resists the ambition of their neighbor, since the increase in this one's salary necessarily translates, whatever the good will of us all, into a loss for that one. Our question therefore amounts to saying, and the thing seems perfectly reasonable to me, that the minimum

expenditure necessary for the worker's life having been found, supposing that a similar determination could be made, finding the norm for wages, which amounts to the condition for increasing general well-being for our social environment.

So let us leave aside the maximums, price systems, regulations and all the apparatus of 93. For us, that is not what it is about. The revolution, by democratizing us, launched us on the path to industrial democracy. This is a first and very big step that it made us take. A second idea came out of this, that of determining labor and wages. Formerly, this idea would have been a scandal; today it has nothing but logic and legitimacy: we retain it.

3. In order to fairly assess a laborer's workday, it is necessary to know what it consists of, what quantities enter into the formation of the price, if there are no foreign elements, no non-values.

In other words, what do we intend to buy and what do we honestly have to pay for in the day of the worker — let us generalize our thought, in the day of anyone who renders us service?

What we have to pay to the one whose service we demand, what we intend exclusively to acquire, is the service itself, nothing more, nothing less.

But in practice this is not how things happen: there are a host of circumstances in which we pay in addition to the value of the product or the service demanded, both for rank, birth, illustration, titles, honors, dignities, fame, etc., of the functionary. Thus an Imperial Court advisor is paid 4,000 francs, while the president has 15,000. The head of a division in the ministry is taxed at 15,000 francs.; the minister receives 100,000. The rectors of rural parishes have been increased in recent years to 800 francs.; add 50 fr. casual; bishops receive at least 20,000 fr. A star at the Théâtre-Français or the Opera requires 100,000 francs per year fixed, and I don't know how many *lights*; whoever doubles it will have 300 fr. per month. The reason for these differences? It is all about dignity, title, rank; all about something metaphysical and ideal, which, far from being able to be paid, is repugnant to venality.....

While the income of some is exaggerated by the high opinion that we have of their functions and their persons, a much greater number see their salaries and food reduced to almost nothing by the contempt that is directed toward their services and the state of indignity in which they are systematically held. One is the counterpart of the other. Aristocracy presupposes servitude: to the former opulence, to the latter, consequently, privations. The right to his own product has always been denied to the slave: the same practice with regard to the feudal serf, from whom the lord took up to five days of work per week, leaving him only one — for Sunday was sacred — to provide for his weekly nourishment. The concession made to every worker of the right to dispose of his labor and the products of his labor dates back to 89. And do we imagine that there is no longer any slave labor today? By this I do not mean absolutely free labor, as we would no longer dare, but work paid below what is absolutely necessary, below the simple respect for humanity? Those who have any doubt in this regard need only open Pierre Vinçard's book. Our mills,

our workshops, our factories, our towns and our countryside are full of people who live on less than 60 cents a day; some, it is said, have less than twenty-five. The description of these miseries shames humanity: it reveals the profound bad faith of our era.

You will tell me that in all this it is only a question of fortunate or unfortunate exceptions; that nations like to honor themselves by raising up the civil list and the emoluments of their princes, magistrates, great officials and illustrious talents, whom it is unreasonable to assimilate to the vulgar mass of industrial and manual laborers.

But go down the social ladder, to the top of which I have transported you, and you will realize to your surprise that in all professions men judge themselves in the same way. The doctor and the lawyer, the shoemaker and the milliner, charge for the fashion they enjoy; there are even people who put a price on their probity, like this cook who, for a higher pledge, promised not to make *the handle of the basket dance*. Who is the man who does not esteem himself a little more than his colleagues, and does not imagine doing you honor by working for you in return for payment? In any setting of wages, when it is the producer who does it, there are always two parts, that of the character, *nominor quia leo*, and that of the worker. There are a hundred surgeons in France who would not have been embarrassed to remove the bullet from Garibaldi's foot, but an illustrious injured person needed a famous operator; Garibaldi seemed ten times more heroic and M. Nélaton ten times more clever. Everyone has had their own promotion: such is the economic world.

Since we are in a democracy, we all enjoy the same rights; since the law grants us all equal favor and consideration, I conclude that, when we are engaged in business, all question of precedence must be put aside, and that in reciprocally pricing our services, we must have regard only for to the intimate value of the labor.

Utility is worth utility;

Function is worth function;

The service pays for the service;

The workday balances the workday,

And any product will be paid for by a product that will have cost the same amount of trouble and expense.

If, in such a transaction, there were a favor to be granted, it would not be to the brilliant, pleasant, honorary functions that everyone seeks; it would be, as Fourier said, to the difficult work that shocks our delicacy and is repugnant to self-esteem. A rich man has the idea of taking me as a valet: "No stupid jobs," I will say to myself; "there are only stupid people. The care given to the person is more than a work of utility, it is an act of charity, which place the person who exercises it above the person who receives it. So, as I do not intend to be humiliated, I will put a condition on my service that the man who wishes to have me as a servant will pay me 50 percent of his income. Beyond that, we are moving away from fraternity, from equality, from mutuality: I would go so far as to say that we are moving away from justice and morality. We are no longer democrats; we are a society of valets and aristocrats."

But, you will tell me, it is not true that the function, as you say, equals the function, that the service acquits the service, and that the working day of one is worth the working day of the other. On this point the universal conscience protests; it declares that your mutuality would be iniquity. We must therefore, willingly or unwillingly, stick to the law of supply and demand, tempered, in its fierce and false aspects, by education and philanthropy.

I would as soon, I admit, to be told that industrial workers, public officials, scientists, merchants, workers, peasants, in a word all those who work, produce, do useful work, are among themselves like animals of different genus, of unequal species, between which no comparison can be made. What is the dignity of the beast of burden compared to that of man, and what is the common measure between the servitude of the first and the noble and free action of the other?... This is how it is that the theorists of inequality reason. In their eyes, there would be a greater distance between this man and that man, than between this man and that horse. They conclude that it is not only the products of human labor that are immeasurable quantities; men themselves would be, whatever has been written, unequal in dignity, therefore in rights, and everything that is done to establish them on a level is reversed by the nature of things. There, they say, in this inequality of persons, is the principle of inequality of ranks, conditions and fortunes.

To those who, out of class interest and vanity of system, hate the truth, it is always easy to indulge in rhetoric. Pascal, seeking the philosophy of history, conceived of humanity as a single individual who did not die, accumulated within itself all knowledge and successively realized all ideas and all progress. This is how Pascal represented the unity and identity of our species, and from this identity he rose to the highest thoughts on the development of civilization, the government of Providence, the solidarity of States and races. The same concept applies to political economy. Society must be considered as a giant with a thousand arms, who carries out all industries, simultaneously produces all wealth. A single consciousness, a single thought and a single will animate him; and in the cogwheel of his work the unity and identity of his person are revealed. Whatever he undertakes, he always remains himself, as admirable, as dignified in the execution of the smallest details as in the most marvelous combinations. In all the circumstances of his life, this prodigious being is equal to himself, and we can say that each of his actions, each of his moments pays for the other.

You insist, and you say: Even if we grant each of the individuals of which society is made up the same moral dignity, they are no less, from the point of view of their faculties, unequal to each other, and that is enough to ruin the democracy, to the laws of which we claim to subject them.

No doubt individuals, who are the organs of society, are unequal in faculties, just as they are equal in dignity. What should we conclude from this? Only one thing: it is that, calm about what makes us all equal, we must take, as much as is within us, the measure of our inequalities.

Thus, with the exception of the human personality, which we declare inviolable, the moral being aside, the things of conscience reserved, we have to study the man of action, or the worker, in his means and his products. Now, at first glance we discover this important fact: that, if the human faculties are unequal from one subject to another, the differences in plus and minus do not go to infinity: they remain within fairly restricted limits. Just as in physics we can reach neither extreme heat nor extreme cold and our thermometric measurements oscillate at small distances below and beyond an average very incorrectly called zero; in the same way it is impossible to assign the negative or superlative limit of intelligence and force, either in man and beasts, or in the Creator and the world. All we can do is, for the mind for example, to mark degrees, necessarily arbitrary, above or below a conventional and fixed point that we will call *common sense*; for force, to agree on a metric unit, namely horsepower, and then to count how many units and fractions of units of force each of us is capable of.

As in the thermometer, we will therefore have, for intelligence and for strength, *extremes* and an *average*. The average is the point to which the greatest number of subjects will approach; those who rise or fall to the extremes will be the rarest. I said earlier that the gap between these extremes was quite small: in fact, a man who unites within himself the strength of two or three average men is a Hercules; he who had wits like four would be a demigod. To these limits imposed on the development of human faculties are added the conditions of life and nature. The maximum duration of existence is seventy to eighty years, from which a period of childhood, one of education, one of retirement and decrepitude must be deducted. For everyone the day has twenty-four hours, of which, depending on circumstances, nine to eighteen can be given to work. Likewise, each week has a day of rest; and although the year is three hundred and sixty-five days, we can only count on three hundred given to work. We see that if the industrial faculties are unequal, this inequality will not prevent the whole from being substantially level: it is like a harvest in which all the ears are unequal, and which is no less like a plain united, extended to the horizon.

According to these considerations, we can define the working day: it is, in all industry and profession, what can be provided in service or produced in value by a man of average strength, intelligence and age, knowing well his condition and its various parts, in a given interval, i.e. ten, twelve or fifteen hours for the parts where the work can be assessed during the day; i.e. a week, a month, a season, a year, for those that require a more considerable period of time.

The child, the woman, the old man, the invalid or man of weak constitution, generally not being able to reach the average of the able-bodied man, their working day will be only a fraction of the official, normal, legal day, taken as a unit of value. — I say the same about the day of the piece worker, whose purely mechanical service, requiring less intelligence than routine, cannot be compared to that of a true industrial laborer.

On the other hand and reciprocally, the superior worker, who designs, executes more quickly, produces more work and of better quality than another; *a fortiori* the one who, to this superiority of execution would join the genius of direction and the power of command, the one exceeding the common measure, will receive a higher salary: he will be able to earn one and a half, two, three days work and beyond. Thus the rights of strength, talent, even character, as well as those of work are protected: if justice makes no allowance for persons, it does not ignore any capacity either.

Well! I say that nothing is easier than to settle all these accounts, to balance all these values, to make right all these inequalities; as easy as paying a sum of one hundred francs, with coins of forty, twenty, ten and five francs in gold; of five, two, one franc, fifty and twenty-five centimes in silver, ten, five, two and one centime in billon. All these quantities being fractions of each other, they can represent, complete, fulfill and supplement each other reciprocally: it is a speculation of the simplest arithmetic.

But for this liquidation to take place, we require, I repeat, the contribution of good faith in the assessment of the labors, services and products; the working society must come to this degree of industrial and economic morality: that all submit to the justice that will be done to them, without regard to the pretensions of vanity and personality, without any consideration of titles, of ranks, of precedence, of honorary distinctions, of celebrity, in short, of the value of opinion. Only the usefulness of the product, the quality, the labor and the costs it costs must be taken into account here.

This commensuration, I affirm and repeat, is eminently practical; and our duty is to strive for it with all our strength: it excludes fraud, overcharges, charlatanism, sinecureism, exploitation, oppression; but, it must be said, it cannot be treated as a domestic affair, a family virtue, an act of private morality. The evaluation of labor, the measurement of values, constantly renewed, is the fundamental problem of society, a problem that social will and the power of the community alone can resolve. In this regard, I must again say it, neither science, nor the power, nor the Church have fulfilled their mission. What did I say? The incommensurability of products has been established as a dogma, mutuality declared a utopia, inequality exaggerated, in order to perpetuate, with general insolidarity, the distress of the masses and the lie of the revolution.

Now it is up to the workers' democracy to take charge of the issue. Let it speak out, and, under the pressure of its opinion, the State, the organ of society, will have to act. If the workers' democracy, satisfied with agitating in its workshops, harassing the bourgeoisie and showing itself in useless elections, remains indifferent to the principles of political economy, which are those of the revolution, — it is necessary let it know it, — it is lying about its duties, and it will one day be disgraced before posterity.

The question of labor and wages leads us to that of commerce and agiotage, with which we will end this chapter.

Among almost all peoples, commerce has been held in distrust and disesteem. The patrician or noble who engaged in commerce infringed. All commercial operations were

forbidden to the clergy, and it was an immense scandal in the seventeenth century, when the speculations and profits of the Jesuits were revealed. Among other traffic, the RR. PP. had secured the monopoly on cinchona. — Where does this condemnation come from, which is as old as civilization, which neither our modern morals nor our economic maxims have redeemed from treachery, which has always seemed inherent to trafficking, and from which moralists, theologians and statesmen have despaired of expurgating it. The Punic or Carthaginian faith was noted for infamy in antiquity. But what was this Punic faith? It was the same as the Greek faith, the Attic faith, the Corinthian, Marseillaise, Judaic faith; the same finally as the Roman faith itself: it was the commercial faith.

For trade to be fair and beyond reproach, it would be necessary, independently of the mutual assessment of services and products that we spoke about in the previous section, for the transport, distribution and exchange of goods to take place at the cheapest and lowest cost and the greatest advantage of all. For this, it would be necessary for all producers, traders, carriers, commission agents and consumers in each country to be mutually informed and duly guaranteed on everything concerning origins, raw materials, existence, qualities, weight, cost price, transport costs, handling, etc., and furthermore committed, some to supply, others to receive the agreed quantities, in return for determined prices and conditions. Statistics should therefore be perpetually published on the state of harvests, labor, wages, risks and losses, the abundance and scarcity of workers, the importance of demands, the movement of markets, etc., etc.

Let us suppose, for example, that from the most detailed and exact calculations, carried out over a series of years, it happens that the average cost-price of wheat, in an average year, is 18 francs per hectoliter; the selling price will vary from 19 to 20 francs, giving the plowman a net profit of 5.30 to 10 percent. If the harvest is bad, if there is a deficit of one tenth, the price must increase by a proportional quantity, on the one hand so that the plowman is not alone in his loss, on the other so that the public does not suffer from an exorbitant increase: it is enough that they perish from scarcity. In good political economy, no more than in good justice, can we accept that general distress becomes a source of fortune for a few speculators. — If there is an abundance of wheat, on the contrary, the price must be reduced in a similar proportion, on the one hand so that the price of cereals, by falling, is not a cause of deficit for the plowman, as we have seen so many times; on the other so that the public benefits from this good fortune, either for the current year or for subsequent years; the unused surplus must be put into savings. In both cases, we see how production and consumption, by mutually guaranteeing each other, at a fair price, one the placement, the other the purchase of wheat, would be regularized; how abundance and scarcity, by being distributed over the mass of the population, by means of intelligent price list and good economic policy, would not lead for anyone to either exaggerated profits or excessive deficits; it would be one of the most beautiful, most fruitful results of mutuality.

But it is obvious that such a precious institution could only be the result of the general will, and it is precisely against this will that, under the pretext of governmentalism, the liberals of political economy rise. Rather than putting an end to an organized, unassailable, invincible extortion of philosophical protest and private justice, they prefer to witness the bacchanalia of mercantilism: is perfection then of this world, and is not liberty fertile enough to pay for her orgies?

The Stock Exchange and the grain exchange, the courts and the markets resound with complaints against agiotage. Now, what is agiotage in itself? An apologist for this sort of trading, as good a logician as a man of wit, told us not long ago: it is the art, in a society given over to anarchic mercantilism, to predict the oscillations of values, and to profit, through purchases and sales made accordingly, from the rise and fall. In what sense, he asked, would this type of operation, which, it must be admitted, requires high capacity, consummate prudence, a multitude of knowledge, be immoral?... Indeed, the environment given, the profession of the *agioteur* is as honorable as that of a hero; I won't be the one to throw stones at him. But I must admit that if, in a society in a state of war, this sort of speculation cannot be incriminated, it is essentially unproductive. Anyone who has been enriched by *differences* has no right to recognition nor to the esteem of men. If he has not defrauded or stolen from anyone — I am talking about the skilled stockbroker, who only uses his divinatory genius in his speculations, employing neither fraud nor lies — he cannot flatter himself either to have been the creator of the slightest utility. Conscience would prefer a thousand times that he had directed his talents towards any other career, letting values follow their natural course, without overloading the circulation with a levy that ultimately the public would do well without. Why this skimming, similar to the duty that is collected at the gates of cities, and which does not have as an excuse like that the need to provide for the expenses of a city? This is the motive which in all times has made agiotage odious, as much to economists as to moralists and the men of state. Just motive, since it is based on the universal conscience, whose judgments are absolute and imprescriptible, very different in this respect from our delayed and transitory legislations.

Those who, by showing their devotion to the political and social *status quo*, affect so much severity towards the speculators, would therefore do well to be more consistent and not stop halfway. In the current state of Society, commerce, delivered to the most complete anarchy, without direction, without information, without point of reference and without principle, is essentially agiotage; it cannot fail to be. Therefore, we must either condemn everything, or allow everything, or reform everything. This is what I will make clear in a few words.

Is it not just, in truth, that the individual who undertakes at his own risk a vast commercial operation, from which the public is called to benefit, finds honest remuneration in the resale of his goods? This principle is entirely just: the difficulty is to make its application irreprehensible. In fact, any profit made in business, if it is not due exclusively to agiotage, is more or less infected with agiotage: it is impossible to separate

them. In an unsupportive environment, devoid of guarantees, everyone works for themselves, no one for others. The legitimate profit cannot be distinguished from the agio. Everyone strives to get the biggest bounty: the tradesman and the industrialist speculate, the scholar speculates, the poet as well as the actor, the musician and the dancer speculates, the doctor speculates, the famous man and the courtesan speculate, one as much as the other; there are really only wage-earners, workers, day-laborers or public functionaries who do not speculate, because they are paid fixed wages or salaries.

Let us therefore agree: the one who was the first, separating in his thought agiotage from exchange, the random element from the commutative element, the benefit of speculation from that of trading, left the realities of commerce to others and was content to speculate on fluctuations, this one only drew the conclusion from the state of war, selfishness and general bad faith in which we all live. He establishes himself, if I dare say it, at the public expense, censor of transactions, by exposing, through *fictitious* operations, the spirit of iniquity that presides over *real* operations. It is up to us to learn from the lesson; because, as far as prohibiting stock market gambling and futures markets by a simple police measure is concerned, we can regard such an enterprise as impracticable and almost as abusive as agiotage itself.

Mutualism aims to cure this leprosy, not by enveloping it in a network of more or less judicious and almost always vain penalties; not by hindering the liberty of commerce, a remedy worse than the disease: but by treating commerce like insurance, I mean by surrounding it with all public guarantees, and by this means bringing it back to mutuality. The supporters of mutuality know the law of *supply* and *demand* as well as anyone; they will be careful not to contravene it. Detailed and often updated statistics; precise information on needs and existence; a fair breakdown of cost-prices; the anticipation of all eventualities, the establishment between producers, traders and consumers, after amicable discussion, of a *maximum* and *minimum* rate of profit, depending on the difficulties and risks; the organization of regulatory companies: this is more or less the set of measures by means of which they plan to discipline the market. Liberty as great as one wishes, they say; but, what matters even more than liberty, sincerity and reciprocity, light for all. This done, the customers are more diligent and more honest. This is their motto: do we believe that after a few years of this reform, our mercantile morals would not be entirely changed, to the great advantage of public happiness?

Chapter IX.

Legislative trends towards mutuality.

Ideas are slowly rising on the horizon of humanity, especially those that testify to the progress of consciousness. There was a time when the profession of thief, synonymous with that of hero, was considered honorable. There was quite a social revolution with this phrase written by Moses in his Decalogue: You shall not steal; *Lo thi-gnob*. Theft, in fact, at a certain moment in history, appears, according to Hobbes' expression, as a natural right. The patriarch Jacob is a clever trickster; his name indicates it, and his behavior with his brother and uncle proves it. When leaving Egypt, the Israelites borrowed, so as not to return them, the kitchen utensils, silverware, festive clothes, and all the best furniture of the Egyptians; it was Jehovah who advised them. Roman law authorizes fraud based on equivocation; too bad for the one who lets himself be taken in by words! *Ut lingua nun cupâvit, ita jus esto*, it said.

Isn't it a curious thing, and one that testifies to the slowness of our progress, that the Civil Code, published in 1805, thought it necessary to guarantee buyers against *hidden defects* in the thing, in other words *crippling defects*?

Art. 1641. — The seller is bound by the guarantee for hidden defects in the thing sold, which make it unfit for the use for which it is intended, or which reduce this use to such an extent that the buyer would not have acquired it, or would have given only a lower price, if he had known them.

Art. 1642. — The seller is not liable for apparent defects, of which the buyer was able to convince himself.

We see from this second article how great the circumspection of the legislator is. It was already a great effort on his part to guarantee the buyer against *hidden defects*; but, as long as these defects are *apparent*, he retracts and withdraws his guarantee. But in what case can we say that a defect is *hidden* or *apparent*? What is the point of this distinction? Simply say that the seller is bound by the guarantee for the defects that make the use of the thing impossible, unless the buyer is pleased to appropriate it despite these defects, which the compromise must express fully. But this is beyond my understanding. After having, in Art. 1646, indicated the rules of action resulting from redhibitory defects, the editor of the Code adds:

Art. 1649. — It has no place in sales made by legal authority.

What does this exception mean? How, Justice expropriates an individual; it is putting their house up for sale, their livestock, their furniture; in its place, it guarantees buyers *peaceful possession of the objects sold*, art. 1625; and it does not guarantee *hidden defects* in these same objects, as prescribed to any seller of this same article! Thus, when man rises, through new laws, to social law, Justice sticks to the law of nature!...

In 1838, the French legislator felt the need to reconsider this guarantee against hidden defects; but this was to give an enumeration among horses, donkeys, mules, oxen and sheep, and to multiply the difficulties of the action to be brought by the dissatisfied buyer. Justice apparently feared having gone too far! But it was precisely the opposite thought that should have inspired it: if you want to moralize trade, stop fraud, guarantee goods, grains, liquids, livestock, etc., in quantity, quality, provenance, etc., it is especially the seller that you must monitor; it is his responsibility that you must involve; it is in his hands that you must seize the evil or hidden defect, as at its source; it is against him that you must facilitate the buyer's action, not protect him against the claims of the plaintiffs. Remember that when it comes to commerce, it is the seller who must generally be presumed to be the deceiver, the buyer the dupe. And why would this one, whose money has no hidden defects, be obliged to be so vigilant? Strike the horse-trading mercilessly, and you will have well deserved public faith. By being especially severe with regard to the *supply*, you will be fair to everyone; you will have created mutuality.

Let us also cite among the commercial guarantee measures, indicating a mutualist tendency on the part of the State, the law of July 28, 1824, relating to trademarks. The author of this law had only one thing in mind: to protect the industrialist against counterfeiting and usurpations of title. But if the inventor, if the skilful manufacturer are protected, one in the property of his invention, the other in his good reputation, the consequence is that an equal responsibility falls on them, and that any product taken out of their stores, if it is judged to be of inferior quality, may be returned to them as tainted by a fatal defect. How many goods would give rise to complaints if this mutualist rule were applied to them! How many manufacturers, after having delivered good quality products to consumers, once their customers have been assured and competition destroyed, relax, and, after having received the medal of encouragement, should be adorned with the green cap, and condemned to harsher compensation. The losses suffered by the public as a result of all these charlatans are counted annually in the hundreds of millions; they defy all police; they will only cease in the face of a reforming power.

Chapter X.

Reduction of rents by the principle of mutuality.

A point on which the law of mutuality is violated excessively is the rents. Where the population is agglomerated and condensed, such as Paris, Lyons, Marseilles, Bordeaux, Toulouse, Lille, Rouen, etc., it is difficult for each family to own its dwelling, although this is eminently desirable; it is therefore necessary that a certain number of private individuals are responsible for building houses and maintaining dwellings for others, whatever risk the latter run in their liberty and their interests. But the rental lease, or the act by which the owner of houses and the tenant deal for housing, is ultimately only one of the thousand transactions that constitute human society, human commerce, a transaction therefore subject to the rules of right, I would even say to the oversight of the police.

In the department of the Seine, a population of 1,800,000 souls, distributed over an area of about thirty square leagues, — which makes 60,000 people per square league, — is at the mercy of 25 to 30,000 owners. Is this not an exorbitant fact, which must attract all the attention and solicitude of the Power? How is this enormous population housed, delivered defenseless to the discretion of 25,000 speculators? What conditions of space, trade, salubrity and price are made for it? Could it be that the Power, through a misunderstood respect for the right of property or an alleged liberty of transactions, abandons it to all the excesses of monopoly and agiotage?

Who would believe it though? As far as leases are concerned, we are still in the old Roman law, in this ancient, tyrannical cult of property. The proprietor is favored by the law, the tenant held in distrust; between them there is no equality. In the event of a dispute, the presumptions are for the lessor, as are the guarantees and security.

1. The claim of the owner is privileged, art. 2102: I would take the liberty of asking why? A tenant buys on credit the furniture with which he furnishes his apartment. His business is bad. After a year he hasn't paid anyone, neither the furniture dealer nor the proprietor. The latter has the right to evict the tenant and to seize the furniture which furnishes the apartment; while the upholsterer can neither claim the objects that he has furnished and which have not been paid for, nor assert his title jointly with the owner. Why this difference? It follows from this that a proprietor in bad faith, getting along with a rogue, could have his hotel furnished without it costing him anything. Is it justice? Is it foresight.

2. If there is no written lease, the owner is believed on his oath, art. 1716. Why not also the tenant? — The same distinction is found in art. 1781, concerning the hiring of work:

“The master,” says the Code, “is believed on his assertion: for the quota of wages; for payment of salary for the past year, and for installments given for the current year.”

I ask once again what, since 1789, justifies this respect for persons?

3. Another inequality: "If an inventory has not been made, says art. 1751, the former is supposed to have received them in good condition." Why am I *supposed* to? Don't houses have, like the horse, bovine and ovine species, their hidden and crippling defects? Who is unaware of the fact that we only really know the advantages and shortcomings of an apartment after living in it for six months?

4. Rental repairs are the responsibility of the lessee: art. 1754 defines them and lists them. Art. 1755 adds, it is true, that the tenant will not be liable for these repairs, in the event that they are caused by obsolescence or *force majeure*. But this reservation is illusory. There are things whose destiny is not to wear out, but to break sooner or later through the use made of them: such are, for example, pottery, porcelain, mirrors, etc. A tolerance is necessary here for the benefit of the lessee. Everyone knows that an uninhabited house wears out much faster than an inhabited house: is it for this reason that the Civil Code has taken the trouble to make the tenant even more liable?

5. The tenant responds to the fire, art. 1755, unless he proves: that the fire happened by fortuitous event or *force majeure*; or due to a construction defect; or that the fire was communicated by a neighboring house.

Art. 1734. — If there are several tenants, all are jointly and severally liable for the fire, unless they prove that the fire started in the dwelling of one of them, in which case that one alone is bound; or that some prove that the fire could not have started at home, in which case those are not bound by it.

Thus the lessee, upon taking possession, becomes the insurer of the building: what premium does the lessor pay for this insurance? After all, fire is a risk inherent in any combustible object, in houses more than anything else. Even if the lessee was prohibited by an express clause in the lease from lighting a fire in the apartment he occupies, it would then be understood that he was responsible for the fire. But no, the houses are rented precisely so that one can heat oneself there and cook food; and it is in the presence of such a clause that the Code places the fire at the expense of the tenants! But it is nonsense.

6. According to all economists, society has a right to the added value of land resulting from new buildings, the creation of new districts, population growth, and so on. By virtue of this right, society could intervene, at least in a general way, in the leases for rent and, by reserving the rights of the city, to protect the tenants against the excessive pretensions of the owners. Why did the legislator do nothing about it? Why this abandonment of considerable values, which are in no way due to the owners, which are due exclusively, on the one hand, to the industry of the tenants and, on the other, to the development of the city? Such, speculating on the increase in the places to be built and the favoritism of the law, initiated sometimes with the projects of the Government, bought, at the price of 30 fr.

the square meter, immense land which he then resold for 200 fr. We have known of it, but we said nothing. Why?

Should we be surprised after that, if for fifteen years the rise in rents has been out of all proportion? If the whim of the owners has become intolerable? Here, the formerly free space, included in a main building, is rented at 3 fr. the cubic meter; elsewhere, it is rented for 15, 20 and 25 fr. One house produces 6 percent, another 30 and 50. Then the owner follows the example of the Code; he respects professions, if not persons. We don't want such a profession; we don't want children; the family is proscribed; we would like to have only couples! Also you hear everywhere crying famine. We don't work anymore, say the workers and petty bourgeois, except for the proprietors and for the taxes. Countless bankruptcies must be attributed to this anarchy of rents, the undue profits of which can be estimated, throughout France and each year, at nearly a billion.

Under a regime of mutuality, however, nothing is easier than to discipline the lease, without violating the law of supply and demand, by sticking to the prescriptions of pure justice. The means, irrefutable as well as infallible, would be three in number.

a) *Law of September 3, 1807, on the rate of interest on money.* — When the author of this law said, Articles 1 and 2:

“Conventional interest and legal interest may not exceed, in civil matters, five percent; in commercial matters, six percent, all without restraint,”

he is not heard speaking only of the sums lent, or of the securities repayable in cash; he included in his definition all kinds of capital, commodities and products, whether in kind or in real estate, as well as in money. Thus the trader, manufacturer or farmer who undertakes to supply, within a given period, a certain quantity of goods, and who, having breached his commitment, will have incurred damages, will pay interest at the rate of 5 or 6 percent per year, depending on whether the matter is civil or commercial, just like the buyer who has not paid, on the due date, the obligation subscribed by him and payable in cash.

Money is mentioned in the law only as representing values, a means of expressing capital and products.

But what is a rental lease? — A contract by which one of the parties, called *lessor*, gives to the other, *lessee*, a house or an apartment, for a time and for a fixed price, payable in money. In political economy, this house or apartment is a value like any other, a capital like any other, a product like any other; I would even say a commodity like any other. The legislator, it is true, did not include this in the law of September 3, 1807. He left the parties free to fix the rate of rents, although, logically, this fixing was a consequence of that of the interest on money. It is still a favor, a privilege, that he granted to property. But it is clear that nothing prevents the law from going back on this privilege, from abolishing this special law, and from saying to the owners of houses: The rate of interest on money has been fixed at 5 percent in civil matters, 6 percent in commercial matters, for all kinds

of sales, purchases, rentals, benefits, services, exchanges, etc., without distinction of furniture or buildings, capital, goods, products or cash. Profiting more than anyone from this limitation, you will in turn submit to the common law; the same interest that you pay to your banker, to your suppliers, will be paid to yourselves. Reciprocity is justice.

b) Another means of keeping built property in check would be to assert the social right in the increase in value of land acquired by causes foreign to the action of the owners. I won't insist on it any longer.

c) Finally, to put an end to the old right of property, a mystical right, full of prejudices and exceptions, I will propose to declare that any rental lease is an act of commerce. Aren't they merchants who rent a hotel, furnish it with furniture, and then rent it again, by the week, by the month or by the year, by cabinets, rooms or apartments? Aren't these contractors whose job is to build houses, which they rent out or resell, just like dealers or furniture rental companies, just as merchants? How do these operations on houses and buildings differ from those defined by law as acts of commerce: manufacturing, supply, entertainment, construction, chartering, hiring, i.e. ship hire, etc.

Now, from the assimilation, logical in right, indisputable in political economy, of the rental lease with the above-mentioned commercial operations; from this assimilation, I say, combined with the application that would be made to said rental lease of the law of 1807, and with the right of the city to the increase in value of building land, it would follow:

1) That all the legislation concerning the rental lease should be redone in a better spirit: more of these favors for the benefit of landlords; no more of these caprices, no more of these unbridled increases that desolate families, ruin manufacturers and shopkeepers; arbitrariness would be banished from an order of transactions which interests the existence of the masses to the highest degree, and whose importance in France is counted by the billions. Housing statistics would be compiled by the authorities; a better oversight would be organized for the salubrity of the dwellings; Masonic societies for the purchase of land, the construction, maintenance and rental of houses, could be set up, in competition with the former owners and in the interest of all. I leave aside the details of the reforms: it is enough for me to have indicated their principles and spirit.

But who does not see that, without a resounding manifestation of public opinion, this great recovery will forever remain a utopia?

Chapter XI.

Application of mutuality to the transport trade. — Relations of economic right between shippers, brokers, carriers and receivers. — Railways and Public Utilities.

We would never believe, if the facts of each day were not there to convince us of it, with what slowness human morality is formed, with what difficulty it manages to distinguish the just from the unjust. The condemnation of robbery and theft, consequently its prohibition and its legal repression, do not go back more than three thousand years. But up to now, these words of theft, robbery, swindling have hardly been understood as anything more than the most violent and crude cases of the usurpation of the property of others, as it is easy to convince oneself by the inspection alone of the attacks on property, enumerated and defined in the Penal Code. In vain did ancient wisdom offer us, from the beginning, its mutualist adage: *Do to others what you want done to you; Don't do to others what you don't want them to do to you.* We have never seen in this high prescription of law anything but a counsel of charity, a formula of purely voluntary benevolence, which does not engage the conscience; we have advanced only with the aid of the executioner and the police, and, regarding the most important aspects of social economy, we are still as savage as the first who, tired of murder, rapine and rape, agreed to respect each other's property, their wives and their lives, and thus founded the first societies.

When we speak today of mutuality, of mutualist institutions, does it not seem that we are saying something new? The man of the people and the bourgeois, the entrepreneur and the wage earner, the financier and the merchant, the landlord and the farmer, the magistrate and the priest, the economist and the jurist, the statesman and the simple citizen have trouble understanding us; they do not understand our reasonings; and for them our words, unintelligible, are wasted words. Mutual insurance is an old idea, which is readily admitted, but as a theory, not as an act of justice; as a mode of free transaction, not as an obligation of right such that he who, speculating on the dissimilarity of risks, makes of the general peril a means of fortune, the government which lets it be so and the society that approves are guilty. Now, if this is the state of opinion in our time on the most elementary of mutualities, mutual insurance, what should we expect with regard to the appreciation of values, fairness in the markets, the exchange of services and products, rental leases, etc.? Who will you make believe that hiding in the *supply* and *demand* is an indelicacy, much more, a real offense against justice, an attack on property? How are we to convince the worker that he is no more allowed, by his conscience, to overrate his work than the boss is to debase it? *A good cat, a good rat, you are told; defend yourself as I defend myself; each for themselves and God for all; we must make do with what we have;* and a hundred other maxims, retained from the barbarian era, when plunder and theft were the warrior's just reward.

Isn't the proprietor master of his house? Didn't he inherit it from his father, or buy it with his money, or build it with his own hands? Is he not in control of demolishing it, of raising it by one or more stories, of living in it with his family, or of making it a barn, a store, a stable; to replace it with a garden, or a bowling alley? Why are you talking here about mutuality? What is this sneaky way of reducing and legally pricing rents, under the pretext of usury, cheap capital, social right to the appreciation of land, etc.? True proprietorship entails the right of accession, right of alluvium, hence exclusive right to capital gain, which is only a blessing from heaven on the owner. Respect therefore to property; nothing but the law of *supply* and *demand*, in its energetic and primitive simplicity, can be invoked here; nothing but his word can bind the proprietor.

This is what is said, without even taking the trouble to notice that, by a new privilege, the law of *supply* and *demand* is much milder for the proprietor than for the merchant, the manufacturer and the worker. The workman is haggled over his wages, the merchant his merchandise, the manufacturer his service; we allow ourselves to reproach them, as a quasi-offence, for the fraudulent exaggeration of their price. Who thinks of addressing such a reproach to the proprietor? Isn't he, in a way, incorporated into his building? If its conditions are too hard, one passes without observation. And on the side of the State, what consideration! What respect! The police seized and threw away green fruits, milk mixed with water, drinks of suspicious manufacture, corrupted meats; it has laws against hoarders, speculators; it knows how, if need be, to put a limit on certain monopolies. For about forty years, the principle of public utility has come to bring certain obstacles to the abuse of property: but what precautions vis-à-vis this powerful caste, always treated as noble! What care for the indemnity! How many owners enriched by expropriation, happy that the State has set its sights on their inheritance, like a lord deigning to lower his eyes to the daughter of his vassal!...

We are going to find these repugnances of an epoch saturated with selfishness, steeped in iniquity, still more vivid in a kind of industry whose importance equals antiquity, without for that reason having ever been penetrated by the pure ray of right.

What bond of solidarity, consequently what mutuality to establish between the public and the transport contractor? Let us reread articles 96 to 108 of the Commercial Code, and we will see that the legislator, far from seeking here the link of justice, only thought of one thing, to establish the security of the sender, by strongly determining the guarantee or liability of the transporter. They are like two worlds apart, which communicate only with suspicion, and whose temporary relationship always leaves them strangers to each other. The package delivered to the messenger, he becomes its proprietor: all that concerns transport, its mode, its conditions, its duration, everything that may occur in the journey, concerns only him. Between the valet and the shipper the contract can be summed up in two words: absolute responsibility lies with the former; the freight to be paid by the second. It follows from this that commerce, industry and agriculture are in general, for all that concerns the circulation of products, delivered to the mercy of the freight forwarders;

there is no respite or alleviation except during the wars that the said commissioners or contractors wage among themselves, and of which the public almost always ends up paying the expenses.

It is certain that in unhappy times, when States are at war, industry weak, travel full of risks, business difficult, the contract of mutual guarantee between a transport company and the public is almost impracticable; the messenger and the carrier, as well as the sender and the principal, will always prefer to retain their liberty. But in a country like ours, where business for centuries has developed so much, where traffic is so safe, why have transport contractors never known how to get along with trade? I practiced inland navigation for ten years, and I saw it die out, without it having been able to organize itself. We had to come to state concessions of the railways, the monopoly inherent in this mode of transport, to the coalition of Companies, finally, so that one conceives the possibility of an equitable and advantageous pact with all the interests, in the transport industry. Nothing could be simpler, however, than the idea of this pact.

Guarantee us, the transport contractors would have said to the industrialists, traders and farmers of the localities respectively served by them, guarantee us your consignments, and we guarantee you on our side:

All transport from points A, B, C, D, to points X, Y, Z;

We guarantee you these transports, at high or low speed, either in a fixed period of so many days and hours, or in a reasonable period;

We guarantee periodic departures, every two, three, four and five days;

Finally, we guarantee you fixed prices, depending on the nature of the loads.

The commitment between us will be reciprocal, for one or more years, entirely modifiable when there will be an invention or serious competition that can perform the service at a lower cost. In this case we must be informed, so that we can position ourselves, and maintain the preference.

Singular thing: if the principle of mutuality could, by the initiative of a few individuals, establish itself somewhere with power and extent, it was evidently in the transport trade. The circulatory apparatus once reformed, the whole system would have been drawn along. But such is the fatality that governs human affairs: never has this simple commitment been understood by the shipping companies; they never offered it; and it does not appear that the public on its side would have consented to lend itself to it. The public was like the companies: lovers of the unexpected, of speculation; it reserved itself. If from 1840 the water transport companies and the main freight forwarders had entered this path, their tariffs being taken as *maximum* and making law, the country would have transport, today, for travelers, at 5 centimes the first and 2 centimes the second, per head and kilometer; for goods, from 1 centime 1/2 to 5 centimes, high and low speed, both by water and by rail.

Instead of this, navigation has been almost everywhere abandoned, and the railroad companies, applying the tariffs fixed for them by careless legislators, are charging:

To travelers: 10 centimes 3, 7.7; and 5.7 per head and kilometer;

For goods: 9, 12, 14 and 21 centimes per ton and kilometer.

In the event of scarcity, wheat, which should pay no more than 2 centimes, pays 5; — oysters, catch, etc., high-speed courier items, 35 cents. Do we want to know, by a single example, what is the influence of this tariff on the price of edibles? While in Bordeaux and Mâcon peaches, of good quality, commonly sold for 10 centimes per dozen, in Paris they were never paid for less than 15, 20 and 50 centimes each.

If, however, the government of Louis-Philippe, born of the ideas of 1789, had been less infatuated with his ideas of authority and hierarchy; if, from 1842, he had been convinced of this principle, that he was nothing other than the representative or the organ of the relations of solidarity and mutuality of all kinds that exist and that time does not cease to develop between the citizens; he had, in the railway legislation, a unique opportunity to establish, with the low cost of transport, industrial and commercial mutuality, in other words, to establish economic right. He would have said to himself, something that the least among the workers understands marvelously, that a public service, such as that of the railways, cannot be given in usufruct to one class of society, and become, to the detriment of the masses, a source of fortune for an army of shareholders; and he would have organized the transport service, or at least he would have entrusted its execution to companies of laborers, according to the principles of economic reciprocity and equality.

Who doubts today that the French people would have been able, without the help of anonymous companies, to provide themselves with railways, and, considering themselves both carrier and shipper, to ensure in perpetuity the lowest shipping cost? But railways built, exploited according to the principle of mutuality, requiring for the wages of their service only a sum equal to their expenses of operation and maintenance; railways for which, by virtue of the axiom of right that no one is serf of his own possession, *Res sua nulli servit*, we would not have had to repay any establishment capital; whose actions would have caused neither rise nor fall, since there would have been neither concessions nor shareholders; railroads which, by being extremely cheap, would only have profited the nation, without creating sinecures and making the fortune of any parasite, were not what the Government needed. Two hundred millions is about the sum to which the annual net revenue of the railways amounts, — left in commerce, agriculture, and industry, would not have been of a mediocre help to the development of public wealth.⁹ The Government and the Chambers of Louis-Philippe judged that it was better to make that wealth pass into the pockets of their friends, financiers, entrepreneurs and shareholders. The people were accustomed to paying for everything, even what was done for them with their own money; what would have happened if suddenly they had been told that, the roads being built with that own money, they owed for transport only the current expense, and zero

⁹ See the *Manuel du spéculateur à la Bourse*, Paris, 1857, Garnier frères; and *Des Réformes à exécuter dans les Chemins de fer*, by the same author, Paris, 1854.

interest? We were not sorry, moreover, to give this development to the well-to-do and less industrious class; to increase the number of supporters of power; to create interests devoted to authority, beaten daily by the rising tide of popular interests. The current Government is also so far, in all these respects, from having understood its true law, that following the Crimean and Lombardy wars it added a war tithe to the railway rates, thus making, through the most unintelligent taxation, a co-parasite of an industry whose nature is to be all the more productive for everyone, as it must pay rent and produce profit for anyone.

Millions and billions, this is what the violation of economic right, the contempt for the law of mutuality, costs the Nation each year. Do we imagine, by chance, that it was with the capital of the Companies that the railways were built? No. The Companies have provided only a fraction, the smallest, of the capital expended, as if to have a pretext to arrogate to themselves the whole of the income. According to the law of 1842, the indemnities due for expropriated land and buildings, as well as earthworks, works of art and stations, are the responsibility of the State. What is left for the Companies to do? The laying of the rails and the equipment. According to this arrangement, what is the share of the state in the receipts? None. What am I saying? Not content with not collecting anything, the State guarantees the Companies a minimum of dividends. Thus one can say that in the roads carried out according to the law of 1842, the State, that is to say the Country, paid the majority of the expenses and withdrew before the Companies when it was time to realize the profits. Never had anarchic mercantilism obtained, through the fault of a government, such success. We argued earlier that the instruments of public circulation, a creation of the Country, should be delivered free of charge to the Country. The Government of 1830 handed them over for nothing to the Companies, which are being paid dearly; it only got the address wrong.

The idea of mutuality is very simple: it has never entered the mind of aristocracies, monarchies, theocracies and of any government. It is in the transport trade that individual initiative would have had the most power for this great reform: it will take an economic revolution throughout the country to bring it about in the canals and the railways.

Chapter XII.

Mutuel Credit.¹⁰

The word *credit* is one of those terms that have passed into vulgar usage, and which persons of all classes make use of at every moment, but which preserves the greatest ambiguity in the intelligence of the masses. The people most often take it in a sense that is neither that of business nor that of political economy, which, consequently, is not that of mutuality either. This comes from the fact that the economic language was not made by scholars, like those of Chemistry and Law, but by practitioners without letters, without philosophy, taking in the sense of a benevolent service what was needed to understand of an interested transaction, thus confusing the most contrary notions, and ending up speaking a sort of slang rather than a rational language.

Credit is a Frenchized Latin word, *credit-us*, or *credit-um*, passive participle, masculine or neuter, of the verb *credo*, which also means to believe and to entrust. Selling on credit is a phrase of low Latinity, as it were, selling to whom is believed, or selling on trust, that is to say on the customer's promise of subsequent payment. To *lend on credit*, for the same reason, is to lend, not on surety or pledge, but on the hope of restitution. Credit is therefore trust: originally it was not understood otherwise.

Now, it is something else: credit in no way expresses confidence, despite everything the usurers of the time say. It is an essentially mercantile and *self-interested* operation, by which individuals who are called capitalists or merchants, make to others who need it and who are called buyers or borrowers, the advance of their capital or goods. Now, this advance, although it is not accompanied by the desired payment, does not take place on word and for nothing, as the people understand it; it is made on pledge, mortgage, lien or surety, and in return for a premium, which is often paid in advance, by deduction, and which is called interest: which is just the opposite of what is commonly understood by credit.

In principle, the lender trusts no one; he only trusts things. It may be that out of benevolence, as man and friend, he grants to another, whose probity he does not doubt, an advance of funds: but that is not what in business is called a credit. This trust loan, if the banker is prudent and regular in his writings, he will not enter it in his journal to his friend's account; he will bring it to his own, given that such an advance is not rigorously, on a prefix date, exigible, and that by granting a credit of this kind, he has made himself surety; which means that in such a case he really trusts only himself.

¹⁰ See on this question: *Organisation du Crédit et de la Circulation*; Paris, 1848; — *Rapport du citoyen Thiers*, followed by *Discours prononcé à l'Assemblée nationale* by citizen Proudhon, 31 juillet 1818; — *Intérêt et principal*, discussion entre MM. Proudhon and Bastiat, — *Banque du Peuple*, followed by the report of the commission of delegates in Luxembourg; Garnier frères, 1849; — *Justice in the Revolution and in the Church*, 3rd Study.

According to this, then, there are two ways of understanding credit: *real* credit, which rests on realities or pledges; and *personal* credit, the sole surety of which rests in the fidelity of the borrower. The popular tendency is entirely to personal credit: the people do not understand mutuality otherwise. Speak to the man of the people of pledge, surety, of a double or triple signature, at least of a bill of exchange, representing a value delivered and everywhere discountable; he no longer understands you, and takes your precautions for an insult. Between people of acquaintance, he thinks, this is not done. — I have twenty years of practice in my profession, this workman will tell you; here are certificates that establish my morality; I want to set up on my own, and I need 3,000 fr. Can you give them to me? He will fall from his height if you tell him that in business, in a mutual bank, as in any other, the rule is not to trust the man, but the pledge.

It is up to the managers and directors of mutual credit societies to form the education of the people in this respect. I am very much afraid that already, by untimely complacency, by the ill-founded fear of failing in their program, some have lent themselves to imprudent advances, and have granted adventurous loans. It is important that the workers be brought back to true principles; let them be well convinced that in matters of credit, more than in any other, charity is one thing and Right another; that a mutual society should not be confused with a *relief* society; in short, that business is not a work of charity and philanthropy. It is only rarely, and with the greatest circumspection, that workers' societies have to allow themselves personal credit, which would be in the rigor of the term true credit, on pain of soon degenerating into charitable foundations, of seeing themselves soon ruined by favoritism, courtesy notes, moral guarantees and dishonor.

What then shall we call mutual credit?

Credit transactions fall into two broad categories; 1. discounting of trading values; 2. capital advances to agriculture and industry.

Each of these operations involves a positive pledge, a real mortgage. Thus the trader who needs cash obtains it by means of drafts or money orders that he draws on his debtor clients, and which he takes care to have again endorsed by another merchant or banker, sometimes by two, which makes three and even four sureties: 1. the debtor, 2. the drawer, 3. the endorser or endorsers, each of these persons being liable for body and goods. In times of crisis, we have also seen merchants obtain money on deposit of goods, representing three or four times the sum paid. Now, it is necessary that the working masses know it well: it is from none of these sureties, on which credit rests, that mutuality can free them. It is about something else entirely.

We have said above that not only is credit not granted on simple promises, but on pledges, realities or mortgages; that moreover it is a self-interested operation, implying for the lender remuneration or profit, a real premium, analogous to that of insurance, varying from 2, 3, 4 to 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 percent per year, and which is called *interest*. To this interest the bankers add a commission and other minor charges which often raise the interest by 1 percent. It is this interest, with the accessories, that it is a question of

reducing by means of mutuality, as well for the discounts of the trade as for the loans on mortgage to agriculture and industry.

I have written too much, for seventeen years, on this subject of mutual credit, for me to believe myself obliged at this moment to enter into long explanations; a few words are enough.

Interest on money, the maximum of which was fixed by the law of September 3, 1807, at 6 percent per year in commercial matters, and 5 percent in civil matters, is the heaviest obstacle that weighs on labor, and for consumption the least justified and most disastrous levy. One can get an idea of this by thinking that trade discounts produce for the Banque de France alone and its branches nearly 40 millions of net profits; as to the advances of capital, to agriculture and industry, that the total of the mortgages was, in 1857, 12 billions, representing an interest of at least 600 millions.

Now, with regard first to circulation and discount, it is clear that the commercial interest demanded by the bankers at 6, 7, 8 and 9 percent is a tribute voluntarily paid to the holders of specie by the discounting merchants, since, just as they could insure each other at the slightest premium, with which no company could be satisfied; just as they would have been able, by acting on the resolutions of the authorities, to guarantee transport at 60 and 80 percent below railway transport, likewise they could credit each other, with or without the intervention of the Government, at a rate to which no capitalist could descend.

When in 1848 the *Comptoir d'escompte* was created, under the initiative of the Provisional Government and by commercial subscription, what prevented the Government, after having granted this new bank the double guarantee of the bonds of the city of Paris and of the Treasury bonds, to stipulate that the shareholders of the Comptoir should enjoy the discount of their bills, without interest, and in return for a simple commission? Soon we would have seen everyone seek the same favor, to solicit shares, that is to say to redeem by a voluntary subscription once paid, the tribute paid by him each year to the bankers. But the February Republic in 1848 was only about politics; it was concerned neither with mutuality nor with gratuity; satisfied to have started a new machine, it gave up any part in the profits in favor of the shareholders. Today the State has withdrawn its guarantee, which has become useless; the capital of the Comptoir, first of 6,666,500 fr. for the share to be provided by the shareholders, was increased to 20 million, and the shares, at 500 fr. originally, are quoted at 980 fr. at the stock exchange.

As for the advances to be made to agriculture and industry, as they are necessarily composed of raw materials, instruments of work, cattle, subsistence and labor; as by these words, land credit, we do not understand any advances of land, meadows, fields, vines, forests, houses or other buildings, but simple work services and supplies; as specie only serves here, as in commerce, as a means of exchange; as consequently the said advances can only be taken from the savings of the nation and as consequently the sole mission of the *Crédit foncieris* to facilitate, through it, borrowers the means to draw from it; as such

an operation has much more the character of a forward sale than that of a mortgage loan, it is also evident that here mutuality can and must receive one of its finest applications, since it is only a question of giving form and practice to what, at bottom, is already the reality, namely, that the true lenders are the producers; that the material of the loan is not money, but raw materials, workdays and instruments of labor and subsistence; that for this purpose, it is not a question of organizing a bank, it is rather a question of stores and warehouses; finally that any advance of this kind having to be made with a view to reproduction, it is up to the producers to organize, by means of a syndicate, their services with respect to each other, on cheap terms to obtain from the money-handlers.

We can never be astonished enough by the strange fascination produced on our finance routines and our so-called economists by money. When in 1848 we took care, in the Republican Assembly, to establish the land credit, savior of our agriculture, we were concerned with only one thing: to create with the least possible cash, the largest possible sum of credit notes; absolutely like the Bank of France. But the more we dreamed about it, the more difficulties we encountered. At first no one would agree to lend his crowns at 3, 3.65 percent interest at most, so that the new establishment could re-lend them on a mortgage at 5, 5 ½ or 6, amortization and administration costs included, for a period of twenty to sixty years. Then, had lenders been found, what use would that have been? The mortgage would nevertheless have made its way, the agricultural debt would have increased, more and more unpayable, and the institution of land credit would have ended in universal expropriation, if, while the revenue from the land is 2 percent, we had persisted in borrowing at 5 and 6. The contradiction thus arose on both sides, on the side of the holders of money and on the side of the agricultural debt, this fine institution of land credit, which had made so many hopes conceived, and whose creation was first discounted to the honor of the imperial government, was abandoned: agriculture now takes occupies itself with something quite different. Earlier we recalled that the total of mortgages amounted to 12 billion. In order for the Crédit Foncier to be able to repay or convert such a sum at ease, it would have had to collect in its coffers, like the Bank, at least a third of this capital in money, i.e. 4 billion coins, as collateral for 12 billion banknotes. Isn't that the ultimate absurdity? Yet it is against this stumbling block that the skill of our financiers, the science of our economists, and the hopes of our republican agronomists have shattered!... *Stupete gentes!*

There is therefore here, as everywhere, a triple abuse to be destroyed, an abuse that would have long since disappeared without the stupidity of our creators and the complicity of our governments:

More and more obstinate violation of economic right;

Deduction in pure loss, and always increasing, of part of the wealth created each year, in the form of interest;

Development of an unbridled, and more and more corrupting parasitism.

Thus what distinguishes the mutualist reforms is that they are both strict in law and highly sociable: they consist in suppressing the tributes of all kinds levied on the workers, under pretexts and by means that will one day be provided for by the constitutions, and imputable to the Governments.¹¹

This mutuality, so ardently denied in our day by the promoters of privilege, and which appears as the signal feature of the new Gospel, is it not what Christ had in view when he said: Give credit without expecting anything, *mutuum date, nihil india sperantes*. Modern theologians, relaxing from the morality of the ancients, have debated on the question whether, by these words, Jesus Christ had absolutely forbidden the loan at interest, whether he had laid down a precept or he had only meant to give one piece of advice. The distinction that we have previously made between the law of Charity and the law of Justice, and the explanation that we have given in the present article, of mutual credit, always pledged, but not interested, and of personal credit, give us the true meaning of the Gospel.

Moses had come first, saying to the Jew: Thou shalt not take interest in thy brother, but only in the stranger. His aim was above all to prevent the confusion and alienation of inheritances, threatened in his time, as in ours, by mortgage. It was for this same purpose that he had ordered the remission of debts every fifty years. Jesus appears in his turn, preaching universal brotherhood, without distinction of Jew or Gentile, and generalizing the law of Moses: Thou shalt lend to thy brother, Israelite or foreigner, without interest. The author of the Gospel thus closed the age of egoism, the age of nationalities and opened the period of love, the era of humanity. Doubtless he developed with more energy than anyone had done before him the celebrated principle, *Do unto others as unto yourselves*; but it never occurred to him to organize mutuality economically, to found mutual credit banks, any more than to impose on anyone the payment of his savings, without compensation and at the risk of losing everything. The proposition enunciated by him relates to Christian communities: however, we know that these communities did not last.

¹¹ One thing we must not omit: Certain partisans of economic anarchy, promoters of industrial and mercantile feudalism, bitter adversaries of workers' emancipation, affect to insistently demand what they call the freedom of the banks, or decentralization of credit; as they have asked for and obtained what they call free trade, as they are on the verge of demanding freedom of interest. In this regard, they never fail to point out mutual credit as a fact of centralization, and to renew the accusation of governmentalism against the supporters of the economic revolution. Is it necessary to remind the reader that any public service, organized in such a way as to cost consumers nothing or almost nothing, is the work of a community acting by itself and for itself, a work therefore as much outside the community as of centralization? Let the public banks be independent of each other, in each province, in each city; nothing stands in the way: centralization will be sufficiently broken by this means. But let us take as freedom of credit the freedom granted to everyone to issue paper money, just as we call freedom of interest the ability to raise the discount to 7, 8, 9, 10 and beyond that, it is an abuse of language intended to cover a deception, and in science a contradiction. — What we have just said about credit, we will repeat about insurance, public works, etc. Let us not confuse collective labor, free by its nature, with the products of centralization, the most expensive and worst of all.

At this hour, we take a step further: without returning to evangelical community and charity, we affirm economic mutuality, in which, without imposing sacrifice on anyone, we obtain everything at the fair price of work; and, for this simple idea, we can say of ourselves what the Jews of Jesus' time said of him: They did not understand him, *Et sui sum non comprehenderunt*.¹²

Egoism, disguised under the false name of liberty, has infected and disorganized us in our whole being. There is not one of our passions, our mistakes, not a form of vice and of

¹² The theory of mutual credit, tending towards gratuity, that is to say entailing for the borrower no other costs than those of administration, estimated at 1/2 or 1/4 percent, was for the first time presented theoretically in a forty-three page brochure, under this title: *Organization of Credit and Circulation*, by J.-P. Proudhon, Paris, 1848. Others, such as Mazel elder, and more recently M. Bonnard, seem to have glimpsed the same principle. But what proves that they only ever had a superficial and false idea of it is that both of them, especially Bonnard, immediately conceived the idea of exploiting this principle for their own benefit, forgetting that what makes the essence of mutuality is its very gratuity. The Bonnard counter is now very dilapidated; However, it is said that the founder had time to make a good fortune, the source of which, however irreproachable it may appear to the courts, is certainly not mutuality.

Among the opponents of mutual credit, it is up to me to single out here Fréd. Bastiat. The memory of this economist, very honorable in most of his opinions, will remain charged, in the judgment of men of common sense, with the reproach of bad faith that he deserved during the public discussion which we had together in 1849. I recognized willingly with Bastiat that in terms of credit the simple individual cannot, without remuneration, divest himself of his capital, any more than he could have insured a single house without a large premium; then, when I wanted to make my adversary understand that the opposite would take place in a mutualist regime, Bastiat no longer wanted to hear anything, alleging that mutuality did not interest him in the least, and that he considered himself satisfied with my admission on the consequences of the credit that I called unilateral, in order to avoid the odious epithet of usurious.

On this subject, I will allow myself a reflection here. Less than anyone else it would be appropriate for me to criticize the working masses, especially at a time when they are seeking to join their efforts, in France, Germany and England, to ensure, against any capitalist coalition and any eventuality of international war, their common emancipation. However, after having pointed out the false ideas and illusions of the working multitude, with regard to credit, I cannot help but note the timidity of a few, who, in their fear of utopias, make themselves a sort of wisdom of following bourgeois practice step by step, and would willingly make their mutualism consist of the working class having its own bankers, while the owners, entrepreneurs and shopkeepers would have theirs. What! Barely affirmed, mutuality would blush at its name! It would be afraid of letting itself be dragged too far! It would protest against what some already call the exaggeration of its doctrines! Let the workers rest assured. Their banks, in current account with the Bank of France, paying very dearly for capital that they are all the more forbidden to give cheaply, are not about to wage a serious war on capitalism. It is not through splits, through insignificant competition, much less through philanthropic subsidies or devotional subscriptions, that mutual credit will be founded in Europe. Here, as I have already expressed more than once, we need all the power of a collective, frankly reforming will. In 1849, the Bank of the People pursued only one goal: it was to work, through detailed examples and weekly reports, on the economic education of the People. For the realization, we had postponed the elections of 1852. Without doubt the future hides many wonders from us, and the Workers' Democracy is invincible. However, I believe that it would do well not to exhaust itself in useless efforts, and since it knew how to account for itself so well in 1863, not to lose sight of the political thoughts of 1852.

iniquity, that does not take from us a part of our meager sustenance. We pay tribute to ignorance, to chance, to prejudice, to speculation, to monopoly, to charlatanism, to advertising, to bad taste, as much as to sensuality and laziness, tribute to crises, stagnations, coalitions, unemployment, not to mention that, by our routine practices, we still pay for competition, property, authority, religion, even science, which obviously there can be no question of abolishing, tributes superior to the services they render. Everywhere economic right is violated in its fundamental principles, and everywhere this violation leads to our detriment in embezzlement of wealth, development of parasitism, and corruption of public morals.

Chapter XIII.

Of association, in mutuality.

I thought it necessary to devote a special chapter to this question, which holds a very large place in the preoccupations of the workers, and over which there still reigns a profound obscurity. As much as their comrades in Luxembourg, the authors of the Manifesto advocate *association*, and regard it as a powerful means of order, morality, wealth, and progress. But neither one nor the other has yet been able to recognize it; all call it pell-mell with mutuality, many confuse it with community; no one, apart from the Civil and Commercial Codes, which moreover the workers care little about, has been able to disentangle their character, useful or harmful; above all, no one has recognized the modifications that it is called upon to receive in the mutual system.

I will try, as far as I can, to shed a little light on this interesting subject, and, in the interest of the workers' societies that are going to develop on all sides and in which a crowd of political notabilities take the liveliest interest, to fill in a few words this important gap.

I call *economic forces* certain formulas of action, the effect of which is to multiply the power of hard labor beyond what it would be if it were left entirely to individual liberty.

Thus, what is called division of labor or separation of industries is an economic force: it has been proven a thousand times since A. Smith that a given number of workers will produce four times, ten times, twenty times as much work, dividing it among themselves in a systematic way, as they would have done if they had each worked separately, all doing the same task, without coming to an understanding and without combining their efforts.

For the same reason, or rather for an inverse reason, what I named among the first, *force of collectivity*, is also an economic force: it is also proven that a given number of workmen will carry out with facility and in a short time a work impossible for these same workmen, if, instead of grouping their efforts, they pretend to act individually.

The application of machines to industry is also an economic force: this needs no demonstration. By allowing man greater effort, labor becomes more useful, the product more considerable: the resulting increase in wealth attests to the presence of an economic force.

Competition is an economic force, by the extra excitation that it gives to the worker;

Association is another, by the confidence and security it inspires in him;

Exchange, finally; credit, coined gold and silver, property itself, which no scruples should prevent me from naming here, at least in anticipation, are economic forces.

But of all the economic forces, the greatest, the most sacred, that which, in the combinations of work, unites all the conceptions of the mind and the justifications of the conscience, is mutuality, in which one can say that all others come to merge.

Through mutuality the other economic forces enter into right; they become, so to speak, integral parts of the right of man and of the producer: without that they would remain indifferent to social good as well as to social evil; they are not compulsory; they offer no character of morality by themselves. We know the excesses, not to mention the massacres of the Division of Labor and Machinery; — the furies of competition, the frauds of commerce, the spoliations of credit, the prostitution of money, the tyranny of property. All this criticism is long since exhausted; and, with the current Democracy, it would be a waste of time to insist on it. We preach to the converted. Only mutuality, which is both intelligence and conscience; the synallagmatic pact, so long disregarded, but which secretly rallies all the workers, obliges man at the same time as it fertilizes his work; only mutuality is inoffensive and invincible: for mutuality, in human societies and in the universe, is at the same time Right and Force.

Certainly association, seen from its beautiful side, is gentle and fraternal: God forbid that I dishonor it in the eyes of the people!... But association, by itself and without a thought of Right that dominates it, is nonetheless a fortuitous link based on a pure physiological and self-interested feeling; a free contract, revocable at will; a limited group, of which one can always say that the members, being associated only for themselves, are associated against everyone else. Thus, moreover, the legislator has understood it and could not have not understood it.

Of what is it a question, for example, for our great capitalist associations, organized according to the spirit of mercantile and industrial feudalism? To monopolize the manufacture, the exchanges and the profits; to this end, to group under the same direction the most diverse specialties, to centralize the trades, to agglomerate the functions; in a word, to exclude small industry, to kill small trade, thereby, to transform into employees the most numerous and most interesting part of the bourgeoisie: all for the benefit of the so-called organizers, founders, directors, administrators, advisers and shareholders of these gigantic speculations. Numerous examples of this unfair war waged by large capitals against small ones can be seen in Paris: it is useless to cite them. There has been talk of a central bookstore that would be sponsored by M. Péreire and would replace most of the current bookstores: a new means of dominating the press and ideas. Even the society of men of letters, jealous of the profits of booksellers, does not dream of becoming the publisher of all the works published by living authors. This mania for invasion no longer knows any bounds: an unequivocal sign of the poverty of spirit. I knew a printing establishment that combined, with typesetting and printing, which can hardly be separated, wholesale and retail bookshops, stationery, type casting, the manufacture of presses, platemaking, bookbinding, cabinet-making, etc. They also wanted to create a school for apprentices and a small academy there. This monster establishment quickly collapsed through waste, parasitism, clutter, overhead, rising competition, the growing disproportion between expenses and receipts. Industrial feudalism has the same tendencies; it will have the same end.

Of what was it a question for the workers' associations under the Luxembourg system? To supplant, by the coalition of the workers and with the subsidies of the State, the capitalist associations, that is to say always to make war on free industry and commerce, by the centralization of business, the agglomeration of workers and the superiority of capital. Instead of a hundred or two hundred thousand licensed establishments that exist in Paris, there would have been only a hundred large associations, representing the various branches of industry and commerce, where the working population would have been regimented and permanently enslaved by the *raison d'etat* of the fraternity, as it tends at the moment to be by the *raison d'etat* of capital. What would freedom, public happiness, civilization have gained there? Nothing. We would have changed chains, and, what is saddest and what shows the sterility of legislators, entrepreneurs and reformers, the social idea would not have taken a step; we would still be subject to the same arbitrariness, not to say under the same economic fatalism.

From this first and rapid glance, both at the communist associations, which moreover remained in the planning stage, and at the general, limited, and anonymous companies, as they were conceived in the mercantilist anarchy and as they practices, with the sanction of the legislator and the protection of the Government, the new feudalism, it results: that the both were founded with particular aims and in view of selfish interests; that nothing in them reveals a reforming thought, a superior view of civilization, not the slightest concern for progress and the general destiny; quite the contrary, that acting, like individuals, in an anarchic mode, they can never be considered as anything other than small churches organized against the great one, in whose bosom and at the expense of which they live.

The general characteristics of these societies, gathered by the Code, show their narrow-mindedness and limited scope. They are made up of a determined number of people, excluding all foreigners; these people are naturally designated by their names, professions, residences, qualities; all provide input; the company is formed for a special purpose and for an exclusive interest, and for a limited duration. Nothing in all that answers the great hopes that the Workers' Democracy has had for association: by what right would it flatter itself to make it produce more human results than those we see? Association is a self-defining thing, the essential character of which is particularity. Can we prevent there from being, side by side, separate and distinct, associations of carpenters, masons, lamp-makers, hatters, of tailors, bootmakers, etc., etc.? Does it enter anyone's mind that all these associations merge into one another and form but one and the same general society? One can boldly defy the Workers' Democracy to throw itself into such a mess; what did I say? One can defy, not only the workers, but their councils, the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences, the Legislative Body, the School of Law, *en masse*, to give a formula of association by which they would unite, combining their action and their interests, two heterogeneous groups, such as masons and cabinetmakers. Therefore, if the

associations are distinct, by the force of things they will also be rivals; their interests will be divergent; there will be contradictions, hostilities. You will never escape from this.

But, you will say to me, do we not have, in order to make our associations agree and make them live in peace without merging them, the principle of mutuality?...

All in good time. Here mutuality already appears as the *Deus ex machina*. Let us therefore know what it teaches us; and, to begin with, let us note that mutuality is not the same thing as association, and that, a friend of liberty as much as of the group, it shows itself equally far from all fantasy, as well as from all intolerance.

Earlier we talked about the division of labor. A consequence of this economic force is that as much as it engenders specialties it creates centers of independence, which implies the separation of companies, precisely the opposite of what the promoters of communist associations, like the founders of capitalist associations, seek. Then combined with the law of the natural grouping of populations by regions, cantons, communes, districts, streets, the division of labor leads to this decisive consequence: that not only is each industrial specialty called upon to develop, and to act in its full and complete independence, under the conditions of mutuality, responsibility and guarantee that form the general condition of society; but that the same is true of industrialists who, in their respective localities, each individually represent a work specialty: in principle, these manufacturers must remain free. The division of labor, liberty, competition, political and social equality, the dignity of man and of the citizen, do not admit branches. The Sixty say in their Manifesto that they no longer want clienteles: these would only be the counterpart of those; it is always the same idea, it is the same thing.

It follows from this that the principle of mutuality, as far as association is concerned, is to associate men only so far as the requirements of production, the cheapness of products, the needs of consumption, the safety of producers themselves require it, where it is not possible either for the public to rely on individual industry, or for the latter to assume the burdens and run alone the risks of the undertakings. It is no longer then a systemic thought, a calculation of ambition, a partisan spirit, a vain sentimentality that unites the subjects; it is the reason of things, and it is because by associating in this way they only obey the reason of things, that they can preserve, even within the association, their liberty.

This side of the mutualist idea, as it results from the general principles laid down in the Manifesto of the Sixty, is of a nature to reconcile to the new democracy the strongest sympathies of the petty bourgeois, small industrialists and small tradesmen.

Is it a question of large-scale manufacturing, extractive, metallurgical, maritime production? It is clear that here there is room for association: no one disputes this any longer. Is it again one of those great enterprises that have a character of public service, such as the railways, the credit establishments, the docks? I have proven elsewhere that the law of mutuality is that these services, excluding any profit from capital, should be delivered to the public at the cost of operation and maintenance. In this case again, it is quite obvious that the guarantee of good performance and good market price cannot be

given by monopoly companies or by state-sponsored communities, operating in the name of the state, on behalf of the state. This guarantee can only come from free members, committed on the one hand to the public, by the contract of mutuality, and to each other by the ordinary contract of association.

Now is it a question of those thousand trades and businesses that exist in such large numbers in the towns and even in the countryside? There, I no longer see the need, the usefulness of the association. I see it all the less in that the fruit that one could promise oneself from it is acquired, moreover, by the ensemble of mutualist guarantees, mutual insurance, mutual credit, market policing, etc., etc. I say more: these guarantees taken, there is more safety for the public, in the cases of which we speak, to deal with a single contractor, than with a company.

Who does not see, for example, that the reason for small commerce to exist is in the need for large companies to establish on all sides, for the convenience of their customers, private shops or offices, in a word branches? However, under a mutual insurance scheme, we are all customers of each other, branch managers of each other, servants of each other. In this consists our *Solidarity*, this solidarity that affirms, with the *Right to work*, with the *Freedom of labor*, with the *Mutuality of the credit*, etc., the authors of the Manifesto. What inconvenience would they find if the same man who, in a system of allegiance such as that of the large capitalist companies or that of the communities of Luxembourg, would be condemned to remain a pledged branch manager, simple employee, became in the system of mutuality where speculation is only a word, a free trader? The merchant's mission is not only to buy and sell, from the exclusive point of view of private interest; it must rise with the social order of which it is a part. Above all, the merchant is a distributor of the products, of which he must have a thorough knowledge of the qualities, the manufacture, the origin, the value. He has to keep the consumers in his constituency informed of prices, new items, the risk of higher prices, the probabilities of falling. It is a continual work, which requires intelligence, zeal, honesty, and which, I repeat, in the new conditions in which mutualism places us, in no way requires the guarantee, moreover suspect, of a large association. It suffices here, for public safety, of the general reform of morals by principles. So I ask myself: why would this economic individuality disappear? Why would we get mixed up in this questions? Let us organize right and for the shop, *laissez faire*. To the most diligent and honest the favor of the regular customers.

There then, if I am not mistaken, must be found the elements of the alliance strongly affirmed and claimed by the authors of the Manifesto between the industrious and commercial petty bourgeoisie and the working classes.

“Without us,” they say with a deep sense of truth, “the bourgeoisie cannot establish anything solid; without its help our emancipation may be delayed for a long time yet. Let us therefore unite for a common goal, the triumph of the true democracy.”

Let us repeat it from their example: It cannot be here a question of undoing acquired positions; it is simply a question, by the reduction of the rent of capital and housing, the facility and the insignificance of the rate of the discount, the elimination of parasitism, the extirpation of speculation, the regulation of warehouses and markets, the reduction in transport prices, the balance of values, the higher education given to the working classes, the definitive preponderance of labor over capital, the fair measure of esteem granted to talent and function, — it is a question, I say, of restoring to labor and probity what the capitalist prelibation unduly takes away from them; to increase the general well-being by assuring existences; to prevent, by the certainty of transactions, ruins and bankruptcies; to prevent, as despoilers, exorbitant fortunes without real and legitimate foundation, in short, to put an end to all of the anomalies and perturbations that healthy critique has at all times indicated as the chronic causes of poverty and of the proletariat.

But what's the point of fighting over words and wasting time in useless discussions? One thing is certain, it is that the people, whatever may be said, have faith in Association, that they affirm it, anticipate it and announce it, and that however there is nothing of it other than the partnership agreement defined by our codes. Let us therefore conclude, to remain faithful both to the data of science and to popular aspirations, that Association, whose formula contemporary innovators have sought, as if the legislator had said nothing about it, but that none of them have even managed to define; that Fourier, artist, mystic and prophet, called HARMONY, and that he announced should be preceded by a period of *Guarantism*; this famous Association which must embrace the whole Society, and nevertheless reserve all the rights of individual and corporate liberty; which consequently cannot be either community or the *universal society of goods and gains*, recognized by the Civil Code, practiced in the Middle Ages in the countryside, generalized by the sect of the Moravians, identified with the political constitution, or the State, and regulated in different ways by Plato, Campanella, Morus, Owen, Cabet, etc.; nor trading companies, in collective name and limited partnership, anonymous, participation; let us conclude, I say, that Association, which the Workers' Democracy persists in invoking as the end of all servitude and the superior form of civilization, who does not see that it is and cannot be anything other than MUTUALITY? Mutuality, in fact, the outlines of which we have tried to trace, is it not the social contract par excellence, at once political and economic, synallagmatic and commutative, which embraces at the same time, in its very simple terms, the individual and the family, the corporation and the city, the sale and the purchase, credit, insurance, labor, instruction and property; any profession, any transaction, any service, any guarantee; which, in its high regenerating scope, excludes all selfishness, all parasitism, all arbitrariness, all speculation, all dissolution? Is this not truly

that mysterious association, dreamed of by utopians, unknown to philosophers and jurisconsults, which we will define in two words, *Contract of mutation or mutuality*?¹³

Let us take a last look at this new pact, as it appears today in the imperfect but hopeful sketches presented to us here and there by the Workers' Democracy, and note its essential characteristics. However restricted it may seem at the beginning in its personnel, special in its object, limited in its duration, modifiable and resolvable in its tenor, there exists in the mutualist association — we can henceforth give it this name — a power of development that tends with an irresistible force to assimilate to it, to incorporate into it all that which surrounds it, to transform the ambient Humanity and the State in its own image. This power of development, the mutual association derives from the high morality and economic fertility of its principle.

Note first that by virtue of the principle that characterizes it, the executives of the Association are open to whoever, having recognized the spirit and the aim, asks to enter it: exclusion is contrary to it, and the more it grows in number the more benefits it gains. From the point of view of personnel, the mutual association is therefore by nature unlimited, which is the opposite of any other association.

The same is true of its object. A mutual society may have as its special object the operation of an industry. But, by virtue of the principle of mutuality, it tends to involve in its guarantee system first the industries with which it is in immediate relation, then the

¹³ The honorable citizens who in recent times have taken under their patronage the development of workers' societies — representatives of the People, journalists, bankers, lawyers, men of letters, industrialists, etc. — will recognize, I hope, that in giving to the term MUTUALITY, *Mutuellism*, etc., taken as the general formula of the Economic Revolution, preference over that of *association*, I did not act for a vain motive of personal glory, but on the contrary in the interest of scientific accuracy. First, the word association is too special and too vague; it lacks precision; it speaks less to intelligence than to feeling; it does not have the character of universality required in such circumstances. Not to mention, as one of the writers of the Association says, that there currently exist among the workers three kinds of societies, whose connection must be found, societies of *production*, societies of *consumption* and societies of *credit*; there are others for *relief*, *insurance*, *teaching*, *reading*, *temperance*, *singing*, etc. Add the companies defined by the Code: *Civil and commercial* companies; *universal societies of goods and gains*, or *communities*; general partnerships, general and limited partnerships, and public limited companies. All of these are hardly alike, and the first thing a writer who wanted to write a treatise on association would have to do would be to find a principle by means of which he could reduce these innumerable associations to a single formula, a principle that consequently would be higher than that of the association itself.

But that is not all: it is obvious that three-quarters, if not four-fifths of a nation like ours — landowners, farmers, small industrialists, men of letters, artists, public officials, etc., — can never be considered as living in society; now, unless we declare them from now on outside reform, outside revolution, we must admit that the word *society*, *association*, does not fulfill the purpose of science; another must be found which, to simplicity and nerve, joins the universality of a principle. Finally, we have observed that in the new Democracy the political principle must be identical and adequate to the economic principle; now this principle has long been named and defined; it is the federative principle, synonymous with mutuality or reciprocal guarantee, which has nothing in common with the principle of association.

most distant. In this respect again, the mutualist association is unlimited, of an indefinite power of agglomeration.

Shall I speak of its duration? It may be that mutualist associates, having failed in an enterprise, in what is defined, particular, personal and special, find themselves led to break their agreements. It is no less true that, as their society was founded above all on an idea of right and with a view to the economic application of this idea, it affects perpetuity, as we have just seen that it affected universality. The day when the working masses will have acquired the clear notion of the principle that agitates them at this moment, when their consciousness will have been penetrated by it, when they will have loudly professed it, any abrogation of the regime instituted by them will become impossible: it would be a contradiction. Mutuality, or the mutual society is justice; and one does not retrogress any more in matters of justice than in matters of religion. Has the world, which has become monotheistic through the preaching of the Gospel, ever dreamed of returning to the worship of the gods? When the Russians abolish slavery among them, could France revert to feudal constitutions? This will be the case with the new reform. The contract of mutuality is irrevocable by its nature, both in the smallest association and in the largest. Purely material and external causes can terminate societies of this kind, with regard to what is special about them; in themselves, and in their fundamental arrangement, they tend to create a new order of things and are no longer terminable. Men, after having made among themselves a pact of probity, loyalty, guarantee, honor, cannot say to each other when separating: We were mistaken; now we are going to become liars and scoundrels again; we will gain more!...

Finally, the last characteristic, the contribution of capital is no longer essential in the mutualist society; it is enough, to be associated, to maintain the mutual faith in the transactions.

In summary, according to the existing legislation, the society is a contract formed between a determined number of people, designated by their names, professions and qualities (Civil Code, art. 1852), with a view to a particular benefit to be shared between the associates (*ibid.*). Each partner must bring money, or other goods, or his industry (article 1835). It is made for a determined time (art. 1865).

The mutual association is conceived in a completely different spirit. It admits, as a mutualist, everyone, and tends towards universality; — it is formed not directly with a view to a profit, but as a guarantee; — one is not required to bring in either money or other valuables, not even one's industry; the only condition required is to be faithful to the pact of mutuality; — once formed, its nature is to generalize and to have no end.

Communist association, as a revolutionary instrument and governmental formula, also tends towards universality and perpetuity; but it leaves nothing of their own to the partners, neither their money, nor their other property, nor their labor, nor their talent, nor their liberty: this is what renders it forever impossible.

The generations once transformed by the mutualist law, nothing will prevent them from continuing to form, as at present, special associations, having respectively as their object the exploitation of an industrial specialty or the pursuit of a business, for personal gain. But these associations, which will even be able to retain their current designations, subject to each other and to the public in the duty of mutuality, imbued with the new spirit, will no longer be able to compare themselves to their analogs of the present time. They will have lost their selfish and subversive character while retaining the particular advantages they derive from their economic power. They will be so many particular churches within the universal Church, capable of reproducing it itself, if it were possible that it came to be extinguished.

— I would have liked to give here the mutualist and federative theory of Property, of which I published the critique twenty-five years ago.¹⁴ The scope of the subject compels me to postpone this important study to another time.

— I shall speak in the third part of this volume of free trade, freedom of coalition, and some other questions of political economy, which can only be resolved by the principle of mutuality

¹⁴ See *What is Property?; Letter to M. Blanqui; Warning to the Proprietors*, Paris, 1840, 41 et 42, and *Economic Contradictions*, Vol. II.

CHAPTER XIV.

Of mutuality in the Government. — Conception of the identity of the political and economic principles. — How the Worker Democracy solves the problem of liberty and order.

That which constitutes *economic right*, of which I have spoken many times in previous publications, in other words, the application of justice to political economy, we must understand now to be the order of mutuality. Outside of mutual institutions, freely shaped by reason and experience, the economic facts are a tangle of conflicting events, the product of chance, fraud, tyranny and theft.¹⁵

Economic right granted, public right will be deduced from it immediately. A government is a system of guarantees; the same principle of mutual guarantee, which must ensure to each instruction, labor, the freedom to disposition his own faculties, the exercise of his industry, the enjoyment of his property, the exchange of his products and services, will equally vouchsafe to everyone order, justice, peace, equality, the moderation of power, the loyalty of public officials, the dedication of all.

Just as the territory was originally divided by nature and defined by a certain membership of regions, so in each region, divided by mutual agreement between municipalities and shared among families - just as, once again labors and industries have each been distributed according to the organic law of division, and have in turn formed consensual groups and corporations;

Similarly, under the new pact, political sovereignty, civil authority and corporate influence are coordinated among the regions, districts, communes and other categories, and through such coordination, become identical with liberty itself.

The old law of unity and indivisibility is repealed. By virtue of the consent, at least presumed, of the various parts of the state to the pact of union, the political center is everywhere and the circumference nowhere. Each group or variety of people, every race, every language is master in its own territory; each city, secured by its neighbors, is queen of the circle formed by its radius. From now on, the unity is only marked in right by the promise that the various sovereign groups make to one another: 1st, to govern themselves and to follow, along with their neighbors, certain principles; 2nd, to protect against the enemy abroad and tyranny within; 3rd, to collaborate in the interests of their respective farms and businesses, and also to assist one another in the event of misfortune; — in the Government, only by a national council formed by the deputies of States, charged with oversight of the pact's implementation and the improvement of the common weal.

¹⁵ See *Economic Contradictions*, 2 vol. gr. in 18, Paris, 1849.

Thus, carried into the political sphere, what we have hitherto called mutualism or guarantism takes the name of *federalism*. This simple synonymy gives us the entire revolution, both political and economic...¹⁶

I will not dwell further on this conclusion of mutualism, finding the practice of universal suffrage and provincial and municipal liberties to be sufficiently emphasized in the Manifesto of the Sixty in what concerns the corporate reorganization. It will suffice here to assert, on the basis of reason and fact alike, that in the Worker Democracy, such it was announced last year in its actions, the more thoughtful and more authentic politics is the corollary of the economy; they treat both the same method and the same principles, ensure that the unitary republic, constitutional monarchy and centralizing autocracy are no more likely to succeed in the future with the masses than mercantilist anarchy or Icarian community.

No doubt this synthetic conception has not, at the time of this writing, made much progress; only a small number of elite minds suspect it. But the foundations are laid, the seeds are planted; the logic of the masses and the natural course of things will give them increase, *Dabit Deus incrementum*. We can say this with complete confidence: the chaotic socialism of 1848 has sorted itself out. I wouldn't take it upon myself to say everything it carries with it; what I know and what I see is that, already a strong embryo, it is completely constituted. Slander and ignorance can do nothing to it. It has solved its problem: wordplay aside, the democratic and social revolution can be said to be guaranteed; its triumph cannot be long in coming.

The mutualist idea, — outside of which we will have reason to convince ourselves more and more that there is no possible improvement for the people, no salvation, — could not fail, upon its appearance, to serve as a text for some criticisms. Two accusations arose, similar in substance, different only in the point of view and the temperament of those who expressed them. On the one hand, the former Democrats seemed to fear that instead of simply reforming the political system, by attacking abuses, changing forms and renewing institutions, as the Republican Party had always understood, Mutualism would destroy the Unity itself, that is to say what constitutes the social bond, collective life, what gives a people its cohesive force, and ensures its power and glory. On the other hand, the Bourgeoisie showed the same mistrust; it saw in this endless mutuality a tendency towards anarchy, and it protested, in the name of liberty itself, against this ferocity of individual right and this exorbitance of personality.

Some minds, it must be said, better intentioned than prudent, have lent themselves to these grievances, through the vehemence with which they have protested in recent times against the excess of central Power; so that if, after so many debates, contradictions, fatigue, disgust, we have something left of our old opinions, some spark of our old political

¹⁶ See *Of the Federative Principle*, 1 vol. gr. in-18, by P.-J. Proudhon, Paris, 1862, Dentu, and *The Sworn Democrats*, by the same author, from the same publisher.

ardor, we can, in the final analysis, interpret it in favor of Order versus Liberty. For twelve years, there has been a real force of inertia in France against any movement.

It is therefore a question at this moment, for the Workers' Democracy, and I do not need to insist on the seriousness of the question, of showing how, with its principle of mutuality, it intends to realize the bourgeois motto of 1830, *Liberty-Public Order*, which the Republican Democracy of 1848 more readily expressed with these words: *Unity and Liberty*.

It is here that we will be able to contemplate together, in its high scope and its great character, this sovereign Idea, by which the political capacity of the working classes is attested, in the most triumphant manner.

Let us first consider that the human mind essentially tends towards unity. It affirms this unity in all things: in Religion, in Science, in Right. It wants it all the more in politics; it would want it, if the thing did not imply a sort of contradiction, even in Philosophy and Liberty. Unity is the law of everything that has life and is organized; whoever feels, whoever loves, whoever enjoys, whoever creates, whoever fights, whoever labor, and, through combat as well as through labor, seeks order and happiness. Lack of unity was conceived as the principle of the satanic kingdom; anarchy, dissolution, is death. It is through unity and with a view to unity that cities are built, that legislation is formulated, that States are founded, that dynasties are consecrated, that multitudes obey princes, assemblies, pontiffs. It is out of horror of rifts, the inevitable result of discord, that the police of governments pursue with their mistrust and their anger philosophical investigation, and haughty analysis, and impious negation, and deicidal heresy; it is for this precious unity that nations sometimes resign themselves to the most detestable tyranny.

Let us try to establish, without exaggerating or diminishing anything, what unity is.

First of all observe that, as there is no liberty without unity, or, equivalently, without order, equally there is no unity without variety, without plurality, without divergence; no order without protest, contradiction or antagonism. These two ideas, *Liberty* and UNITY or ORDER, are dependent on one another, like credit to mortgage, like matter to the spirit, like the body to the soul. We can neither separate them nor absorb them into each other; we must resign ourselves to living with both, balancing them...

The question here is therefore to know, not as impotent sophists claim, whether Liberty will emerge from Order, or the Order from Liberty; whether we can rely on the latter for the production of the former, or if it is itself only the last word of organizing thought: Order and Liberty do not await cooperation or permission from each other, nor from anyone, to manifest. They exist, indissolubly linked to each other by themselves, and for all eternity. It is only a question of discovering what is, in all things, their respective measure, and the character that belongs to them.

To date, Order and Liberty have been, in the Body Politic, two provisional, inaccurate, not to say arbitrary, expressions. Humanity, in organizing and liberating itself — two

synonymous terms — has gone through a series of hypotheses intended to serve as both a test and a transition. Perhaps we are not yet at the end: in any case it is consoling for us, and it is enough for us from now on, to know: 1. that there is parallel progress in society towards Liberty and Order; 2. that, as for the progress we have to make at this moment, we can define and accelerate.

How is it then that so many governmental forms, so many States, have, so to speak, abrogated themselves one after the other; that the universal conscience has withdrawn from them, and that today, in civilized Europe, we no longer find a single man who wanted to swear by any of the previous constitutions? How is it that the constitutional monarchy itself, so cherished by our fathers, the work of three consecutive generations, no longer has any chance of recovering in ours, and that throughout Europe it gives visible signs of weakening? This is because no political form has yet given the true solution of the harmony of Liberty and Order, as requested by reasonable souls; it is because Unity, conceived by the most liberal intelligences as well as by the most absolutist minds, is always only a factitious, artificial unity; a unity of coercion and constraint, a pure materialism finally, as foreign to consciousness as impenetrable to reason: Dogma, Fiction, Flag, Symbol of sect, party, church or race; article of faith or reason of state.

Let us clarify this with a few facts. France forms a great unity: we can, from Hugues Capet, give the date of accession of each of its provinces. In 1860, Savoy and Nice were in turn annexed: what does this prove for French unity? What do the increases in territory and conquests do to it? Is political unity a question of surface area or borders? If this were so, unity would only be found in the omniarchy of the globe: no one would believe in France, nor in England, nor in any other state.

From the realm of matter, let us move on to that of mind. Universal suffrage, as organized by the law of 1852, is certainly a unitary expression; and the same can be said of the electoral regime of 1830, that of 1806, that of 93, etc. Well, what do all these formulas mean? In which have we found the true order, the true political unity? Ask instead in which we have encountered the most intelligence, the most consciousness; which has not failed in Right, in Liberty, in Common Sense. Earlier we said that political unity was not a question of territorial area and borders: it is not a question of will or vote. I will go further: were it not for the respect due to the Workers' Democracy, which seems decidedly committed to its electoral rights, and the hope that it has given rise to over the last two years, who would believe in universal suffrage?

What new generations need is a unity that expresses the soul of society; spiritual unity, intelligible order, which unites us by all the powers of our conscience and our reason, and yet leaves us with free thought, free will, free heart; I mean it does not raise any protest on our part, as happens to us when we are in the presence of Right and Truth. What did I say? What we need today is a unity that, adding to all our liberties, increases in turn and is strengthened by these liberties themselves, as suggested by the metaphysical couple taken as a motto by the Bourgeoisie of 1830, *Liberty-ORDER*.

Is it possible, then, that political unity would satisfy such conditions? Certainly, provided however that it itself rests on this double foundation: Right and Truth; for there are only two things which can never engender servitude for us, Truth and Right.

Let us take up an example: the system of weights and measures.

If our metric system were one day established throughout the globe, thus uniting all the producers and traders of the earth in the common use of the same method of evaluation and account, would there result from this unity, half scientific, half contractual, the slightest embarrassment and the slightest disadvantage for anyone? Far from it, all nations would find there, for their economic relations, innumerable facilities and the removal of a host of obstacles. If, as we speak, this reform of weights and measures, so rational, so useful, has not yet, and with unanimous eagerness, been accomplished everywhere, do you believe that this comes from interests or contrary liberties? Oh no: these are local prejudices, popular self-esteem, state jealousies, these are the servitudes of all kinds that afflict the human spirit which oppose them. Take away this obstinacy of the least justified customs, this devotion of the masses to routine, this Machiavellian resistance of all power to what comes from elsewhere than from home, and tomorrow the metric system will be decreed by the whole globe. The Russian calendar is twelve days behind the sun: why has Russia not yet adopted the Gregorian reform? Ah! It is because the government that would try it, in the current state of mind, would run the risk of being considered an apostate...

Thus, the unity of weights and measures could exist, notwithstanding the difference in names, brands, types or effigies; and it would be both a step towards unity and an increase in liberty. The same goes for the unity of the sciences: it can exist, and in fact it exists, it is essential, despite the difference in languages, methods and schools; we cannot even imagine how it could not exist: a new step towards universal unity, a new and powerful means of liberty. Likewise for the unity of morality, which all reason proclaims despite distinctions of worship, customs, and institutions, and in which all conscience today finds the pledge of its liberty.

Such must therefore be between humans, — reasonable and free creatures, or destined to become so, — the social bond, principle and foundation of any political order, in a word, *unity*. It constitutes itself, invisible, impalpable, permeable in every sense to liberty, like the air passed through by the bird, which brings it to life and supports it.

Well, this unity, so free from any embarrassment, so far from any exception, reserve or intolerance; this order so easy that we cannot imagine any other homeland, any other destination for liberty, is precisely what the mutualist organization promises to give us.

What is mutuality, in fact? A formula of justice, until now neglected, or held in reserve, by our different legislative categories; by virtue of which the members of society, of whatever rank, fortune and condition they may be, corporations or individuals, families or cities, industrial workers, farmers or public officials, promise and guarantee each other service for service, credit for credit, pledge for pledge, security for security, value for

value, information for information, good faith for good faith, truth for truth, liberty for liberty, property for property...

This is the radical formula by which the Democracy is now undertaking to reform Right in all its branches or categories: civil right, commercial right, criminal right, administrative right, public right, international right; this is how it intends to found economic right.

Let this mutualism exist, and we have the strongest and most subtle bond, the most perfect and least inconvenient order that can unite men, the greatest amount of liberty that they can claim. I admit that in this system the role of authority is increasingly weak: what does it matter if authority has nothing to do? I also admit that charity becomes an increasingly useless virtue: what will we have to fear from egoism?... What private and social virtue will you accuse of lacking men who reciprocally promise each other everything, who, without ever granting anything for nothing, guarantee each other everything, assure each other everything, give each other everything: Education, Labor, Exchange, Heritage, Income, Wealth, Security?

— This is not, someone will say, the Fraternity that we had dreamed of, that fraternity glimpsed by the ancient reformers, announced by Christ, promised by the Revolution. What callousness! What vulgarity! This ideal may appeal to clerks and experts in business writing; it is not even up to the standards of our old bourgeois.

It was a long time ago when, for the first time, I received this objection point blank: it never proved to me but one thing, and that is that, among the majority of our agitators, the demands for reform are pretexts: they don't believe in it and don't care much about it. They would be angry if we showed them the possibility and ordered them to carry out the execution.

Men possessed by the cult of the Ideal, to whom things of pure utility seem petty, and who, by leaving domestic care to others, you appear to have nobly chosen, like Mary, the best part; believe me, take care of the housework first, *Æconomia*: the Ideal will come by itself. The Ideal is like Love, if not love itself; provided it is given food and drink, it does not take long to become flourishing. The more we caress it, the thinner it becomes; the less fussy we are with it, on the contrary, the more magnificent its generations are.

What! Because the men of mutuality, instead of rooming together, will all have their own home; because everyone will be able to say, with a certainty that is very rare in our time: this one is my wife and these are my children, instead of sowing their seed indiscriminately, and generating pell-mell; because, in these utilitarian morals, man's habitation would be cleaner, more beautiful, better decorated than the temple of God; because the service of the State, reduced to its simplest expression, could no longer be an object of ambition, any more than of self-sacrifice: you will accuse our citizens of rudeness, of individualism! You will say that their society has nothing ideal, nothing fraternal!... Ah! We have known it for a long time, and you don't bother to disguise yourself anymore. Your community, supposedly hardworking and democratic, needs

authority, distinctions, corruption, aristocracy, charlatanism, the exploitation of man by man, of the industrious worker by the artist, and free love. Shame!...¹⁷

¹⁷ What distinguishes false unity in all things is its materialism. For such a scheme a monkey would be enough in command. The machine mounted, all would obey. Nobody can require of the central action either intelligence or security or morality. It wants, it directs, it is the authority and that is all.

Centralization has been the triumph of the Commune of Paris after the septembrisades and later that of Marat, on May 31 It produced the triumvirate of Robespierre, Saint-Just and Couthon and has made possible the terror and has supported fourteen months. She assured the 18 Brumaire, and give nearly two years after the revenge Cadoudal. If Bonaparte had been killed by the bomb, the Restoration, which took place only in 1811, had advanced twelve years. With centralization, while Napoleon dated his decrees from Moscow, very nearly that Mallet does not replace in Paris. The centralization was in 1814, the capitulation of Paris, the constitution of France, the centralization, having reversed the Bourbon dynasty, overthrew the dynasty of Orleans. Seven men have been December 2. With centralization, it is not a man who commands, hero or conspirator not Lafayette, Danton and Marat, not even the Convention, the ui directory, nor King, nor Emperor : Paris is the great city, the center who spoke.

Chapter XV.

Objection against mutualist policy. — Response. — Primary cause of the fall of States. — Relationship of political and economic functions in the New Democracy.

But let us not get caught up in digressions. We have to explain what unity and order are in a mutualist democracy; and here is the much more serious objection that our adversaries will not fail to raise against us.

Let us get rid of theories and sentimentalities, they will tell us: in every State there must be authority, a spirit of discipline and obedience, without which no society can survive. There must be a force in the Government capable of triumphing over all resistance, and of subjecting all opinions to the general will. Let us argue as much as we like about the nature, origin and forms of this power; that is not the question. The real thing, the only thing, is that it be vigorously constituted. No human will can control human will, says de Bonald, and he concludes that there is a need for a higher institution, a divine right. According to J.-J. Rousseau, on the contrary, public power is a collectivity that is made up of the abandonment that each citizen makes of a portion of his liberty and his fortune in the general interest: it is the revolutionary democratic right. Let us follow whatever system we wish, we always arrive at this conclusion, that the soul of a political society is authority, and that its sanction is force.

This, moreover, is how States have always been constituted; and this is how they govern themselves and how they live. Do we believe that it was by an act of their free adhesion that the multitudes formed themselves into a group and founded, under the hand of a leader, these powerful units, to which the work of revolutions adds so little? No, these agglomerations were the work of necessity served by force. Do we believe that it is of their own free will, by the effect of a mysterious persuasion, of a conviction impossible to motivate, that these masses allow themselves to be led like a herd, by a foreign thought, which hovers over them, and of which no one has the secret? No, again: this faculty of centralization, to which everyone resigns itself although murmuring, is also the excuse of necessity, served by force. It is absurd to balk at these great laws, as if we could change them and create another existence for ourselves, based on other principles.

What then does mutualism claim, and what are the consequences of this doctrine, from the point of view of the Government? It claims to found an order of things in which the principle of the sovereignty of the people, of man and of the citizen would be applied literally; where each member of the State, maintaining its independence and continuing to act as a sovereign, would govern itself, while the higher authority would only deal with the affairs of the group; where, consequently, there would be certain things in common, but no centralization; let's go all the way, a State whose recognized sovereign parties would have the ability to leave the group and break the pact, *ad libitum*. Because we must

not hide it: the federation, to be logical, faithful to its principle, must go that far, on pain of being nothing more than an illusion, a boast, a lie.

But it is obvious that this faculty of secession which, in principle, must belong to every confederated state, is contradictory; it was never realized, and the practice of the confederations denies it. Who does not know that at the time of the first Medina Greece almost perished, betrayed by its federal liberty? The Athenians and the Spartans presented themselves alone against the great king: the others had refused to march. The Persians defeated, civil war broke out between the Greeks to put an end to this absurd constitution; it was the Macedonian who had the honor and the profit. — In 1846, when the Swiss confederation was about to dissolve through the secession of the Catholic cantons (*Sunderbund*), the majority did not hesitate, in order to bring back the splitters, to use the means of arms. It did not act then, whatever was said, under federal law, which was positively against it. How could the thirteen Protestant cantons, all sovereign, have proven to the eleven Catholic cantons, all equally sovereign, that they had the right, by virtue of the pact, to force them into the Union that the latter no longer wanted? The word federation swears against such a pretension. The Swiss majority acts under the right of national conservation; it considered that Switzerland, placed between two large unitary States, could not, without extreme danger, admit a new confederation, more or less hostile; and by yielding to necessity, by supporting its right on the argument of force, it affirms, in the name and under the insignia of its alleged confederation, the prominence of the principle of unity. — As I write, and certainly with much less excuse than the Swiss liberals of 1846, since American liberty is in no danger, the United States of the North also claims to retain in the Union, by force, the United States of the South, calling them traitors and rebels, neither more nor less than if the old Union were a monarchy and Mr. Lincoln an emperor. It is clear, however, that one of two things must be true: Either the word confederation has a meaning, by which the founders of the Union wanted to clearly distinguish it from any other political system, in which case, and leaving aside the question of slavery, the war waged against the South by the North is unjust; or else, under the appearance of confederation, and while waiting for the favorable hour, they have secretly continued the formation of a great empire in which case the Americans will do well to erase from their *platforms* in the future the words of political liberty, republic, democracy, confederation and even Union. Already they are beginning to deny on the other side of the Atlantic the rights of *States*, which means the federative principle, an unequivocal sign of the coming transformation of the Union. What is even stranger is that European democracy applauds this execution, as if it were not the abjuration of its principle and the ruin of its hopes.

Let us summarize: A social revolution, in the sense of mutuality, is a chimera, because, in this society, political organization should be the corollary of economic organization, and because this corollary, which we admit must be a federal State, considered in itself is an impossibility. In fact, confederations have never been more than provisional, states in

formation; theoretically, this is nonsense. So mutuality, posing federalism as its last word, excludes itself; it is nothing.

This is the decisive argument to which we have to respond. But first I have to present a historical rectification.

The adversaries of federalism voluntarily assume that centralization is endowed with all the advantages that they deny to the federation; that the first is endowed with energy to the same degree that the second is not very viable; in short, that as much as the latter is devoid of logic and force, we are as certain to encounter it in the former, and that this is the cause of the enormous difference which, until this moment, has indicated their destinies. I should therefore, in order not to omit anything and to equalize positions, oppose criticism of the federative principle to criticism of the unitary principle; show that if confederations have, since the origin of societies, only played an apparently secondary role; if, thanks to the divergence of their institutions, they did not last long; if it even seems impossible for them to establish the truth of their principle, states with great centralization, on the other hand, have most often been nothing more than vast brigandages, organized tyrannies, whose main merit has been, for thirty centuries, to drag, so to speak, on the rack the corpses of nations, as if the goal of Providence had been to punish them, through centuries of torture, for their federal fantasies.

Thus I would have to show that the whole of history is only a series of compositions and decompositions; that pluralities or federations are constantly followed by agglomerations, and agglomerations by dissolutions; that the Greek Empire of Alexander, established in Europe and Asia, was soon followed by the division of its generals, a real return to nationalities, as we say today; that this nationalist movement was then succeeded by the great Roman unity, replaced in the fifth century by the Germanic and Italian federations; that we recently saw the Austrian Empire become absolutist federalist, while Italy passed from federation to kingdom; that if the first Empire, with its one hundred and thirty-two departments, its large fiefs and its alliances could not hold out against the European confederation, the second Empire, much more strongly centralized, although much less extensive than the other, is worked by a spirit of liberty much more compelling in provincial and municipal communities than in the individuals themselves.

This is what I would have liked to develop further, and which I will content myself with recalling here, for the record.

This then is the enigma that we have to solve; it concerns centralization as much as the federation itself.

1. What causes unitary states, whether monarchical, aristocratic or republican, to constantly decompose?

2. And what makes federations tend to resolve into Unity at the same time?

This is what we must first answer, before passing judgment on the comparative value of centralized States and confederates. And this is precisely what I respond to, in accordance with the principles laid down in the previous chapter, namely, that Truth and

Right are the only bases of order, outside of which all centralization becomes absorbing, and all federation hypocritical:

What makes states, unitary and federated, subject to decomposition and ruin is that, among the former, society is stripped of any kind of political and economic guarantee; and that, among the others, supposing the Power to be as perfectly constituted as one wishes, the same society has until now only had political guarantees; it never offered economical ones. Neither in Switzerland nor in the United States do we find organized mutuality: however, without a series of mutualist institutions, without economic right, the political form remains powerless and the government is always precarious, a whitened sepulcher, as Saint Paul said.

What remains to be done to protect the confederations from any dissolution, at the same time as we maintain the principle thus defined: Capacity of any city, territory, province, agglomerated population, in a word for any State to enter and leave the confederation *ad libitum*?

Note that such a condition has never been offered to free men; such a problem has never been raised by any publicist. De Bonald and Jean-Jacques, the man of divine right and the man of demagoguery, agree to declare, following Jesus Christ, that *every kingdom divided within itself will perish*. But Christ spoke in a spiritual sense; and our authors are pure materialists, partisans of authority, and hence of servitude.

What must be done to make the confederation indestructible is to finally give it the sanction it still awaits, by proclaiming, as the basis of federal right and of every political order, economic right.

It is here above all that it is appropriate to consider the revolution that will take place in the social system, through the sole fact of mutualism, some examples of which we have previously offered the reader's attention. We have already been able to judge that the principle of mutuality, transported from private relations into the collective movement, arises in a series of institutions whose development it is easy to indicate. Let us only recall, to aid the memory, the most salient ones.

A. — Economic functions.

1. Service of CHARITY and assistance to persons, forming a transition between the regime of Charity instituted by Christ and the regime of justice inaugurated by the Revolution: society of assistance, medical service, asylums, crèches, nursing homes, penitentiaries, etc. All this exists more or less, no doubt, but it lacks the new spirit, which alone can give it efficiency, and purge parasitism, hypocrisy, begging and waste.

2. INSURANCE against flood, fire, risks of navigation and railways, animal disease, hail, illness, old age and death.

3. CREDIT, circulation and discount; banks, stock exchanges, etc.

4. Public TRANSPORT services by railways, canals, rivers and sea. — These services do not in any way prejudice the private companies, for which they serve on the contrary as regularizers and pivots.

5. Service of WAREHOUSES, docks, markets and mercurials. Its aim is to ensure at all times the distribution of products in the best interests of producers and consumers. It is the end of mercantilist speculation, hoarders, coalitions and stock trading.

6. Services regarding STATISTICS, advertising and announcements for setting prices and determining values. — Corporate establishments, serving as regulators for retail trade.

7. WORKER COMPANIES, for carrying out earthworks, reforestation, clearing, roads, pavements, irrigation.

8. WORKER COMPANIES for the construction of bridges, aqueducts, reservoirs, ports, tunnels, public monuments, etc.

9. WORKER COMPANIES for the exploitation of mines, waterways and forests.

10. WORKER COMPANIES for the service of ports, stations, markets, warehouses, stores, etc.

11. MASONIC SOCIETY for the construction, maintenance, rental of houses and the cheapness of housing in the cities.

12. PUBLIC EDUCATION, scientific and professional.

13. PROPERTY, revision of laws concerning right; the formation, distribution, mode of transmission, etc., of properties. Reform and consolidation of the *allodial* system.

14. TAXATION...

Observations. — 1. Until now the institutions or functions to which we give the name economic have been a *desideratum* in society. We do not invent them, we do not create them on an arbitrary whim; we limit ourselves to releasing them, by virtue of a principle as simple as it is peremptory. It is demonstrated in fact that, in many circumstances, individual initiative is powerless to achieve what can be achieved effortlessly and at much lower cost by the cooperation of all. Where private action cannot reach, it is just, it is a right and a duty to use collective force, mutuality. It is absurd to sacrifice wealth and public happiness to impotent liberty. This is the principle, the goal, the reason for economic institutions. Everything that the individual can execute, by submitting to the law of Justice, will therefore be left to the individuality; anything that exceeds the capacity of one person will be within the remit of the community.

2. I place in the category of economic functions or institutions the establishments of *Charity*, *Public Education* and *Taxation*. The nature of things indicates the reason for this classification. The extinction of pauperism and the alleviation of human misery have always been regarded as the most difficult problems of science. Just like indigence among the workers, social misery touches the living sources of production, and directly compromises public happiness. It is therefore a science, an exact policy, to remove this entire category of establishments from the action and influence of Power. — The same must be said of Taxation. In this regard, the Revolution of 89 and all the Constitutions that emerged from it, established the true principles, by deciding that the tax, requested by the Government, must be agreed to by the nation, and the distribution made by the general councils and municipalities. It is not the Prince who pays himself; it is the Country that pays its agent: hence it follows that what we today call the Ministry of Finance does not

fall within the remit of the Power. — As for public education, which is nothing other than the development of domestic education, it must be recognized as an economic function, unless it is transformed into a religious function again, and the family itself is denied.

3. We see from articles 4, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 of the table above, what is, in the new Democracy, the importance of workers' associations, considered as economic organs and institutions of mutuality. Their purpose is not only to satisfy the workers' interests, but to respond to the legitimate wish of society, which is to remove the exploitation of railways and mines from the monopoly of joint stock companies; — constructions of public utility from the favoritism of tenders, and from the whim of State engineers; — waters and forests from the devastation of Domain, etc. These workers' companies, formed according to the requirements of the Civil and Commercial Code, subject to the law of competition, as declared in the Manifesto, and responsible for their actions, are also bound with regard to the society that employs them out of mutual duty, which is to make them benefit from their services at the best possible price.

This set of economic functions is joined by a series of others called *political*, which form their complement. Like the previous ones, they can vary in number and definition: no one can be mistaken about their character.

B. — Political functions.

15. Electoral body or universal suffrage.
16. Legislative power.
17. Executive power : Administration,
18. — Police, Justice,
19. — Worship,
20. — War.

The ministries of agriculture, commerce, public education, public works and finance were transferred and merged into economic functions.

Observations. — 1. These functions are called *political*, as opposed to the previous ones called economic, because their object is no longer persons and goods, production, consumption, education; labor, credit and property; but the collective State, the social Body in its unity and its relations either with the outside world or with itself.

2. These same functions are further subordinated to the others, and we can call them sub-functions, because, despite their ceremonial majesty, they play a much less essential role than economic functions. Before legislating, administering, building palaces, temples, and waging war, society works, plows, navigates, exchanges, exploits the lands and seas. Before crowning kings and establishing dynasties, the people found the family, consecrate marriages, build cities, establish property and heredity. In principle, it is the political functions that remain confused with the economic ones: nothing, in fact, of what constitutes the specialty of government and the State, is foreign to the public economy. If later general reason, by freeing the governmental organism, seems to confer on it a sort of

primogeniture, this is the effect of a historical illusion that cannot deceive us, now that we have reestablished the social genealogy in its integrity, and put everything in its place. Between economic functions and political functions there exists a relationship analogous to that which physiology indicates, in animals, between the functions of organic life and the functions of relational life: it is through these that the animal manifests itself outside and fulfills its mission among creatures; but it is through others that he exists, and everything he does in his liberty of action is, in truth, only a more or less reasoned conclusion of his primordial powers.

3. Thus, in the democratic Constitution, as it can be deduced from its best-established ideas and its most authentic aspirations, the political order and the economic order are one and the same order, one and the same system, established on a single principle, which is mutuality. Just as we have seen, through a series of mutualist transactions, the great economic institutions emerge one after the other, and form this vast humanitarian organism, of which nothing until then could give the idea; in the same way, the governmental apparatus results in its turn no longer from some fictitious convention, imagined by the need of the republic, and as soon withdrawn rather than put in place, but on a real contract, where the sovereignties of the contracting parties, instead of being absorbed in a central majesty, both personal and mystical, serve as positive guarantees to the liberties of States, municipalities and individuals.

We therefore no longer have a sovereignty of the people in abstraction, as in the Constitution of 93 and those which followed it, and in Rousseau's Social Contract, but an effective sovereignty of the laboring, ruling, governing masses, first of all, in charitable meetings, in chambers of commerce, in arts and crafts corporations, in workers' companies; in the stock exchanges, in the markets, in the academies, in the schools, in the agricultural shows; and finally in electoral summons, in parliamentary assemblies and councils of state, in the national guards, and even in churches and temples. It is always and everywhere the same force of collectivity that is produced, in the name and by virtue of the principle of mutuality; final affirmation of the rights of man and citizen.

I say that here the working masses are really, positively and effectively sovereign: how could they not be, if the economic organism belongs to them entirely: labor, capital, credit, property, wealth; how, as absolute mistresses of organic functions, could they not be, much more so, of relational functions? Subordination to the productive power of what was once, and to the exclusion of everything else, the Government, the Power, the State, is evident in the way in which the political organism is constituted:

- a.* An ELECTORAL BODY assembling in its spontaneity, policing operations, reviewing and sanctioning its own actions;

b . A delegation, LEGISLATIVE BODY, or Council of State, appointed by the federal groups and re-electable;¹⁸

c. An *executive commission* chosen by the representatives of the people within their own ranks, and revocable;

d. A president of that commission, finally, appointed by itself, and revocable.

Is this not, tell me, the system of the old society turned upside down; a system where the country is decidedly everything; where the one who was formerly called head of state, sovereign, autocrat, monarch, despot, king, emperor, czar, khan, sultan, majesty, highness, etc., etc., definitively appears as a *Monsieur*, the first perhaps, among his fellow citizens for the honorary distinction, but certainly the least dangerous of all public officials. You can boast this time that the problem of political guarantee, the problem of submission of government to country, of prince to sovereign, is solved. You will never see usurpation or *coup d'état* again; the insurgence of power against the people, the coalition of authority and the bourgeoisie against the masses, is impossible.

4. All this understood, I return to the question of unity posed above: How, with federative right, will the State maintain its stability? How can a system, which consecrates as its fundamental thought the right for each confederate to secede, then act together and sustain itself?

The objection, it must be admitted, was unanswerable, as long as the confederated States were constituted outside of economic right and the law of mutuality: the divergence of interests would sooner or later lead to disastrous splits, and monarchical unity replace the republican equivocation. Now everything is changed: the economic order is based on entirely different data; the spirit of the States is no longer the same, the confederation, in the truth of its principle, is indissoluble. The Democracy, so hostile to any thought of split, especially in France, has nothing to fear.

Nothing that divides men, cities, corporations, individuals exists any longer between mutualist groups: neither sovereign power, nor political concentration, nor dynastic right, nor civil list, nor decorations, nor pensions, nor capitalist exploitation, nor dogmatism, nor sectarian spirit, nor party jealousy, nor racial prejudice, nor corporate, city or provincial rivalry. There may be diversity of opinions, beliefs, interests, morals, industries, cultures, etc. But these diversities are the very basis and object of mutualism: they cannot therefore degenerate in any case into intolerance of the Church, pontifical supremacy, prepotency of

¹⁸ If the confederated States are equal, a single assembly would suffice; if they are of unequal importance, they would restore equilibrium, creating for federal representation, two chambers or branches, in one of which the members are appointed in equal numbers by the States, whatever their population and the extent of their territory, in the other of which members are appointed by the States themselves, in proportion to their size. (See the Swiss Federal Constitution, in which the duality of Parliament has a different meaning than in the constitutions of France and England.)

locality or capital, industrial or agricultural preponderance. Conflicts are impossible: for them to resurface, mutuality would have to be destroyed.¹⁹

Where would the revolt come from? On what pretext would the discontent be based? — In a mutualist confederation, the citizen gives up none of his liberty, as Rousseau demands for the government of his republic! Public power is in the hands of the citizen; he himself exercises it and benefits from it: if he complained about something, it would be that neither he nor anyone else can usurp it and enjoy it alone. Nor does he have to make a sacrifice of fortune: the State only asks him, as a contribution, what is rigorously demanded by public services, which being essentially reproductive, in their fair distribution, make taxation an exchange.²⁰ Now, exchange is an increase in wealth:²¹ on this side again, dissolution is not to be feared. Would the Confederates separate in the face of the risks of a civil or foreign war? But in a confederation based on economic right and the law of mutuality, civil war could only have one motive, the motive of religion. Now, without taking into account that spiritual interest is very weak when other interests are reconciled and mutually guaranteed, who does not see here that mutuality has mutual tolerance as a corollary; what rules out this chance of conflict? As for aggression from abroad, what could be the cause? The confederation, which recognizes the right of secession to each of the confederated States, cannot, for even greater reason, want to force foreigners. The idea of conquest is incompatible with its principle. Only one case of war, coming from outside, can therefore be foreseen here, namely, the case of a war of principle: it would be that the existence of a mutualist confederation were declared by the surrounding States, with great exploitation and great centralization, incompatible with their own principle, just as in 92 the Brunswick manifesto declared the French Revolution incompatible with the principles that governed the other States! To which I reply that the

¹⁹ A little-known and most interesting fact will bring this truth into full light. In certain localities of the department of Doubs, district of Montbéliard, where the population is half Catholic, half Protestant, it is not uncommon for the same building to be used in turn, at different times, for both religions, and this without the least impatience on either side. Obviously these good people must have gotten along; they made between themselves, for the exercise of their religion, a pact of mutual tolerance; and mutuality excludes any thought of conflict. It is unheard of that in these villages we have seen anyone move from one religion to another; it is no less true that no aggression, no act of zealotry has been committed by any religionist. For several years now, the Archbishop of Besançon has begun to sow disunity: he is building separate churches for his flock. A true friend of peace and humanity would have simply proposed to make the house of God larger and more beautiful; he would have understood that this church-temple was the most beautiful monument erected by the hands of men to Christian charity. The archbishop does not see it that way. As much as it depends on him, he pits religion against religion, church against church, cemetery against cemetery. When the last judgment comes, Christ will only have to pronounce the sentence, the separation of the faithful and the ungodly will be complete.

²⁰ See *Theory of Taxation*, by P.-J. Proudhon. Paris, Dentu, 1861.

²¹ See the *Manuel du spéculateur à la Bourse*, introduction, by the same author, Paris, 1857.

outlawing of a confederation, based on economic right and the law of mutuality, would be precisely the happiest thing that could happen to it, both to exalt the federative and mutualist republican feeling, and to put an end to it within the world of monopoly, and determine the victory of the Workers' Democracy across the entire face of the globe...

But what need is there to insist further?

The principle of mutuality, by entering into legislation and customs, and creating economic law, fundamentally renews civil right, commercial and administrative right, public right and international right. Or rather, by identifying this supreme and fundamental category of right, economic right, the principle of mutuality creates the unity of legal science; it shows, better than we had seen until then, that right is one and identical, that all its prescriptions are uniform, all its maxims corollaries of each other, all its laws, variants of the same law.

The ancient right, which the science of the old jurisconsults had subdivided into as many special branches as it applied to different objects, had the general character, in all its parts, of being negative; to prevent rather than allow; to prevent conflicts, rather than creating guarantees; to repress a certain amount of violence and fraud, rather than ensuring, against all fraud and violence, the creation of wealth and common happiness.

The new Right is, on the contrary, essentially *positive*. Its goal is to provide, with certainty and scope, everything that the old right simply allowed to be done, expecting it from liberty, but without seeking the guarantees or the means, without even expressing in this regard either approval or disapproval. Lacking guarantee, social solidarity; persisting in the practices of mercantile anarchy, dissimulation, monopoly, agiotage, is now deemed, by the new Right, an act as reprehensible as all the frauds, breaches of trust, forgeries, armed robberies and robberies in an inhabited house which the law has until now dealt with almost exclusively. This positive character of the new Right, the new obligations that result from it, the liberty and the wealth that are the fruit of it, we have sufficiently developed in the questions relating to insurance, to supply and demand, to fixation of prices and values, to commercial good faith, to credit, to transport, etc., in short, to what we have called economic institutions or functions; we don't need to go back to it again.

How then could a worker group, after having been part of a mutualist federation, renounce the positive, material, palpable, predictable advantages that it guarantees? How would it prefer to return to the ancient nothingness, to traditional pauperism, to insolidarity, to immorality? After having known economic order, would it want to become an exploiting aristocracy, and for the filthy satisfaction of a few, recall universal poverty? How, I say, could the hearts of men who have known right declare themselves against right, denouncing themselves to the world as a band of thieves and bandits?

As soon as the mutualist economic reform is proclaimed in one part of the globe, confederations become necessary everywhere. In order to exist, they do not need the states that federate to be all juxtaposed, grouped as if in an enclosure, as we see in France, Italy and Spain. The federation can exist between separate States, disjointed and distant from

each other: it is enough that they declare that they want to unite their interests and provide each other with a reciprocal guarantee, according to the principles of Economic Right and mutuality. Once formed, the federation can no longer dissolve: because, I repeat, we cannot return from a pact, from a profession of faith, like the mutualist profession of faith, like the federative pact.

As we have already said, the principle of mutuality, in the political order as well as in the economic order, is therefore certainly the strongest and most subtle bond that can be formed between men.

Neither system of government, nor community or association, nor religion, nor oath, can at the same time, by uniting men so intimately, assure them such liberty.

We have been accused of fomenting, through this development of right, of fomenting individualism, of destroying the ideal. Slander! Where then would the power of the community produce such great things? Where will souls feel more in unison? Everywhere else we have the materialism of the group, the hypocrisy of the association, and the heavy chains of the State. Here, only, we feel, in justice, true fraternity. It penetrates us, animates us; and no one can complain that it constrains him, that it imposes a yoke on him, or burdens him with the slightest burden. It is love in its truth and in its frankness; love which is only perfect to the extent that it has taken for its motto the maxim of mutuality, I almost said of commerce: giving, giving.

CHAPTER XVI

Bourgeois dualism: constitutional antagonism. — Decisive superiority of the working-class idea.

We know what the Workers' Idea consists of, both from the point of view of interests and that of the Government. We will complete this exhibition by saying in a few words what what the bourgeois idea was in 1789, and what it has been since the Revolution. The reader will then be able to judge, with full knowledge of the facts, on which side political capacity is today, whether it is in workers' democracy or in bourgeois capitalism.

Having previously noted (part 2, chap. ii) that bourgeois consciousness had reached its highest degree of intensity in 1789, when the Third Estate, challenging the old regime through the mouth of Sieyès, said of itself: *What am I? Nothing; What should I be? Everything*, we observed that, the bourgeoisie having in fact become everything, but that, nothing then any longer differentiating it in the social body, it had begun to lose the feeling of itself, and that it had fallen into lethargy. We noticed that if, in 1848, after the fall of Louis-Philippe, it seemed to emerge from its torpor, it was thanks to the insurgence of the working classes, who, separating themselves or rather distinguishing themselves from it, having acquired awareness of themselves and their destiny, made their entry onto the political scene; it was, in a word, thanks to the socialist terror.

But one thing even sadder than this fall of consciousness in the middle and upper bourgeoisie is that, unlike the working classes, whose rise is so rapid, the bourgeoisie no longer even has the intelligence of the Idea that once governed it; and that insofar as the Country and the Government can be considered as being dependent on it, they are, by the effect of its profound nullity, at the mercy of fortune. Now, what constitutes political capacity is not only consciousness, it is also the Idea; and the bourgeoisie, if it still knew how to read and think, would not be a little surprised to learn that its idea is exhausted, that it is as powerless to create order as liberty, in a word that it no longer has an idea.

Before 89, the bourgeois idea was a division of the feudal idea. The nobility and the clergy owned almost all the land, dominated the castles, the convents, the bishoprics, the parishes; exercised the rights of mortmain and others, rendered justice to their tenants and made war on the king, until, from defeat to defeat, they would have been reduced by the coalition of the bourgeois and the king to paying him no more than their court. The bourgeoisie, for its part, reigned over commerce and industry; it had its corporations, privileges, franchises, controls; to escape the tyranny of the clerics and nobles, it had made an alliance with the Crown and managed by this means to count for something in the State. In 89 this whole system was abolished. The bourgeoisie, having become all in politics, was able to increase its properties indefinitely, continuing to manufacture and trade, just like the nobles to consume what remained of their income, and the clergy to sing their services. There was no more idea, no more among one than the others.

I am mistaken: this is what the bourgeois idea became.

Having become, through its homogeneity, through its capital, through its uncontested influence over the plebs, mistress of the State, it saw in it only a means of consolidating its acquired position, and, through jobs and the budget, of creating a new field of exploitation and fortune. Substituted for the rights of the clergy, the nobility and the king in the old estates-general, the bourgeoisie saw no disadvantage in preserving for the State its monarchical, centralizing and unitary form: only it took care to take its security with regard to the prince, what was called Constitutional Charter. Basically, it was through the bourgeoisie and for the bourgeoisie that the administration functioned, through the bourgeoisie and for the bourgeoisie that taxes were collected, by the bourgeoisie and for the bourgeoisie that the king reigned.

All justice emanated from it; the king's government was its government; it intended to have the sole right to make war and peace, as well as rise and fall; and if sometimes it had to repress the political inclinations of the Crown, we could judge that it was not long in mourning the loss of a dynasty.

However, this system of political centralization needed, according to the rules of balance, a counterweight. It was not enough to have limited, circumscribed and balanced the royal power, to have subordinated it to a parliamentary majority, subject to the countersignature of its own ministers: it was still necessary to put a brake, a limit to this immense organization called the Government, if it did not want sooner or later to be swallowed up by the monster. It was warned against the prerogative of the Crown: what was this prerogative, purely personal, compared to the evolving, absorbing power of the system?...

It is here that bourgeois genius is revealed, in its naivety.

Various counterweights were therefore given to this immeasurable force of centralization. These were, in the first place, the organization of the power itself, according to the economic principle of the division of labor or industrial separation; — then, the representative system, and the voting of taxes by an assembly of elected representatives; a system under which the executive power could do nothing without the countersignature of a legislative majority; — finally, universal suffrage. We realized that no bourgeois majority was safe from the seductions of governments, and we seriously said to ourselves that if a ministry could attract a few hundred bourgeois, it would never succeed in corrupting an entire people!... Municipal and departmental organization could also be counted among the great means of constitutionally containing power: but this was only a hope, which was never realized. (See below, part 3, chap. iv).

But of all the obstacles to authority, the most powerful, the only one that acts in an effective manner, and which today shares with imperial absolutism the omnipotence of the nation, was — guess what? — mercantile and industrial anarchy, economic waste, liberty of usury and agiotage, *Chacun chez soi, chacun pour soi* in the ideality of their egoism, *Laissez faire, laissez passer* in its broadest extension, property in all the ugliness of the old

quiritary law; in short, the negation of all mutuality and guarantee, absolute insolidarity, the nothingness of economic right. It was logical: to one exorbitant principle, it was necessary to oppose another no less exorbitant. *Abyssus abyssum invocat*. This is the great secret of contemporary disorder: two scourges that buttress each other, which, instead of reciprocally paralyzing each other, give each other, so to speak, a mutual sanction. Since then, they have both grown up, each in their own sphere. The central power has become increasingly absorbing and oppressive; economic anarchy manifested itself in unbridled agiotage, unprecedented trading shocks, terrible stock market speculation, and progressive and universally rising prices.

The bourgeois does banking, industry, even agriculture, extraction, navigation, commission, etc.; but outside of any agreement aimed at reducing risks, eliminating chance, fixing values, or at least preventing violent deviations, balancing advantages between the seller and the buyer. He has a horror of anything which could, by giving him a guarantee, impose an obligation on him; he denies economic solidarity and he rejects mutuality. Suggest to the bourgeois that he engage in an operation according to the rules of mutualism, he will answer you: No, I prefer to remain free. Free from what? To invest, if necessary, one's money at higher interest, at the risk of not finding the investment or of placing it on a ruinous mortgage; to sell his goods at a high profit, at the risk of being forced to sell them at a loss; to overrate its products, even if it means degrading them himself, if stagnation or congestion occurs; to lease his land at an exaggerated rate, at the risk of ruining his farmer and not being paid; free, I say, to speculate on the rise and fall, to bargain, to gamble, to lay down the law over others, to use and abuse the monopoly, even if he has to endure even harsher conditions, and, after having flogged his colleagues, being the victim of their reprisals. The bourgeois is not for certain operations, since they require a certain reciprocity from him. He seeks randomness, as long as there is probability of success. Everything is an occasion, means or pretext for fierce competition, without distinction between what is the work of man and what results from the force of things. Insurance itself, so easy to mutualize, is preferably practiced in monopoly mode.

This economic insolidarity, I should say this non-morality of transactions, advocated by the political economy of the English school, the bourgeois has made into a principle, a theory, a doctrine. For him, the idea of an economic right, complement and corollary of political right and civil right, does not exist; it is nonsense. *Everyone at home, everyone for themselves; God (!) for all*. This is his motto. Economic science, as he understands it, is not based on a two-term notion, a synthetic and positive notion therefore, which makes the science of interests in the image of justice itself; it is based on elementary, simplistic, contradictory notions, which, unable to determine themselves and find their balance, make science a bascule and a perpetual contradiction. For the bourgeois, for example, there is no TRUE VALUE, although he constantly talks about the law of *supply* and *demand*; although these two terms, *supply* and *demand*, imply, each from a different point of view, the idea of an exact value, regarding which the debate between the supplier and the demander

indicates the search. In the eyes of the bourgeoisie, value is essentially arbitrary, a matter of opinion. From the fact that value is *mobile* he concludes that it is necessarily false; and God knows how much this falsity that he imputes to things makes the errors of his conscience excusable! So you will never see him, neither in his transactions, nor in the reflections that they give rise to in him, worry about the balance of values, the fair price of goods, the balance of services, the normal rate of interest or wages: it is not he who indulges in these chimeras. To buy, if he can, for three francs that which is worth six; to sell for six francs what is worth three, and this despite the personal knowledge he has of the situation and things, despite the damage that his neighbor may experience: this is his commercial maxim, and he professes it without shame. Tell him after this that his rents, his interests, his profits, all this profit that it would be easy, by changing practice, to legitimize, to a sufficient extent, but that he prefers to extract through a war of ruses, ambushes, surprises, the monopoly guaranteed to him by the superiority of his capital and the ambiguities of his trade; tell him that all this is disloyalty, he gets angry, and that is what saves his honor. At least he is convinced that the acts, more or less scabrous, in which he engages every day, from morning to evening, having their necessity, also have their legitimacy; that there is therefore no fraud or theft, except in the cases defined by the Code.

What do you say after that about these academic exhibitions, where prize after prize is awarded to young writers who stand out in the war against socialism, by justifying filthy doctrines; of these conferences, of these courts, where people pretend to avenge outraged property; of these Malthusian missions, where we boast of establishing the relationships between a political economy of man-eaters, and the eternal principles of justice and morality? Because we dispose of chairs, positions, competitions, schools, would there be any hope of deluding the masses and taking human conscience as a dupe? Miserable sophists, who do not even have the sense to see that the masses, preoccupied with their misery, do not understand them, and that they have nothing to teach those who pay them! They dare to speak of an economic morality, when all their effort, for forty years, has been to prove that morality is one thing and political economy something else; that where the first says *yes*, the second can very well say *no*; when the clearest of their theories consists of rejecting, from the domain of political economy, the intervention of right, the call to human solidarity, as an attack on science and liberty! Which of them would dare to answer affirmatively to this question: Does there exist, apart from economic right, based on the obligation of mutuality, a science, an economic truth? Ask them, and you will see their answer.

What virtue, what good faith could hold in a society whose fundamental maxim is that economic science has nothing in common with justice; that it is radically independent; that the idea of an Economic Right is an economic utopia; that thus the economic order, existing, so it is claimed, by itself, is not based on any legal data; that men can promise each other whatever they wish, but that in reality they owe each other, because of their

economic relations, absolutely nothing; that consequently, each having the right to follow his own interest exclusively, the friend will be able legally, rationally, scientifically, to ruin his friend, the son to abandon his father and mother; the worker to betray his boss, etc.? What respect, I say, for property in such a system? What power in the association? What consideration of power? What religion of law? What dignity of man? I would fill a volume with the infamies spouted, under the cover of their so-called science, by so-called economists: I leave this execution to younger people. Thank heaven, posterity will not fail the cause.

The immorality of the bourgeois idea was particularly revealed during free trade. There is not a bourgeois who does not want to have a favorable balance and who does not believe himself lost if he does not obtain it; but not one at the same time who does not rant against the awful monopoly of his colleagues and who does not find it fair that protection should be stopped for them. Let us give him relief, nothing better: it is in the interest of society. But if we strike others, it will be justice. Same thing for the discount. What merchant, small or large, would not be happy to be guaranteed the discount on his paper with two signatures instead of three, and at the fixed rate of 1/2 percent instead of the 5, 6, 7, 8 and even 9 that is extorted from him arbitrarily, unexpectedly, in the most difficult moments? It is precisely this state of fixed discount and regularity of credit that the supporters of mutuality propose to create in perpetuity. But wait: the bourgeois will not always be unhappy; he too will have his lucky day. Here he is who, after a series of happy campaigns, made one hundred thousand, two hundred thousand francs. Money is overflowing in his cash register; quickly he takes it to the Bank. Oh! So don't talk to him about half a hundred discount and two signatures anymore. He is rich, master of the position; he makes the law for the bankers, banker himself. Let us impose harsh conditions on our less fortunate competitors; let usury devour them!... He will find that business is superb; he will approach the Government and vote for the ministry.

As the bourgeois is in business, so you find him in politics. Basically he has no principles; he only has interests. The stock market price decides his way of seeing things. Alternately a courtier of Power or supporter of the Opposition; humble solicitor or fierce detractor; shouting *Long live the King!* or *Long live the League!* depending on whether the stock market rises or falls, whether its goods flow or remain, depending on whether, thanks to the intervention of some high-ranking person, a large order from the State, given to him or to his competitor, has come on save him from ruin or plunge him into a desperate situation.

It is in the works of political economy published over the last thirty years and in the criticisms that have been made of them that we must see to what extent this unfortunate bourgeoisie has fallen, and into what abyss have been precipitated at will its statesmen, its representatives, its orators, its professors, its academicians, its sophists and even its novelists and playwrights. We have endeavored to destroy the moral sense in it with

common sense; and those who accomplished this beautiful work it called its saviors. *Quos vult perdere Jupiter, dementat.*

What especially distinguished the French nation as it emerged from the crucible of the Revolution, and what made it the model nation for almost half a century, was this spirit of equality, this tendency towards leveling, which for a moment seemed to ensure that the whole capitalist aristocracy and the whole salariat are resolved into a single class, the one that has so rightly been called the middle class. To the equality of rights, to that of shares, to the freedom of industry, it was only necessary to add the all-powerful impulse of mutualist institutions, and the economic revolution would have been accomplished without a shock: *Order*, so dear to the bourgeoisie, would not have been disturbed for a single moment.

For almost twenty-five years, the country has suffered a contrary influence and direction; thanks to the legislation on mines, to the privilege of the Bank, especially to the railway concessions, capitalist and industrial feudalism has decidedly taken the upper hand; so that the middle class will die out day by day, attacked head-on by the rise in wages and the development of the limited companies; on the flanks by taxes and foreign competition or free trade; and finally replaced by civil servants, the upper bourgeoisie and the salariat.

Where did this decline of the middle class come from, a decline that brings with it that of the nation and liberty? From the economic theories that it has madly accepted, from this false liberalism by which it has not yet stopped swearing, and which has given it administrative centralization, the permanence of armies, parliamentary charlatanism, anarchic competition, monopolistic parasitism, the continuous rise in the cost of money and capital, the cosmopolitanism of free trade, universal high prices, and consequently worker coalitions and strikes. But there is no evil so great that we cannot find a remedy; as the cause is common between the urban and rural workers (see Part 1, chap. ii above), it also becomes so between the Workers' Democracy and the middle class: may they both understand that their salvation lies in their alliance!

So, we can say that from now on, between the capitalist-proprietor-entrepreneur bourgeoisie and the government, and the Workers' Democracy, the roles, from all points of view, are reversed. It is no longer this that must be called the mass, the multitude, the vile multitude; it would rather be this one. Taken in its community, the working people are no longer this pile of sand that Napoleon I used to define society. What is society? he said. An administration, a police force, courts, a church, an army; the rest is dust. *Rudis indigestible moles*. Now the working masses are one; they feel, the reason, they vote without advice, alas! but finally they vote with a will of their own, and they already develop their Idea. What does not think, what has fallen back to the state of peat and indigestible mass, is the bourgeois class.

While the People, under the impulse of an energetic conscience and thanks to the power of a just idea, present themselves to the world with the power and in the splendor

of an organic formation, claiming their place in the councils of the Country, offering to the middle class an alliance which it will soon be too happy to obtain, we see the upper bourgeoisie, after having rolled from political catastrophe to political catastrophe, having reached the last degree of the intellectual and moral void, resolving into a mass that has nothing more human than selfishness, looking for saviors when there is no longer any salvation for it, displaying a cynical indifference to any program, and, rather than accepting an inevitable transformation, calling upon the Country and upon itself a new flood, by fiercely rejecting what it even saluted and adored in 1789, Right, Science, Progress, in a word, Justice.

PART THREE

POLITICAL INCOMPATIBILITIES. — CONCLUSION.

Chapter I.

A political excommunication; necessity for the Workers' Democracy to denounce the split.

Let us consider that since 1848 the French nation has found itself divided into seven main parties:

- A) Legitimists;
- B) Orleanists or constitutional monarchists;
- C) Bonapartists or imperialists;
- D) Clerics, Episcopalianism or Jesuits;
- E) Conservative Republicans, differing from the preceding only in the suppression of the crown; moreover, professing on economic questions the same principles as the monarchists;
- F) Radical Republicans or Democrats, in other words Reds or Socialists, to whom are now attached, by the logic of the idea
- G) The Federalists.

Each of these parties is subdivided into several nuances: it is thus, to speak only of the radicals, that we have seen them (Part Two, Chap. ii) divided into two schools, that of the Communists or Luxembourg, and that of the Mutuellists recently inaugurated by the *Sixty*.

No sooner had the Republic been instituted, on February 24, 1848, in place of the monarchy, than antagonism, soon civil war broke out between the old parties, A, B, C, D, E united, and the new party, F—G, accused by the champions of the old idea of conspiring against property, religion, the family and morals.

The effect of this condemnation was, for the condemned party, most fortunate. It began the dissolution of the old parties by forcing them to come to an understanding; then it made the Republic solidary with socialism, by proving that the latter was the consequence of the former. From the sessions of Luxembourg, especially from the day of April 16, the war against the Social Republic became the concern of all the Powers, passing from one to the other like a sinister heritage, from the Provisional Government to General Cavaignac, from General Cavaignac to President Louis-Napoleon, finally from President Louis-Napoleon to the Imperial Government, to whom the rallying of the rival parties, beaten at the same time as the Social Democracy on the day of December 2, earned the title of *Savior of Society*.

Consider from this that the defeat of the Red or Socialist Democracy, first in 1848 and 1849, then in 1851 and 1852, is the pivot of our contemporary history; that such is still

today the principal reason for the existence of the Imperial Government; that in its daily policy the Second Empire never lost sight of this condition of its existence; that nothing indicates that today it has any thought of changing its conduct, unless in the elections of 1863 and 1864 the radical party manifested itself in a formidable manner, and that the risk of socialism is the only link that binds to the Imperial Government the temporarily ousted, but by no means reconciled parties of the Legitimacy, of Orleanism, of the conservative Republic and of the Episcopate.

Thus the Imperial Government, on which the builders of the Constitutional Opposition try to cast the unpopularity that affects them all, can only be regarded, from our socialist point of view, as a reactionary expression. The situation for us would be absolutely the same if, in the place of the Napoleonic dynasty, events had brought to power either Henry V or the Count of Paris, or some African successor of Cavaignac.

The fact that testifies above all to the immutability of this policy, notwithstanding all the changes of reign, is that the industrial and financial feudalism, long prepared during the thirty-six years of the Restoration, of the July Monarchy and of the Republic, and into which men of all regimes have entered, has not ceased since the *coup d'état* to grow stronger and to extend. It was in these last years that it completed its organization and took its place: the elections of 1863 sent it in large numbers to Parliament. Singularly, as if this feudalism dreamed of identifying, following the example of socialism, politics and political economy, we see it little by little becoming one with the government, inspiring it and dominating it. For eleven years it was, with the Church and the army, the life of the Empire, and we could not say that to this day its loyalty has been shaken.

However, the large companies have consummated their coalition; a little longer, and the middle classes, absorbed by high competition or ruined, will have entered into feudal domesticity or been thrown back into the proletariat. Then the decisive hour will have sounded, and if another law of May 31 does not come to the aid of the system, the question will be settled on the battlefield of universal suffrage. How will the middle classes behave in these new elections? Will they have the same disinterestedness that the working classes once and so imprudently showed? Will they rally to this mob, after having dragged it away? We have just seen this poor petty bourgeoisie at work; we know how it votes and who it votes for. Without self-awareness and deprived of ideas, deceived by its newspapers on all the questions of the century, always ready to believe that a simple change in the personnel and in the routine of the Power will bring a softening to its martyrdom, incapable of forging a path off the beaten track, knowing of all politics only how to nominate coterie candidates against administrative candidates, will it at least have the good sense to attach itself to the young element, to the party that thinks, that wants, that walks, that calls and that is strong?

From these considerations it therefore follows that since December 2, 1851, — if we do not go back to June 24, 1848, — the Socialist Democracy can consider itself politically excommunicated, I would not like to say proscribed. Our ideas, if not our people, are

outside the government, outside of society; no one has yet dared to outlaw them altogether. The principle of freedom of opinion is there that opposes it. But they are deprived of these ideas, as much as possible, of the means of propaganda; they are handed over to unfaithful organs; the use of the periodical press, preserved for all the old parties, lavished on all the charlatans, all the renegades and all the pimps, is specially and obstinately refused to us. If sometimes an idea inspired by our principles appears before the public, offers itself to the Power, it is quickly dispatched by the privileged knackers, or discarded, and I know something about that, by the coalition of contrary ideas. The exhumed of the Provisional Government did not show themselves more ardent, in March 1864, against the workers' candidacies,

In the presence of a state of things where to destroy us is to save society and property, where intellectual ostracism and the inquisition of ideas appear, if the Democracy does not learn to organize itself and to fight better, in the certainties of the future, what can we do, if not proudly accept our condemnation and, since the old world rejects us, to separate ourselves from it radically?

May this word of *separation*, dear reader, be for you neither a subject of alarm, nor a pretext for calumny. You would be in equal error if you were to conclude from this decisive word that I have to advise the people only to revolt or resign.

Far be from me, first of all, any thought of antagonism, any ferment of hatred and civil war. It is well known that I am not exactly what is called a man of *action*. The separation I recommend is the very condition of life. To distinguish oneself, to define oneself, is to be; just as to be confused and absorbed is to lose oneself. To make a split, a legitimate scission, is the only means we have of asserting our rights and, as a political party, of gaining recognition. And we will soon see that it is also the most powerful weapon, and the most honorable, that has been given to us, both for defense and for attack. For a long time the Socialist Democracy asserted itself only through individual publications, appearing at rare intervals; the Manifesto of the *Sixty* was a first and vigorous attempt at collective manifestation, directly emanating from the People. We know what was the conclusion, too naive, of this manifesto and how, after having been received at first with acclamation, it was then rejected by the majority of the Democratic voters. They didn't want worker candidates, and that was a joy for everyone. But such an attempt should not be repeated: that would be shame and foolishness. The time has come, on the contrary, to act through a dignified and reasoned scission, which is moreover inevitable. What is this scission? I'm going to explain.

The Workers' Democracy, by showing in the elections of 1863-64 its resolution to assert its political right, revealed at the same time its idea and its lofty pretensions. It aims at nothing less than to accomplish, for its own benefit, an economic and social revolution.

But, in order to accomplish such a great work requires more than electoral demonstrations, more or less equivocal, professions of faith published in the newspapers, more or less regular lectures given by a few speakers, with the permission of the police; it

is not even enough for a few practitioners, passing from the apostolate to action, to call around them, in associations for mutual help or cooperation, a few hundred zealots. The work of reform could drag on without producing any result other than to entertain the conservatives from time to time. It is necessary to act politically and socially, to appeal, by all legal means, to the collective force, to set in motion all the powers of the country and the State.

When Louis XVI, after fifteen years of useless efforts, feeling his impotence, finally resolved to triumph over the conspiratorial resistance of the court and the city, the nobility, the clergy, the bourgeoisie, the parliaments, the financiers and the people himself, he convoked the estates-general of the nation. What followed proved that it was not too much for this universal commotion to pass through legislation and facts a revolution already accomplished in people's minds.

Since 89, the French nation has changed its constitution twelve or fifteen times; and each time it was necessary to set in motion the strength and the intelligence of the country.

Much lesser, relatively insignificant creations have required the irresistible concurrence of Power and Opinion. To establish the Bank of France, Bonaparte did not have too much consular dictatorship, supported by a coalition of financiers.

Was the Second Empire able to establish the Crédit Foncier, the object of so many hopes, foreseen by royalty, promised by the republic, demanded at the same time by agriculture and industry, by the towns and the countryside? No, the Empire has remained powerless in the face of this national creation, and we can defy it to lift such a burden.

Does the Workers' Democracy, with its small and poor associations, with its subscriptions at five centimes a week, with its ordinary means of persuasion and propaganda, imagine itself able to accomplish one of those vast movements that regenerate societies and change the face of the globe in a few years? It would simply not manage to organize a general system of insurance and to replace the fixed premium by mutuality. What would it be like if it had to seriously compete with the Banque de France, the Crédit Mobilier, the Comptoir d'Escompte, all those financial agglomerations whose capital, cash, is counted in the billions?

On a theoretical demonstration proving to the country that it has every interest in paying the rent of money at one-half percent instead of eight, will financial companies convert to mutuality? And will the railroads divest themselves of their fares? And the rentiers, whose claim now amounts to ten billion, will they consent to conversions? And will commerce enter, without further invitation, the paths of guarantee and cheapness? And will the workers, whose poverty demands an increase in wages on all sides, set the example, by offering, in the hope of proportional reductions in subsistence and housing, to work more and at a lower price? I leave aside the Government, which, harassed on all sides, will take care not to cut off anything from the extent and intensity of its power.

It was, in my opinion, an unfortunate idea of the phalansterian school to have believed that it would lead the world, if it were only allowed to pitch its tent and build a first model phalanstery. It was assumed that a first attempt, more or less successful, would lead to a second; that then, step by step, the populations snowballing, the thirty-seven thousand communes of France would find themselves, one morning, metamorphosed into groups of harmony and phalanstery. In politics and social economy, epigenesis, as the physiologists say, is a radically false principle. To change the constitution of a people, it is necessary to act at the same time on the unity and on each part of the body politic. We cannot stress it too much. What! To repair a miserable local road, the initiative of a prefect, that is to say of the central authority, the services of twenty communes are needed; and one would imagine that by means of a few subscriptions, a few voluntary donations, with the fervor so quickly exhausted by a plebs as mobile as it was powerless, a nation of thirty-seven million souls would be swept along! Such reveries must be sent back to the school of fraternity, of the family-state or of free love.

I therefore say that, as there are things, and even very great things, the execution, development or success of which can be effected without any other help than the word — such are the sciences and the philosophies, such were formerly the religions — there are others that need all the faculties, all the devotion and all the sacrifices of a people: among these things, Political Constitutions and Social Reforms figure in the first rank. Let us preach, write, publish, discuss, it is our right: thus the French Revolution willed it, by proclaiming the great law of progress, and as a condition or instrument of this progress, freedom of thought and publicity of opinions. But let the Democracy not forget that by decreeing the liberty of thought and of the press, the Revolution wanted and guaranteed the consequence: namely that the Government would belong to the majority, in other words that the Power would follow public opinion or thought, wherever it pleases to go, provided that this thought is that of the majority.

Thus the Workers' Democracy, today as in 1848, holds in its hands the elements of its triumph. It is a question for it of conquering the majority according to its own idea; that done, to impose itself on the Power by claiming its sovereign authority. The only question is to know if, in order to achieve its goal, the Workers' Democracy will follow the ordinary way of elections and parliamentary debates, a way foreseen and more or less guaranteed by the previous constitutions, or if it would not do better, for its idea, for its dignity and for its interests, without however deviating from legality, to adopt another attitude.

Here I maintain that the representative formula, as it has been conceived and applied in France since 1789, is no longer appropriate; that the Workers' Democracy has other duties to fulfill than to give itself advocates and to organize, by means of these current languages, a critique of the Power compromising for itself alone, and from all points of view useless.

Let us remember that since 1789, the old parties, divided only by their party prejudices, less than that, by their dynastic colors, have been in the state of a permanent

coalition against the plebs, whose impatience they fear; that despite the ardor of their polemics their common political system is basically the same; that this system has as its essential character, on the one hand, governmental concentration, always and inevitably expressed by the prerogative of a Head of State; on the other hand, economic anarchy, which, under the name of liberty, covers the usurpations, monopolies, parasitisms, stock-jobbing and usury on which the new caste has survived since 89; that in that strange combination of monarchical authority and capitalist and mercantile anarchy that constitutes the bourgeois *Order*, the *Opposition* to the Power appears in turn as an integral part of the system, in no way as a potential protest; that it forms an antithesis to the Government, but is not the enemy of the Government; under such signs that the old Legitimist, Orleanist, Bonapartist, formal Republican parties, succeeding each other in power in turn, can take and do take oaths without committing their opinion: it suffices, for the satisfaction of their conscience, that they abstain from conspiring, and remain faithful to the caste and the system.

The events of the past sixteen years have brought all of this to light.

In 1848, the Republic established universal suffrage, appointed an assembly of legislators, gave itself a constitution. What did it do in all of this but make a variation on the ideal that has possessed us since 89? How did the administration, justice, politics, government and public economy differ from what they had been at the end of the reign of Louis-Philippe? No one, either in the Legitimist party, or in the Bonapartist or Orleanist party, found himself in the least confused; everyone felt at ease in the new republic; the clergy themselves, who had called the former heretical, took part in the labors of the latter. This republic, the work of practitioners of the form, had therefore nothing to distinguish it from monarchy; and we were right, we socialists, to repudiate it.

December 2 arrives, and the Constitution of 1852 replaces that of 1848; for a few years, the men who had been ousted by the *coup d'état* kept themselves apart, out of a sense of personal dignity. Then they changed their minds, and we have seen them all, royalists, republicans, members of the Provisional Government, resume their places as opponents in Parliament. It is because in the Constitution of 1852, as in that of 1848, they had recognized, behind very slightly disfigured features, their ideal.

As for the Socialist Democracy, for the working plebs, it was something else: we can say of it that it did not find its ideal at the basis of any of the constitutions that France has given itself since 89, and that the Revolution is summed up entirely for it in these vague formulas: UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE, *Right to work*, *Abolition of the proletariat*, etc. In 1848, it protested against the Constitution! In 1863, it put economic reform back on the agenda.

In 1848, we were in the Republic as at home; the Constitution, in spite of all that it said and all that it did not say, testified to our existence, our pretensions, our approaching triumph. Our submission was conditional, temporary; we could use, without contradiction, without apostasy and without perjury, all the legal guarantees to organize our forces and

prepare the transformation of the Republic. Supported by the right of 1848, we awaited 1852.

Today, after the restoration of the imperial throne, after the law that prescribes the oath to deputies, after the decree of November 24, 1860, after the return of the old parties and the resurrection of the Constitutional Opposition, the position of the Radical Democracy is no longer the same. In the absence of the Government, which has kept silence, the Opposition has made it clear to us: You are nothing here; vote with us or withdraw. It was the case for the Workers' Democracy to answer like the ten tribes of Jeroboam: Well! Fo your business, bourgeois; let us return to our tents, Israel!

It did not happen. The Workers' Democracy, preferring *action* to council, had taken it into its head to strike a blow: instead of separating sharply, it again made itself a humble follower; like the young of the opossum it returned, so to speak, to the womb that had borne it, and voted, by a detestable tactic, on behalf of an Opposition that neither wanted nor could recognize it.

I therefore conclude that since the political and economic ideal pursued by Workers' Democracy is not the same as that which the bourgeois class has been striving for in vain for seventy years, we cannot figure, I am not saying only in the same parliament, but even in the same Opposition; words with us have a different meaning than with them; — that neither the ideas, nor the principles, nor the forms of government, nor the institutions and the mores are the same; that it is not even these liberties and guarantees of 89, always and uselessly promised, which in bourgeois constitutionalism could not possibly be realized, while in the democratic system they flow of themselves and without any difficulty. Hence the inevitable consequence that, if the working plebs believed they could reject the Government candidates in the last elections as representatives of an idea contrary to their principle, all the more reason should they reject those of the Opposition, both being the expression of the same idea, the same policy, the same *order*, with this difference however that the ministerial candidates frankly present themselves for what they are, while the others deceive their voters by covering their idea with a mask.

Let the working class, if it takes itself seriously, if it pursues something other than a fantasy, hold it for itself to say: Above all, it is necessary that it abandon its tutelage and that, without worrying more about the Ministry or the Opposition, it now acts exclusively by itself and for itself. To be a power or to be nothing: such is the alternative. By voting for the candidates of the May 31, 1863, then for those of March 20, 1864, the Socialist Democracy lacked resolution and intelligence. It has forgotten itself, and for what? For the enemy. By the Manifesto of the *Sixties* it had risen to the height of a patriciate; by its vote it has descended to the rank of freedmen.

Chapter II.

1. Political morality: the oath before and since 89; contradiction of the civic and constitutional oath. — Political morality, in France, distorted as a result of the adulteration of the oath.

One thing passed on as a maxim among our so-called politicians, whose job it is to for an Opposition all governments, which does not prevent them from finally rallying to all governments, is that, in order to combat the Power usefully, the first condition is to place oneself on one's own ground, in other fields, to accept the law of which it is the author and the organ. Which means in good French that to get rid of a man, the surest way is to break into his home and, when he greets you, to murder him. Rhetoricians, ready to hold forth under all regimes; lawyers, pleading not only all causes, but before all courts, accepting all jurisdictions, adapting to all procedures; atheists, gloating in their indifference, because they are incapable of rising to principles; to whom all professions of faith are equal, because their soul has lost the sense of right, and who are not reluctant to kneel before any idol, because they despise men even more than the gods! For these sophists, nothing is irreconcilable, nothing contradictory, nothing incompatible, nothing repugnant. They have conciliations, accommodations, justifications for everything. Whether it be the Constitution of 1848 or that of 1852, the military commissions or the jury, the law of general security or the *habeas corpus*, civic duty or dynastic fealty: they see no difference, they do not notice the transition. It is thus that we have seen them cheerfully taking their part in the oath demanded by the Constitution of 1852 for election to the Legislative Body and, when the Republican Democracy hesitated before this imperial homage, pushing it, through an outburst of passion, to commit what in the calm of reason it had at first regarded as a felony.

More than once, over the past three years, I have had occasion to deal with this serious question of the oath, which sums up all political morality, and each time my observations have remained unanswered. I want to come back to it again, certain in advance that fewer people than ever will answer me. But I want to demonstrate, about the oath, first, that our unfortunate nation definitely no longer knows what it is doing or where it is going; secondly, that it is incompatible with the democratic and social faith, not to say with the modern conscience.

Before 89, under the regime that, with more or less reason, had been described as divine right, the oath was taken individually to the king. In this condition, there was at least no ambiguity. The king was first a perfectly determined character, regarding whose identity there was no arguing and no mistake; then he was the nation incarnate, the living law, the State. The king was everything. With him, there was no distinction to make, no reservations to establish, no conditions to set. The duty was fixed; political morality had its criterion. The oath, formal or tacit, chained you to the royal person, symbol, expression

and organ of the nation, of its rights, of its constitution, of its franchises or, as we say more ambitiously, of its liberties. This conception of royalty and the oath, imprinted with religion, therefore had its advantage: never did a dynasty showed itself worse than that abominable family of Valois, which begins with François I and ends at Henry III; it was, however, the notion of royalty that, in their persons, through terrible civil wars, saved the French nationality.

Since 89 new ideas, which I am certainly far from condemning, have ruled the nation. With divine right the feudal oath was abolished, replaced by the civic oath. What is the *civic oath*?

According to the Constitution of 1791, title II, art. 5, the civic oath reads as follows:

“I swear to be faithful to the *Nation*, to the *Law* and to the *King*, and to maintain with all my power the Constitution of the Kingdom, decreed by the National Constituent Assembly in the years 1789, 1790 and 1791.”

Note the difference. One no longer swears loyalty to one person, the KING; but to a triad, the Nation, the Law, the King. The Nation is named first, in order to inculcate its eminent sovereignty; then comes the law, expression of the national will; after that, the King. Simple representative of the Nation and executor of its wishes, the King is appointed last: there is no equality between the terms of the triad; there is gradation. The spirit of the Revolution, such as it was conceived in 89, is found entirely in this formula of the oath.

The civic oath was abolished with the Constitution of 91: the Constitutions of the year II, of the year III and of the year VIII no longer mention it. Napoleon I restored it in 1804, in this form:

“I swear obedience to the constitutions of the Empire and loyalty to the Emperor.”

Napoleon, it is easy to see, in the interests of his despotism, came as close as he could to the feudal formula; he too, like Louis XIV, said “*L'Etat c'est moi*,” and considered himself the true representative of the people, the living law and the incarnation of France.

But the Revolution is inexorable. Napoleon cannot help recalling in the formula of the oath the *constitutions of the Empire*, constitution of 1804, constitution of 1802, constitution of 1799, the latter referring to the *Revolution* and to the *principles of 89*. That is enough: in vain Napoleon will conceal and act; the new spirit reappears behind these constitutions. At base, the oath of 1804 is the same as that of 1791, and it will be the same for the oaths taken to the kings of the elder branch and the younger branch, and later to Napoleon III.

So here is what is perfectly understood: From now on the monarch is no longer alone. What did I say? He is not even the first. There is something above the prince, something above the throne; this something is the Nation, this something is the Law. It is impossible

to purge the oath of these two images; impossible to re-establish in hearts, in its truth, the monarchical religion.

These observations made, let us examine how powerful this new oath can be.

First, as to the intention, it appears from its tenor that we wanted, by this explicit formula, to satisfy the new ideas, to consecrate the new right, to make the oath itself less mystical, less idolatrous, more worthy of man and citizen. By grouping these three great names, the Nation, the Law, the King, it was believed to give to the oath, along with more rationality, more majesty. By making the three terms, so to speak, united; by recalling the constitutions, the highest expression of the Law, it was thought to consolidate the social edifice, to communicate to the Crown the inviolability of the Law and the indestructibility of the Nation. These thoughts were certainly present in the minds of the founders; well, this is precisely what proves that the said founders acted more like poets than statesmen.

It is evident, in fact, that an oath taken collectively to three persons, or if you prefer, to three principles, could not have the same certainty as an oath taken to a single person; just as an obligation to do or not to do may give rise to many more interpretations, difficulties and disputes, depending on whether it has been contracted towards one or more persons, under specific conditions or even without conditions. From the sole fact that the political oath has been collectively taken since 1789 to the Nation, to the Law and to the King — it matters little whether it is admitted or concealed — it is conditional, subject to interpretation, and it implies reciprocity. It is wrong that the President of the Legislative Body pretends to shut the mouth of the deputy, who, before raising his hand and pronouncing the formula, asks to give an explanation. The very nature of the act implies for the one who swears the right to explain himself.

Moreover, it is so true that the political oath has become, since 1789, a simple synallagmatic contract between the Prince and those whom he previously called his subjects, that the Constitutions of 91, 1804 and 1814, the most monarchical of our Constitutions, impose on the King or the Emperor an oath equivalent to that which is sworn to themselves, an oath that recalls and implies the principles of 89, the spirit of the Revolution and the obligation for the leader of the State to defend them. The Constitution of 1852 is the only exception to this rule. A pure omission, which I dare say that Napoleon III would not dare to claim.

Now here comes the worst. It can happen that the Three to whom the oath is taken and who are supposed to be inseparable, — the Nation, the Law, the King, — contradict each other and divide. Nations, like individuals, are subject to deviations; their character, their sentiments, their opinions vary. The Law also can vary, were it only in the thought of those who, for reasons of interest or the nature of their functions, are called upon to interpret it. The King, finally, is subject to variation. As a principle, it never remains similar to itself: the king of 1791 is not the same as that of 1788; that of 1830 bears little resemblance to that of 1814. As a personal influence, it varies even more and in a more dangerous manner: the dynasty of Bourbon would perhaps still reign, if Charles X had

been animated by the same spirit as Louis XVIII. Between three elements, which are so variable, the agreement could not go far; the antagonism is fatal.

What can such an oath be in practice, and what real utility can the Three to which it is addressed derive from it: Country, Constitution and Government? It was in vain that the kings of the Charter received the oath of the whole of France, I mean of political and official France: the oath of the peers and deputies, oath of the magistracy, of the administration, of the Church, the Legion of Honor, the army, etc. Everything vanishes in a storm, as if these oaths had been written on the leaves of the trees on the boulevard. They got off with saying to the king: Sire, it is you who have not kept your oath! And everything was broken. This was repeated so many times since 89, that one could nowadays cite the example of some character who in the course of his career had sworn, in all good all honor, a dozen oaths. In 1814, the army saw, not without scandal, the generals of the Empire, forgetting or rather interpreting their political and military oath, wresting the Emperor, their leader, from his abdication. Alas! Hadn't he sworn, too, *to maintain the integrity of the territory of the republic...; of respect and ensure respect for equal rights, political and civil freedom?...* *Donnant, donnant*, Sire; you haven't kept your oath, and neither will we. You have respected neither the equality of rights, nor civil and political liberty, and the territory of the republic is invaded. Your abdication!... Sad but inevitable result of the civic oath. Never, I dare say, was such a defection seen under the ancient kings.

Thus since 1789, except for a few short intervals, the French have never ceased to chain themselves by oath to their constitutions and to their princes, and none of these oaths has been kept. Constitutions and dynasties were constantly renewed, in spite of the oath or by virtue of the oath, one does not know which to say: either that the constitution was insufficient or did not fulfill its object; either the prince had incurred the reproach of bad faith or rather, through the work of ideas and the progress of time, nation, prince and constitution no longer get along. Imagine the three persons of the divine Trinity in conflict. To whom will the prayer of mortals be addressed? Who should we worship: Father, Son or Spirit? Baptized and confirmed in the name of the Three, to whom shall we pay our homage? There will be no more God;

Such is the position in which France found itself, notably in 1814, 1815, 1830 and 1848. What cowardly compositions! What failures! What betrayals disguised under the name of transitions! For a time the public conscience rose up against these indignities. The people, in their naivety, ignorant of political fatality that governed men and things, not understanding that a faithful subject could deny his master, any more than a Christian could deny his God, the people, I say, hissed at the ingrates and the traitors; their memory has remained tainted. Today, the revolutionary logic has completed its work: we all swear, and we perjure ourselves; it passes, as they say, like a letter in the post. We have even come to make the oath, reluctantly given and mentally disavowed, an act of virtue. These intrepid swearers, who were laughed at thirty years ago, are being praised in the full

academy. It is because, indeed, were we a hundred times certain that these cowards listened much more to the voice of interest than that of duty, in the face of the contradiction of the system, the fact and the right would always fail to establish against them an accusation of perjury. No wonder then that after giving them our absolution *en masse*, we ended up following their example.

Let us follow this strange transformation of our public mores.

By virtue of the plebiscite of 1851, Louis-Napoleon was therefore charged with issuing a new constitution. In order to ward off perfidious influences and hostile personalities from his government, he made the oath of fidelity to his person a condition of admission to all employments, notably that of deputy. Evidently the author of the constitution of 1852 will have supposed that the notable men of the old parties, his natural enemies, would either refuse, as people of honor, to commit themselves to such an oath or that, having taken it, they would hold to it.

At first these forecasts appeared to be justified. Most of the politicians who had made their mark under the last governments kept their distance: those who rallied did so seriously, with all the good faith that could be demanded in such a case. All showed themselves, with rare exceptions, benevolent advisers, enlightened, discussing with the Power, not to attack it and shake it, but to warn it, to serve it and consolidate it. For their part, Messrs. Cavaignac, Goudchaux, and Carnot emphatically refused the oath, and this refusal did them as much honor as their rallying had procured the others.

In 1863, after more than a decade of waiting, the resolutions changed. Orléanists, Legitimists and Republicans say to themselves that it is necessary to return to Parliament, to form a *Legal Opposition*. How did they view the condition of the oath? None spoke: it is dangerous to explain oneself in such a case. But we can prejudge their secret thoughts from the situation and from their actions.

2. — The Oath and the Orleanist Party.

M. Thiers, from his first speech, did not conceal the feelings of affection that attached him to the Orleans family. His language, full of candor and dignity, won over everyone and won him approval rather than reprimand. Besides, the imperial government does not ask him for his friendship. Then M. Thiers made it understood that above all, faithful to the ideas of 89, he regarded the constitutional monarchy, such as it had emerged from the July Revolution, as the most fortunate expression of these ideas, but that, the existence of this monarchy not depending on one family rather than another, he was ready to join the Imperial Government, if the latter on its side declared itself ready to enter into his system. "Accept my theory of ministerial responsibility," he said, "and I'm yours. In the meantime, allow me to remain in Opposition."

What M. Thiers has declared on his own account applies to all the deputies of the Orléanist opinion.

It follows from this, very clearly, that M. Thiers and those who follow him, more friends, besides, of the Orleans than of the Bonapartes, — they admit to it, — are opposed to the Constitution of 1852; that if, as simple citizens, and especially during the time when they exercise their functions of deputies, one does not have to fear that they will allow themselves the slightest attack against the Government, the least unconstitutional step; if they stay away from conspiracies; as deputies they do not conform to their oath which is to *obey the Constitution*: which would not make sense or which means, above all, that they will express no blame for the Constitution, will not allow themselves any systematic criticism likely to destroy it in public opinion. In this respect, the oath taken by M. Thiers is evidently an oath that his reason has not ratified, which his conduct in Parliament contradicts every day: what I myself call a false oath.

Assuredly M. Thiers, in putting up his candidacy, did not envisage with this rigorous logic the consequences of his action. A man of his age, where oaths count for so little, where political morality is so flexible; practical spirit of the *juste-milieu*, he said to himself that things should not be exaggerated any more than they should be diminished; that nowadays, according to all the precedents since 89, the significance of the political oath was: 1. Recognition of the Imperial Government, like government in fact and law of the country; 2. A promise not to say or do anything that could lead to its overthrow. From which M. Thiers thought he could conclude that the safest thing was to stick to this sufficiently explicit interpretation; that to go further would be to overstep the bounds and to grant the Power more than it itself asked for; that the best friends of the Empire did not really commit themselves to anything more; that with all the more reason one could not demand of M. Thiers, partisan of the parliamentary regime and member of an opposition accepted as legal, that he made himself the champion of a political system that he did not approve of, the guarantor of a dynasty that he had not sought; especially since, after all, the oath that he was obliged to take, by its nature, by all of our constitutions, by our whole history since 89, was reciprocal; so that if the head of State, through some serious fault, such as we have had more than one example, were to lose his crown, it was in all justice to accuse him of it himself, not the honorable citizens who, after having served him with their warnings, their protestations, their oath, would have held themselves towards him in an attitude of reserve.

This is what M. Thiers must have thought, in substance; what everyone in the Opposition thinks along with him. And note that I will be careful not to oppose anything to these allegations. I will not refute them; I do not contradict them. One does not contradict what is self-contradictory. Here the facts, as I observed just now, the new law, the constitutional texts, the overtones of public opinion: everything protests for and against, and makes of the adversaries of power who have sworn, a part of reason. How then could I refute them?

But it is precisely this ambiguous situation that I denounce; it is this immoral contradiction, of which I do not accuse anyone of having been the inventor, since it results

from our revolutions, it is this legal hypocrisy, that I reproach in all these oaths taken with such a light hand, by men who would probably think twice if they were not convinced in advance of the insignificance of their promise. What I reproach, I say, in all these oaths, is that they are *knowingly taken in vain*, despite the prohibition of the Decalogue: *Non assumes nomen Dei tui in vanum*; it is to contain only a negative promise, a passive obligation, which leaves the door open to denigration, denunciation, attack; to offer no guarantee to authority and to profit only from the ambitious who, perfectly convinced of their inefficiency, are not afraid to undertake it. What I reproach in these oaths is that they have perverted consciences; it is that everyone in the political world can say, with a serenity of soul that the Jesuits never knew: I have taken an oath, and I will not break it. But I guarantee nothing, I answer for nothing; to fulfill my promise, it is enough that I keep quiet. Let the Power defend itself, it is its own business; whether it escapes or gets lost, I can't help it and wash my hands of it!

What! You call that keeping an oath, and you take yourselves for serious men! But what, if you please, is the cause which in our country, for three quarters of a century, has made governments sink? Is it not the uncertainty of systems, the plurality of principles, the obscurity of law, the perpetual contradiction between the Nation and the State, the suspicion constitutionally raised on the good faith of the prince, on the excess of his influence; as a result, the harsh criticism of adversaries who, having sworn to at least spare him, if not to support him, dealt him the first blows, the weakness of his defenders, the abandonment of his creatures, the perfidy of the opposition ? Only superficial minds, who believe in the efficacy of oaths, and who have found in the restoration of the Empire the realization of their wishes, bind themselves to Napoleon III by a solemn promise; and then that, in their inexperience with revolutions, in the indiscretion of their parliament, in the very excess of their zeal, they gradually compromise the Power that they intended to defend, and end up losing it: it does not there is nothing in this that is natural, nothing that can be explained. These men are of good faith, and deserve as much indulgence as compassion. One day they will feel the contradiction of which they are the playthings: God grant then that the sincerity of their hearts does not go away with that of their illusions! But you, the skillful, you, the sophists, who know the ground on which you walk, who of the ambiguity of situations, of the antithesis of principles, of the double meaning of words, of the oscillation of in their inexperience with revolutions, in the indiscretion of their parliament, in the very excess of their zeal, they gradually compromise the Power that they intended to defend, and end up losing it: there is nothing in but what is natural, nothing but what is explicable. These men are of good faith, and deserve as much indulgence as compassion. One day they will feel the contradiction of which they are the playthings: God grant then that the sincerity of their hearts does not go away with that of their illusions! But you, the skillful, you, the sophists, who know the ground on which you walk, who of the ambiguity of situations, of the antithesis of principles, of the double meaning of words, of the oscillation of in their inexperience with revolutions, in the

indiscretion of their parliament, in the very excess of their zeal, they gradually compromise the Power that they intended to defend, and end up losing it: there is nothing in that's only natural, nothing but explicable. These men are of good faith, and deserve as much indulgence as compassion. One day they will feel the contradiction of which they are the playthings: God grant then that the sincerity of their hearts does not go away with that of their illusions! But you, the skillful, you, the sophists, who know the ground on which you walk, who of the ambiguity of situations, of the antithesis of principles, of the double meaning of words, of the oscillation of the interests and the bascule of the powers, do you know how to make irreproachable means of attack before the constitutions and the laws, are you in good faith? Can you talk about your innocence? Aren't your speeches so many betrayals?... You say, speaking of the Power: Why doesn't it change policy! Why does it not change its constitution! That is to say, why does he not give his resignation into our hands!... As if our country had not tried all forms of government! As if we were not at this moment in pure skepticism! And who does not know today that of all these constitutions whose whirlwind we are carried away by, the best is never worth the others, and that the preference affected for this one to the exclusion of that one is always only one method of opposition? You create a void around the Power; you dig the ditch at the foot of its walls; you undermine its foundations; you give the signal to the conspirators, and when the building is blown up, you cry out, clapping your hands: It is not our fault; we kept our oath. Ah! You resemble the woman spoken of in Scripture, who, covered with the defilement of her adultery, protests her modesty. You pose as Judiths, and you are only Potiphars. Rid us of your oaths; you will have done more for Liberty than by executing thirty dynasties. covered with the defilement of her adultery, protests her modesty. You pose as Judiths, and you are only Potiphars. Rid us of your oaths; you will have done more for Liberty than by executing thirty dynasties. covered with the defilement of her adultery, protests her modesty. You pose as Judiths, and you are only Potiphars. Rid us of your oaths; you will have done more for Liberty than by executing thirty dynasties.

3. — The Oath and the Legitimist and Republican Parties.

Of all our sworn orators, who do not march with the Power, the least reproachable is without a doubt M. Thiers. Historian of the Consulate and of the Empire, admirer of the first Napoleon, one cannot imagine him having a very deep antipathy for the posterity of his hero. Partisan of the monarchical form, fond of force, authority and initiative in government, passionate about military glory, what has he to reproach the imperial government so much for? When he said to the Emperor: "Have your ministers appear, instead of sending us your councilors of state, and I am with you;" doesn't it seem that his adhesion is hanging by a thread? Who more than he, without rallying to the Imperial Government, could believe himself authorized to take the oath?

And yet it is easy to see that there is nothing rational about this oath, any more than the condition to which M. Thiers subordinates his rallying — and about which he is less fooled than anyone. M. Thiers, who, in the penultimate volume of his history, placed the *Additional Act* of 1815 far above the Charter of 1814, cannot be unaware that the mode of discussion at present followed in the Legislative Body is borrowed to this same *Additional Act*: how can that which, coming from Napoleon I, received the thoughtful approval of M. Thiers after a personal experience of twenty years, be rejected by him, when put into practice by Napoleon III? So M. Thiers said to himself that the Emperor could not compromise on this point, and it is because he considers the compromise impossible that he makes it a condition, that he will make it, if he can, a necessity. Comedy!

But what about MM. Berryer, Marie, J. Favre and others who, regardless of considerations of good parliamentary faith, constitutional sincerity and public morality, seemed to have very special reasons for refusing to take the oath?

M. Berryer is a supporter of the constitutional monarchy: there is no doubt about that. Only, while M. Thiers declares that he does not hold to one dynasty rather than another, and subordinates his rallying to the adoption of his favorite maxim: *The king reigns and does not govern*, M. Berryer regards dynastic legitimacy as essential to the Constitution, which leads to a maxim diametrically opposed to that of M. Thiers: *The king reigns and governs*. Put Henri V in place of Napoleon III, without changing a word of the Constitution of 1852, and M. Berryer will be able to say he is satisfied. Here a question of man and dynasty; there is a matter of parliament. At least it is conceivable that the Constitution of 1852 is modified, since it declares itself modifiable; so that M. Thiers can say that his oath indicates a hope on his part, a hope already in progress. But how could Monsieur Berryer, a servant of Henry V, swear by Napoleon? What is the possible transition from one of these characters to the other? It was a great thing, in 1814, that the legitimate dynasty had rallied to the Revolution by giving the Charter; M. Thiers has related the joy that the whole of France experienced. Now can this dynasty and those who represent it go so far as to recognize, as the princes of Orleans did without difficulty, as the Bonapartes admit, that the dynastic question is entirely subordinated to the choice of the people; consequently, that the traditional legitimacy, *a priori*, of the Count of Chambord is a word, and that Napoleon III, elected emperor, sovereign in fact and in law, is legitimate? If M. Berryer agrees to this, he has taken an immense step in the system of the Revolution: what then prevents him from attaching himself, like M. de La Rochejaquelein, to Bonapartism? If, on the contrary, he rejects this conclusion, what is his oath?

It is the same argument with regard to MM. Marie, J. Favre, Pelletan and others. They were believed to be, many people still suppose them to be republicans. This means at the very least that, if, on the one hand, M. Thiers and his friends regard the monarchy as essential to the Government, but without clinging to a special dynasty, the choice of which depends on popular suffrage; if, on the other hand, M. Berryer and the legitimist party

maintain that this monarchy must have its roots in a higher sphere than universal suffrage, the republicans, for their part, claim that the monarchical element is useless, even even harmful; that the true prince is the very assembly of representatives, at most a revocable chief, appointed by it or elected by the people. Suppression of royalty and dynasty: this is what distinguishes the republicans. I wish, for a moment, that under the terms of the constitutions and in the spirit of democratic legality, they can go, without failing in their principles, to the point of recognizing Napoleon III as sovereign in fact and in law, and, by this broad interpretation of their oath, to believe themselves in good standing with Power and with public opinion. This will always remain: while M. Thiers makes the substitution of the Charter of 1830 for that of 1852 a condition of his rallying, they want to return to the Constitution of 1848; in other words, This will always remain: while M. Thiers makes the substitution of the Charter of 1830 for that of 1852 a condition of his rallying, they want to return to the Constitution of 1848; in other words, they demand that Napoleon III abdicate his imperial title, as exceeding the limit set by universal suffrage; that he renounce for himself and his race the benefit of the *senatus-consulte* of 1852 and 1856; that he restore the *status quo* of December 1, 1851, and, in case he wishes to remain at the head of the Government, that he submit again, as President of the Republic, not for life, to the suffrage of the people. Do they hope to obtain such a concession from His Majesty? To say so would be regarded as buffoonery. Do they think they are forcing it? What then becomes of their oath? Therefore, if the republicans of the Opposition only entered Parliament with the ulterior motive of forcing their position and re-establishing the republic, they admit that their object is to abrogate the Empire; therefore, unless they are secretly supposed to be renegades, they do not abide by their oath; they do more, perhaps unwittingly, and they conspire. But what am I saying, unwittingly? They would doubtless deny it, and indignantly, if questioned about it; at the bottom of their hearts, they would not be sorry that Democracy believed it. Such is the deplorable conscience that the oath has made for our politicians.

4. — The Oath and the New Democracy.

In France, the political oath, multiple in its terms, complex in its formula, heterogeneous in its data, contradictory in its expression, dishonored by its antecedents, powerless and lying, is one of those acts that every man, every thinking party must forbid.

One does not take an ambiguous, equivocal, double-edged oath, implying in its terms its resolute condition, because it is not serious.

We do not lend it to a power to which we are not rallied and of which we systematically declare ourselves the adversary, because it is a forfeiture.

We abstain from it, above all, when it is proved that this oath, even taken with the intention of not keeping it, involves in fact the abjuration, the moral suicide and the political forfeiture of the party which that it. Now, this is what would have happened to

the Workers' Democracy, if in the last elections it had acted knowingly, if against this oath a formal protest had not been raised within it. The proof of this last proposition will complete my thesis.

The men of the old parties who, without rallying either to the policy of the Emperor, or to the Constitution of 1852, or to the Napoleonic dynasty, thought it their duty nevertheless, after twelve years of loyal abstention, to submit to the constitutional oath in order to enter the political arena, did not do so without reason; they had motives apparently, and of several kinds, personal motives and political motives.

Let us leave personal motives aside: they would teach us nothing worthwhile.

Coming then to political considerations, what do we find? It is, of course, that in the eyes of the Opposition, the government is bad; that it lacks the principles of 89; that it violates the rights and liberties of the nation; that it overburdens the taxpayers by the prodigality of its expenditures, and pushes towards social revolution; in short, that the policy of the Emperor, at home and abroad, is detestable. Such is the judgment of the Opposition.

It said to itself accordingly, but in a low voice, so low that it could not hear its own words, that it was necessary to put an end, if possible, to such a regime; that the magnitude of the reasons sufficiently covers what may be irregular in the company; that, moreover, no one directly blames the person of the Prince or his dynasty; — MM. Thiers, Berryer, Marie, J. Favre are not, God forbid! regicides; — that in Napoleon III one only combats a system, a policy, contrary to the rights and liberties of the country, to the great principles of the Revolution; and that if, in the insurrection of consciences, misfortune happened to someone, this someone could only attribute the fault to himself.

In short, the old parties united against the Imperial Government know very well what they were doing. They would be careful not to embark on an affair which political morality, especially in the event of failure, would not fail to qualify as high treason, if they did not feel strengthened in their hearts by the consideration of a primary interest and national law. He who does so much as to break an oath, does not do it for nothing, without an honest pretext, without a powerful excuse.

But what did the Workers' Democracy seek by entering into this bourgeois coalition? What does it expect for itself? What part will it be given in this old system which it is a question of restoring, both against socialist tendencies and against imperial absolutism?

The Workers' Democracy knows what the political and social profession of faith of the Opposition is, a profession of faith that is common to it and to the Government. Let us put it back in front of the reader:

1. It is that the French nation, that is to say the 37 million souls who populate our 89 departments, form a single and indivisible body politic; —
2. That this body politic is composed of the following elements: a sovereign People, a Power that represents them, a Constitution that determines their respective rights and attributions and their relations; —
3. That Power is, like the body politic or the State, equally one and indivisible, the

constitution highly centralized; — 4. That this political centralization has as its counterweight the independence and lack of solidarity of industries, the absolutism of property, mercantile anarchy, leading inevitably to industrial and financial feudalism, to the subalternization of labor to capital. Such is the political ideal of our adversaries: the rest, — constitutions, dynasties, presidencies, dictatorships or directories, elections and representation, executive power and legislative power, responsibility of the prince or responsibility of ministers, — is incidental, a matter of form. This, I say, is what in the Opposition and the Government is called the *chose publique*, the COMMON WEAL, something that each aspires to seize in turn, to which all are devoted, as to their own country, in life and death, and whose sacred interest goes so far as to cause them to decide, in the serious cases, to take an oath of fidelity and obedience to their intimate enemies, to their rivals. This is what it is for them to save, or at least to snatch from the claws of the imperial eagle, who, they say, has made too big a share of it. When the country is in danger, who would hesitate to save it, even at the cost of a false oath?

But we New Century Democrats, plebs of labor and right, which we flatter to regenerate social and political mores, what have we to do in this intrigue? Would we flatter ourselves, by any chance, that it turned out to our advantage? But how would we not see that by rallying to the Opposition, we are only substituting one domination for another, so that the only fruit that we have to reap from our oath will be to have sacrificed our interests and our consciences on the altar of bourgeois interests? We will have made ourselves conspirators, apostates, perjurers, on behalf of a coalition formed much less against the Empire than against us. Who are they, in fact, these men who seem so determined to destroy the Imperial Government?

Old legitimists, remnants of the ancient nobility, living on their titles, their incomes, their privileges, their conveniences, more than on their labor; needing the protection of the prince more than the mutuality of their peers, resigned in advance, with M. Berryer, to pass, if necessary, for the safety of society, from the dynasty of the Bourbons to that of the Bonapartes. No doubt they won't take the plunge until the last hour, but they will take it: the *principles* and the *commonweal* above all.

Orleanist millionaires, the cream and the flower of the bourgeoisie, financiers, speculators, having a hand in all major affairs, living on shares, subsidies, bribes, differences and achievements, much more than their personal work, and for whom governmental, autocratic, aristocratic or parliamentary protectorate, one or the other, is indispensable. For any fortune, any ease that does not proceed directly from personal labor, which can only be attributed to privilege, monopoly, speculation, necessarily has its guarantee in the Power, since if it did not have its guarantee in the Power, it would be lost.

A clergy who, whatever their discontents, cannot avoid swearing either: what would become of them without the State? This has been a tradition since Constantine. Didn't Jesus Christ command to *render unto Caesar what is Caesar's*? It is true that he added to it this corrective, *and to God what belongs to God*, which singularly changes the question.

Republicans of form, finally, and perhaps some communist democrats, both having the perfect right to enter into the coalition and to show themselves easy on the oath, centralizers above all, indivisibilists, unitaries, men of authority, expecting more from the State than from themselves, consequently devoted clientele of the *de facto* sovereign, as long as he shows complacency towards the *de jure* sovereign, who in their opinion is none other than them themselves.

No, we cannot, men of the new social pact, who reject above all political joint ownership and economic insolidarity, we cannot associate ourselves with an oath that all our adversaries, friends or enemies of the Empire offer again and again; because, in this oath, they finally find the maintenance of their system, their preservation and our ruin; because, after having sworn with them, we would have to swear again against them; because in voting against the Government we would have to vote at the same time against the Opposition, and because in order to wage war on all the old parties together, it is not in Parliament that we must legally seek our field of action, it is outside Parliament.

— Bah ! said one, I will be faithful to Napoleon III as he himself was faithful to the Constitution of 1848. What do you have to say about that? “Two things: the first, that you will nevertheless have committed perjury, which no example, no reprisal can justify; the second, that you will not have eight million votes to relieve you of your oath, as Napoleon III had them in 1851 and 1852.

— The political oath, alleged another, must be likened to the professional oath: it is nothing more. — It is true that for more than one the quality of representative, bringing in an income of 12 to 15,000 francs, is a profession. To that I have nothing to reply.

Most, impatient, protest that such scruples are out of season; that we are not obliged to show ourselves more difficult than so many others; that, above all, if we want to serve our ideas, we must act, and that we deprive ourselves of an immense means of action and of propaganda by renouncing by false delicacy the advantages of parliament.

Do what you must, the saying goes, *come what may*. Against this proverb the morality of the Jesuits did not prevail; would it be otherwise for that of the Normal School? Well, I am going to show that this lure of the public tribune, by which the People allowed themselves to be seduced, was only a decoy; that all its hopes have been betrayed by its representatives, and that they always will be; that there is nothing for us to do in the Legislative Body, and that if we appeared there, it could only be for a moment, to reveal the impotence both of Power and of the Opposition, and then withdraw charged with their common curse. It is fine to suffer affront for the truth; but that is not worth perjury.

Chapter III.

Universal Suffrage. — Incompatibility.

The law that organizes universal suffrage raises twenty questions, each more serious than the others, and on each of which there would be legal action to bring against MM. the gentlemen deputies of the Opposition. Among these questions I will touch upon two or three, for the sole purpose of proving, first, that our deputies, when they speak of universal suffrage, perpetually turn in the sophism that the old logicians called *ignoratio elenchi*, ignorance of the subject; then that between their political faith, sufficiently indicated by their oath, and the true electoral right, there is complete incompatibility.

I. *That the right of suffrage is inherent in man and in the citizen.* — Last year, the Belgian clerical party, a party that comprises more than half of Belgium, decided to take a step forward and, adopting the ideas of M. de Genoude on universal suffrage, proposed a law which, enlarging the electoral right, might be considered as a first attempt at universal and direct suffrage. Great was the scandal among the so-called liberals who, attributing to themselves the monopoly on progress, saw themselves suddenly outdistanced by their adversaries, who had become the promoters of the political emancipation of the masses. The proposal of the clericals was called hypocritical, revolutionary; the spirit of preservation, still more ferocious in constitutional Belgium than in imperial France, was stirred up against it; in short, for the plan to grant every citizen the right to vote, with no other condition than the age of majority and domicile, the Liberals substituted another, which made the exercise of the right to vote subject to certain conditions of education and ability. It was to be demanded, they said, that every elector know at least how to read and write, that is to say that he had received a primary education. The proposal of the clericals was therefore discarded: this was one of the causes that led to their defeat in the elections of August 11.

Certainly it is to be desired that every citizen should have acquired the degree of knowledge, very modest, that one finds everywhere among the most humble schoolmasters; but the objection of the liberals of Belgium is none the less contrary to all principles, full of bad faith towards the rival party and malevolence towards the people. In Democracy — let us not forget that the Belgians present themselves as democrats — the electoral right is inherent in the quality of man and citizen, like the right of property, the right to inherit, the right to testate, the right to work, the right to sue and claim in court, the right to associate, the right to buy and sell, the right to build, like that of getting married and having children; like the obligation of military service, like that of paying taxes. Has anyone thought to require, for the exercise of these rights, which all derive from the right of democratic sovereignty, that the citizen prove his education beforehand? What! You grant to the illiterate all the rights that together constitute the highest dignity

for the man and the citizen, and you refuse him the first of all, the most elementary, that by which he is called to declare that such men, responsible for legislating for him, reviewing the accounts of the administration, and voting the charges he will have to bear, have or do not have his confidence! There is more than a constitutional inconsistency here; there is, we agree, a bourgeois usurpation. Let one exclude from the right of suffrage the insane, the minors, the traitors, the infamous: I can still understand it. Some are outside the law and society; others are deprived of their virile faculties, or have not yet acquired them. But education, even primary education cannot, any more than higher education, be assimilated to a faculty: to claim so would quite simply be to renew Tartuffe's argument, saying that if he accepted the donation from Orgon, who disinherited his children for him, it was for fear that so great a fortune should fall into unfaithful hands. Here the Liberals of Belgium acted like Tartuffes; the clericals spoke like the Revolution.

From the principle, indisputable in a democratic society and State, that the electoral right is inherent in man and in the citizen, are deduced from the consequences, or if you prefer, from the corollaries of the greatest interest. It is, first of all, that political equality once declared, put into practice by the exercise of universal suffrage, the tendency of the nation is towards economic equality. All history confirms this: posit the inequality of fortunes as a principle and political inequality will be the consequence; you will have a theocracy, an aristocracy, hierarchical or feudal society. Now change the political constitution, and from the aristocracy pass to the democratic regime: the social tendency will be the opposite. The system of political guarantees will lead to the mutuality of economic guarantees. Isn't this precisely what the workers' candidates intended! But that is also what their bourgeois competitors don't want. We too have our liberal tartufferie. Someone who was prosecuted during the last elections for the offense of illicit association said to the police commissioner in charge of the house search: Well, Sir! Can you forget that if I posed my candidacy against the Government, it was in order to prevent that of a worker?... Let it be remembered: between equality, or political right, and equality, or economic right, there is an intimate relationship, so that where one of the two is denied, the other will soon disappear. The dictators who held the elections of 1863-64 were not unaware of this; did the working Democracy, which so willingly lent itself to their maneuver, know it?

II. *Electoral constituencies.* — According to the French law, universal suffrage is *direct*. This also follows from the principle that universal suffrage, in other words political right, is inherent in man and in the citizen, his essential, inalienable prerogative. So whenever the enemies of liberty and equality have tried to destroy them, first in public opinion, later in practice, they have endeavored not only to restrict the right to vote, but to make it as *indirect* as possible. Thus, according to the Constitution of the year VIII, the sovereignty of the People having to pass, as in a wire drawing mill, through four stages of election, ended by being nothing more than a shadow of sovereignty, the reality of which remained

entirely in the hands of the First Consul. The people voted all the same: they would have voted thirty-six degrees as well as four. One advantage that the ruling classes have over the classes of the ruled is that the latter never notice when they are being laughed at.

But here is something that becomes more serious.

If the political right is inherent in man and in the citizen, consequently if the suffrage must be direct; the same right is also inherent, *a fortiori*, in each naturally formed group of citizens, in each corporation, in each commune or city; and the suffrage in each of these groups must be equally direct. So demands Democracy, or as one would say the sharing of sovereignty, according to the maxim: *Each at home, each for himself, guaranteed for all*. Is this how the Government, on the one hand, and the Opposition, on the other, see it?

Everyone agreed to blame the current constituencies. The deputies of the Opposition did like the others; they were careful not to allow this grievance to escape. It has been said, and with good reason, that the electoral groups were formed arbitrarily, despite relations of neighbors, of industry, of interests, against natural reason, against economic reason, one could add, against the principle of universal and direct suffrage. Populations that nature and historical development had brought together, accustomed to living together as a family, have been divorced; others, who did not know each other, confused. They were so many moral persons whose individuality was destroyed, obliged as they were to vote outside their center, for people and interests they did not know. Deputies devoted to the Imperial Government have loudly complained about it; they dared to say that it was an evil; that, in order to thwart an opposing election, which is moreover problematic, one should never violently break natural affinities or create imaginary ones. All this could not be more rational; but all that is incompatible with the system of the Government and the Opposition, and what I do not understand is that the latter had the courage to take advantage of it. Let it therefore answer the objection that I am about to make to it.

In our system of centralized monarchy, of autocratic Empire, of one and indivisible Republic, — it is all one, — the groups or natural constituencies, the maintenance of which a certain deputy from the North demanded with so much insistence, do not have the right to the respect of the Power as far as it finds convenience for national unity, the first law of the Country and of the Government. It was with a view to forming this unity, by a complete fusion, that the old provincial divisions were broken into departments; — it is for the same purpose that the old Democracy, unwittingly doing the business of the Crown, never ceased to protest against *parochialism*; — it was animated by the same spirit that the Constitution of 1848 laid down this maxim of public law, preserved and marvelously practiced by the Imperial Government: *The representatives of the French people are not the representatives of their respective departments, they are the deputies of the whole of France*. Finally, it is for the same purpose that MM. of Girardin and Laboulaye, the first in the *Presse*, the second in his public lectures, claim *college unity*, as the most powerful means of arresting the impulses and of erasing the divergences of universal suffrage, thereby of annulling the spirit of locality, and of maintaining, under an

appearance of democracy marching towards union, the political and economic subordination of the working masses. What, in fact, is this *college unity*, if not a way of rendering the suffrage *indirect*, by having the great masses vote, instead of voting, as the consular constitution would have it, by degrees?

See, indeed, the consequences.

Under the one and indivisible republic, as under the centralized monarchy, every citizen is eligible in the eighty-nine departments; he can put up his candidacy, not only in the department where he lives, where he exercises his industry, where he has his properties, of which he knows the population, the businesses and the needs; but he can also present himself where he is unknown, where he has no kind of interest, where nothing, except his quality as a Frenchman, his talent as a lawyer or a famous poet, recommends him. He can put up his candidacy, I say, not only in his department and in any department other than his own, but in two and even in several departments at the same time, in ten departments; he can pose it, like M. Bertron, the friend of the human race, in the eighty-nine departments. The plurality of candidacies, something abnormal from the point of view of the natural division of population and territory, monstrous in a federative state, is a matter of right in a unitary republic. Now, what is this plurality of candidacies, if not a promiscuity by means of which one confuses everything, localities, opinions and interests? Will you call direct suffrage the suffrage given by ten thousand communes separated by customs, territory, business, even ideas, to an individual who is a stranger to them all, who interests them and represents them only point of view of a passing feeling or a whim of circumstance? For the suffrage to be direct, it is not enough that it be awarded directly from the elector to the elected; it must no less directly represent opinions, rights, interests, and affairs. For a state, a society, is not composed solely of wills; it is also composed of things.

And it is so true that this way of practicing universal suffrage is in violation of the democratic principle, that it is on the contrary the surest route to the monarchy, which would certainly not happen, if the votes were, as they should be, genuinely direct.

In April, 1848, M. de Lamartine was nominated the same day by ten departments. No one doubts that if, a fortnight later, the Presidency of the Republic had been put to the vote, he would have been named in place of Louis-Napoleon. In 1863, M. Émile Ollivier was a candidate in five departments: it was then, everyone noticed, that this orator began to affect the dictatorship of the Opposition. But the most curious fact of this kind is that of M. Jules Favre.

In 1863, M. Jules Favre was, as we know, simultaneously a candidate for Paris and Lyons. In the latter city, he had as a competitor, besides the ministerial candidate, a sincere democrat, M. le doctor Barrié, a most honorable citizen, who, moreover, asked nothing better than to enter, under the auspices of M. Jules Favre, into the Opposition. M. Jules Favre was elected in Paris on the first ballot; in Lyons, there was a second ballot. What happened? The elected representative of Paris nevertheless maintained his

candidacy for Lyons, and Dr. Barrié, by virtue of this strange law that demagogy has imposed on us, that of two candidates, of the same opinion, the one who obtained the least number of votes must withdraw in the event of a tie, tendered his resignation as a candidate. It was thus that M. Jules Favre, already crowned, was able to win another laurel from Lyon. The consequence, long foreseen, of that double election of M. Jules Favre was, in Paris, that of M. Garnier-Pagès.

Many people will undoubtedly find, like me, that this is to force the principle of direct suffrage. They will say that if the plurality of candidacies is logically right in a unitary state, the opposite necessarily takes place in a democracy, especially in a workers' democracy; that the subsequent formality of *verification of the powers* can in no way alter this principle, since in fact, and the words say it, it is the vote of the electors that makes the election, not the verification of the assembly; that it would therefore have been necessary for the Government to have the second election of M. Favre annulled as abusive, exorbitant, and I add, anti-democratic, anti-republican, if the Government had been less careful of its own interest. It was not, and it should have been. The Imperial Government had an advantage in finding the thing quite simple: it was the monarchical principle that asserted itself in the person of M. Favre. Give me my ridings, and I'll give you your candidacies.

Now, I ask any man of good faith: From what front of so-called democratic representatives, who thus understand and practice unity, have they been able to complain to the Power about its constituencies, which are perfectly legal and conform to the principle of unity, all the more irreproachable in that, the better to serve unity, they violated all natural relations, but which were nonetheless judged, and by everyone, arbitrary? The Power was within its rights, not only under the terms of the electoral law, which entrusts it with the care of the constituencies, but under the terms of the Constitution of 1852 and of all those that preceded it, but according to the spirit and the practice of seventy years of government. The Imperial Government could reply: I have broken the natural groups everything that I have found then contrary to the great principle of our political unity; in doing so, I exercised a right and fulfilled a duty. It is not for you, hoarders of candidacies, swindlers of elections, more unitary than the Government, more despotic than the Emperor, to reproach me for it.

III. *electoral corruption*. — During the last verification of powers in the Legislative Body, a number of facts were denounced by the Opposition for abuse of influence, which means for electoral corruption. To which the commissioners of the Government replied by denouncing in turn certain acts of the candidates of the Opposition, which were just as reprehensible as those of the candidates of the Government. The sittings of the Legislative Body were stenographed; the *Moniteur* was there. Nothing is easier than to show, documents in hand, that the puritans of the Democracy have not been more exempt from

reproach than their adversaries, and that in good justice the Country will do well, at the first opportunity, to dismiss the parties back-to-back.

But the question is whether, with universal and direct suffrage, the reproach of corruption and venality can, in law, be raised, even when the offense would, in *fact*, have been committed; and it is here that I accuse the deputies of the Opposition of falsifying by their sophistry the opinion of the country, after having given it by their intrigues the most detestable example.

In a system of censitaire elections, as there existed in France before the Revolution of 1848, when the electorate consisted exclusively of citizens paying 200 fr. at least direct contributions, we understand that the custom was established among the aspirants to the deputation to solicit the votes of the voters. This solicitation was not obligatory, but it was almost general. The mass of the nation being represented by a kind of jury, formed from 250 to 300,000 electors, and the deputy having to be considered not as their particular delegate, but as that of the whole nation, it could be admitted that the candidate, at the same time as he carried himself in the name of *the country*, asserted before the electors-jurors the titles that he thought he had in their favor. It was basically a reservation in favor of the sovereignty of the masses, a tacit homage paid to universal suffrage. Such an intrigue was rational, hence honorable.

So also the reproach of corruption could in certain cases be raised against an election, and strike at the same time the elected official and the voters. It was then supposed that the electorate, a privileged body, had failed in its political duties, by listening only to its caste selfishness, without taking into account the superior interests of the Constitution and the People. It was thus that, in the year that preceded the Revolution of February, the election of M. Charles Laffite was annulled four times by the Chamber.

With universal and direct suffrage, the principle is different and things can no longer happen in the same way. On the one hand, it is no longer a privileged body that appoints, in the name of ten million citizens aged twenty-one and domiciled, the representatives of the country; it is the sovereign People, it is these *ten million* electors, superior in their collectivity to the Constitution, to the prince, to the State, superior to any written or tacit law, whose interest is therefore not preceded by any other, who are called upon to appoint, directly and without intermediary, their deputies.

A first consequence of this principle will therefore be that, in the spirit of universal suffrage, it is no longer up to the candidate to solicit the voters, but rather to the voters to solicit the candidate. That if the contrary continues to take place, this solicitation no longer has the same meaning as before; it is, for the moment and while waiting for the People to have had their education, a way of explaining to the voters the nature of the interests that the deputy will have to defend, the difficulties to overcome, the questions to resolve. Sooner or later, moreover, it will be necessary to return to the rule, or universal suffrage would sink into its own native ignorance.

But the most important consequence of the establishment of universal and direct suffrage is that the indictment of venality can no longer, by right, be articulated against any of its choices, even though it would be established that there had, in fact, been corruption.

Every election is essentially made with a view not only to a question of right, but also and above all to one or even several questions of interest peculiar to the electors. Now if the right, incorruptible by its nature, is clearly distinguished from what is not it, and is therefore repugnant to all confusion and equivocation, it is not the same with interest, of which one can say on the contrary that the principle is corruption itself. And what constitutes venality or political corruption? The interested motive; I challenge you to answer otherwise.

The whole question is therefore to ensure that the interests by virtue of which the voters are determined are or become honest, virtuous, legitimate interests, not shameful and culpable interests. But, tell me, who is the judge of interest here, and what do you call culpable interest, legitimate interest? What difference can you make, in a case of a violently disputed election, between the man whom the department calls its benefactor, and the one whom you please to treat as a *corrupter*? For if I admit that you protest against corruption, I do not think your intention is to proscribe benevolence, to prevent devotion and to teach the masses ingratitude. What is the difference then, I beg you, from the point of view of political honor, between the candidate who heroically promises to have universal war declared in defense of the Polish aristocracy and the one who, addressing the less chivalrous, undertakes to support peace, in the interest of the peasants, the workers, the bourgeois? Between someone who, flying the flag of material interests, will promise to dig a canal, build a railway, etc., at the request of his direct constituents, and someone who, placing himself at the higher point of view of general interests, would swear to oppose these constructions, if he judged that the utility, public commanded their postponement in another department? Between M. Havin, M. Frédéric Morin, or any other, promising to support the interests of their electors in the newspapers at their disposal, and M. Lévy or M. Delessert, pledging to serve them in their influence in the ministry? Would M. Pinard, director of the Comptoir d'Escompte, offering to the voters to make them enjoy a fixed rate of 3 or 4 percent instead of 6 and 7, be more corrupt than M. Carnot, offering as a guarantee of the oath he has just taken to Napoleon III, the one taken in 1815 by his father to Napoleon I?

In this connection, I cannot help noticing that the exclusion of M. Bravay, twice elected by the department of Gard, was a flagrantly arbitrary act on the part of the Legislative Body. It has been rumored that the real reason for this exclusion was less in the corruption of the voters than in the unworthiness of the elected official, accused of acts that the least severe mercantile morality would highly condemn. Let us assume that the indictment was well-founded. The deputies could, if the alleged fact were true, exert on their future colleague a pressure that would have forced him to resign: but it was

necessary to start by declaring the regularity of the election, since indeed the election was regular. Here it was up to the Opposition to take the defense of the law into their own hands. Instead, it has been found more convenient to do virtue, perhaps slander, since everything was done behind closed doors, at the expense of liberty and electoral legality. It is not so much on M. Bravay that this eviction reflects, as on the voters themselves.

Do we believe that the socialist democrats who voted for M. Pelletan, although, they said, this candidate was not one of them, voted from their opinion of plums? They made a bad political speculation: that is all. July 14, 1789 found its salary on the night of August 4. It will be the same for all the votes of the universal and direct suffrage, or universal and direct suffrage would be absurd.

Let us therefore not speak of venality and corruption under the empire of universal suffrage: logic does not allow it and respect for the people, as well as for the institution, forbids it. It would be a crime of *lèse-majesté*. To say, on the one hand, that universal and direct suffrage was established to cut short any enterprise of electoral corruption; then agree, as M. Jules Simon did, that universal and direct suffrage needs to *be directed*, and that the day when the Opposition will be in power, it will certainly not leave it without direction; to promise the electors to take their interests in hand, and then punish them for having believed in these binding circulars; contradicting oneself on every point, and not even suspecting that from the plural to the universal the conclusion is not valid: such has been the spectacle given to us by the Opposition for a year. And we, socialist democrats, we would have brought our votes! We would have chosen for our representatives men whose political prejudices we knew thoroughly; who, in their electoral dictatorship, had just given us a sample of their modesty and their respect for liberty of suffrage; who from the mourning of liberty had not feared to make themselves an instrument of usurpation; who, by their oath, had betrayed republican morality; who, by the multiplicity of their candidacies, already assigned the Presidency to the Republic; who, in our now too well-justified forecasts, having to control the conduct of the Government, were going to win its case, on all points, by reasoning about universal suffrage as they would have done twenty years ago with property-based suffrage; men whom we would have had to fight in the full Chamber of Deputies, if by some impossible means we had become their colleagues; men finally, who, called to the government of the Republic and to the representation of the People, did not know how to understand, either in 1848, with the explosion of social ideas, or in 1852, following the *coup d'état*, nor in 1863-64, when the workers' candidacies appeared, that universal and direct suffrage was anything other than a gigantic batch of voters; that by it everything was changed from top to bottom in the political and economic system, from the constitution of the central power to the last village school!...

They talk about liberty and corruption. Do they even suspect what constitutes the liberty and integrity of universal suffrage?

In a Democracy organized according to the true notions of popular sovereignty, that is to say according to the principles of contractual law, any oppressive or corrupting action

on the part of the central Power over the Nation is rendered impossible: the very hypothesis in is absurd. And how?

This is because, in a truly free Democracy, the central power is not distinguished from the assembly of deputies, natural organs of local interests called into conciliation;

It is because each deputy is above all the man of the locality that chose him for its representative, its emanation, one of its citizens, its special agent charged to defend its particular interests, except to best reconcile them with the general interests before the grand jury;

Because the assembled deputies, by choosing from their midst a central executive committee, do not make it distinct from themselves, superior to them, able to sustain a conflict with them, as would a royal or presidential elected representative of the people;

It is finally because, in order to regulate the general interests, appeal is made directly to the local interests, and because it is from their debate, from their balance one by the other, from their mutual transaction, that then results the law, and with the law the action of the central authority; completely disengaged with regard to the voters, who have nothing to expect from it, any more than it has anything to fear from their animadversion.

So that, as we said above, the hypothesis of a culpable transaction, of an act of corruption, of a plot hatched at a high price against public liberties, between the superior authority of the country and a part of the voters, which amounts to saying between the deputies and their own constituents, becomes contradictory, impossible.

Serious minds, who would have had, with a sense of the situation, an understanding of these fundamental principles of public right, would not have taken on a mission like that assumed by our so-called democratic deputies. They would not have gladly associated themselves with this invincible incompatibility of universal and direct suffrage exercised in a state largely centralized. They would have said to themselves that if universal suffrage ultimately requires as many representatives as there are natural groups or, if you prefer, as many deputations as there are provincial sovereignties; if, in spite of the favor accorded by all monarchical constitutions to double, triple, quintuple and tenfold candidacies, reason and the rights of peoples do not permit a single man to be the representative of several constituencies, we can even less admit that 'a single deputy, a single power, should be the representative of a whole people, and this at the very moment when the People gives itself representatives by localities; that an experience of forty years has sufficiently done justice to this antagonism; that the time has passed when, in the general uncertainty of the true principles of government, the public conscience could admit these sorts of transactions; and that all that true friends of liberty, founders of a Democracy, had to do in this instance was to decline the parliamentary mandate and declare themselves impossible.

Chapter IV.

Of municipal liberty: That this liberty, essentially federalist and incompatible with the unitary system, cannot be claimed by the Opposition nor granted by the Imperial Government.

One of the questions on which the Opposition prides itself the most on winning the approval of the country and getting the better of the power, is that of municipal liberties. It is above all the Parisian population that, in their zeal for independence of the communes, the opposing deputies like to court, without any concern for their oath and their own convictions, any more than for logic and facts. For twelve years the city of Paris has been administered by an imperial commission: has it been better for it? Was it any worse for it? We can maintain the pros and cons. But whether it won or lost, the city of Paris, we are assured, regrets its municipal councillors: what an opportunity for representatives to gain popularity!

The question of municipal liberties is one of the most complicated and vast; it essentially affects the federal system, I would gladly say that it is the whole of federation. So I do not think I need to protest my adherence to such a reform, in favor of which I have spoken out for a long time and in many circumstances. What I propose to do today is to show, by a few decisive observations, to what extent those who, in a spirit of opposition or for any other cause, make the most noise about municipal liberties, and who nevertheless remain attached to the system of unitary centralization, are in contradiction with themselves; what a triumph they are preparing for their adversaries, and what a disappointment for the country!

I therefore say that municipal liberty is by nature incompatible with governmental unity, as all our constitutions have sought and defined it successively. I add that this incompatibility is even greater in Paris, because of its title of capital, than in any other city in France.

Let us make this proposition still more explicit, if possible. As was said above (Part II, chap. ix), two principles are considered in the bourgeois world, as the Revolution made it, as the two columns of society and the State: these are, on the one hand, the principle of political centralization, of another, that of economic insolidarity, in other words of mercantile and industrial anarchy, which, as a counterweight to the first, necessarily leads to the feudalism of capital. Now, these two principles necessarily producing their consequences over time, according to the laws of historical evolution that govern all governments, and municipal freedom being an obstacle to them, it follows that the communal life must, as the weaker, be gradually subordinate to the action of the center; and that if the higher authority, the central Power, has established its headquarters in a city, this city becoming the capital must, more than any other and more promptly than another, lose its municipal character.

Such is the proposition, self-evident to anyone who understands the terms of which it is composed, which I oppose to the Parisian municipalists, and which nullifies their claims.

As for those of my readers who are not in the habit of grasping at first sight all that is contained in a formula, I believe I should remind them of a few facts that will make the matter quite tangible to them.

I. *Decline of municipal liberties.* — French unity is the authentic product of our history. It began with the Roman conquest, continued with that of the Franks; then, dislocated, or rather transformed by the feudal system, it began again, with the advent of the Capetian dynasty, by the action of the kings. The national *faisceau*, as we see it today, having therefore been formed by successive annexations, it is conceivable that the provinces and communes gradually incorporated had to, for a certain time, retain something of their autonomy, what they called their customs, franchises, etc. But little by little the royal administration and jurisdiction prevailed. After Richelieu, the government of the provinces, entrusted to intendants, men of the prince, came exclusively from the Crown and became almost uniform. The reformers of 89, resuming the monarchical work, erected this regime of unity into a state doctrine, to the acclamations continued to this day by all the people.

However, the communes retained for a long time some remnant of life after the consummation of the large unity. The province, vague, spread out, had been crushed and absorbed for generations, while the commune, with its local spirit, with the condensation of its life, still resisted. It was directly affected by the Constitutions of the year II and of the year III, which made the municipal administration a simple subdivision of the central administration, then by the institution of the *prefects*, February 17, 1800, which replaced the *central commissioners* of the Republic, and had to assist them the *councils of the prefecture*. At that time, we can say that the damage was done and irreparable. Fifteen years later, when the Empire fell, the commune had lived, and it was in vain that liberalism tried to revive it.

I said above (Part II, chap. xii), how the bourgeoisie, frightened by the exorbitance of the central power and the example given by Napoleon I, had tried to subdue the Government by giving it a triple counterweight: 1. the constitutional, representative and parliamentary system; 2. a municipal and departmental organization; 3. economic anarchy. It is regarding the second of these counterweights, renewed from the old communes, that I now propose to say a few words.

Much attention was paid, under the reign of Louis-Philippe, to this *municipal and departmental organization*; it was, like the *Crédit Foncier* and so many other things, one of the mirages of bourgeois rule. It had been talked about under the Restoration; Napoleon I himself had seemed interested in it; it is spoken of more than ever during the reign of his heir. The people in the middle, always the most numerous and the least intelligent in our

country, are those who insist on this point most forcefully. It seems to them that, by restoring a certain initiative to the commune, we would end up giving the central power a stable balance; that we would take away from centralization what is atrocious about it, above all that we would escape federalism, which is as odious to them in 1864 as it was, but for other reasons, to the patriots of 93. These good people gladly admire Swiss and American liberty; they regale us with it in their books; they use it as a mirror to make us ashamed of our adorations; but they would not touch, for anything in the world, this beautiful unity which, according to them, is our glory, and which the nations, they assure us, envy us. From the height of their academic sufficiency, they treat as exaggerated the writers who, concerned with logic and history, faithful to the pure notions of right and liberty, do not believe in political resurrections and, tired of eclecticism, want to free themselves once and for all from doctrinaire juggling.

M. Édouard LABOULAYE is one of those softened geniuses, very capable of grasping the truth and showing it to others, but for whom wisdom consists in shortening principles by means of impossible conciliations; who ask nothing better than to impose *limits* to the State, but on condition that they are allowed to be imposed on liberty as well; who would be happy to clip the nails of the first, as long as we clipped the wings of the second, whose reason, finally, trembling before any broad and strong synthesis, delights in dabbling in the amphigouri. M. Laboulaye, whom the Democracy came close to appointing, in place of M. Thiers, as its representative, is part of a group of men who, while claiming the so-called guarantees of July against the imperial autocracy, are given the task of refuting the aspirations of socialism and federalism. It was he who wrote this beautiful thought, which for a moment I had the idea of taking as an epigraph: "When political life is concentrated in one forum, the country is cut in two, Opposition and Government." Well! Let M. Laboulaye and his friends, so zealous for municipal franchises, deign to respond to a question, to one alone.

The commune is in essence, like man, like the family, like any individuality and any intelligent, moral and free collectivity, a sovereign being. In this capacity, the commune has the right to govern itself, to administer itself, to impose taxes on itself, to dispose of its properties and its revenues, to create schools for its youth, to set up teachers, to establish its police, to have its gendarmerie and its civic guard; to appoint its judges, to have its newspapers, its meetings, its private societies, its warehouses, its bank, etc. The commune, consequently, takes decrees, issues ordinances: what prevents it from going so far as to give itself laws? It has its church, its worship, its freely chosen clergy, its ritual even and its saints; it discusses publicly, within the municipal council, in its newspapers and in its circles, everything that happens within it and around it, which affects its interests and agitates its opinion. This is what a commune is: for this is what collective life, political life is. Now, life is one, entire, indivisible; it rejects all hindrances, knows no limit but itself; all coercion from without is unsympathetic to it and, if it cannot overcome it, fatal. Let M. Laboulaye and his political co-religionists therefore tell us how they

intend to accord this communal life with their unitary reservations; how they will escape conflict; how they intend to maintain the local franchise side by side with the central prerogative, to restrict this one and stop that one; to affirm at the same time, in the same system, the independence of the parts and the authority of the Whole? Let them explain so that we can know and judge.

There is no middle ground: the municipality will be sovereign or branch, all or nothing. Give it as much importance as you like: from the moment that it does not come under its own right, that it must recognize a higher law, that the great group to which it belongs is declared its superior, not the expression of its federal relations, it is inevitable that one day or another it will find itself in contradiction with it, and that conflict will break out. However, as soon as there is a conflict, logic and force dictate that it is the central Power that wins, and that without discussion, without judgment, without compromise, the debate between superior and subordinate being scandalous, inadmissible. So we will always come back, after a more or less long period of agitation, to the negation of parochialism, to absorption by the center, to autocracy. The idea of a *limitation of the State by the groups*, where the principle of subordination and centralization of the groups themselves reign, is therefore an inconsistency, not to say a contradiction. There is no other limit to the State than that which it voluntarily imposes on itself by abandoning to municipal and individual initiative certain things that it temporarily does not care about. But the day will come when it thinks that it must claim as belonging to its domain the things which it had first detached from them, and this day will come sooner or later, since the development of the State is indefinite, and not only the state will prevail in the courts, it will be right in the face of logic.

Since we call ourselves liberal, and we are so daring to speak of the limits of the State, while reserving its suzerainty, let us still say what will be the limit of individual, corporate, regional, societal liberty, the limit of all liberties. Let us explain, since we believe ourselves to be a philosopher, what a limited, prized, guarded liberty is; a liberty to which one has said, by passing the chain to it and tying it to the stake: You will graze this far, but you will not go any farther!...

The facts have confirmed all this criticism. During the thirty-six years of parliamentary rule that followed the fall of the first Empire, municipal and departmental liberties continued to decline, without governments even taking the trouble to attack them. The movement was self-fulfilling, by the nature of the unitary principle alone. Finally, after a series of invasions, the details of which would be superfluous, the town was finally reunited with the State by the law of May 5, 1855, which attributed to the Emperor, or to the prefects his *missi dominari*, the appointment of mayors and assistants. By the law of May 5, 1855, the commune thus became what, from 1789, 1793 and 1795, the logic of unity had decided it would be, a simple branch of the central authority.

I say that this result was inevitable, that it should not be seen as anything other than a product of public reason engaged on the path of monarchy and unity; that what the

Imperial Government did in 1855 is the consequence, imposed by events, of what all its predecessors had done before; and that to make against it, of this necessary development, a means of opposition, while one declares oneself a partisan of unity, is one of two things: to act in ignorance or to be dishonest. The municipal system, as it still existed under Louis-Philippe, although singularly fallen, constituted, with regard to the prefecture, a double government, *imperium in imperio*; unless one says that it is the prefecture which duplicates the work of the commune and the province: which would amount to exactly the same thing.

In issuing the law of May 5, 1855, the government of Napoleon III did nothing other than put into execution a judgment of history, exercise its right, and, I dare say, fulfill its imperial mandate. It is the monarchical, unitary and centralizing destiny of France that continues: it is not for a semi-dynastic, constitutional, bourgeois, unitary, and duly sworn Opposition to make it a text of reproach.

II. *Paris capital and municipality.* — As for the city of Paris, and that of Lyons, whose municipal councils are appointed by the Emperor, that is to say, transformed into commissions, while everywhere else the citizens participate in the administration of their localities by the election of their councils, there is even less reason to accuse the Government. The two capitals of the Empire are treated, I do not say according to their merits, which one might take for an insulting irony, but as it befits their dignity that they are. Paris cannot enjoy both the honors of capital and the prerogatives, however weak, left to the municipalities. One is incompatible with the other; it is necessary to choose.

Paris is the seat of the Government, of the ministries, of the imperial family, of the Court, of the Senate, of the Legislative Body, of the Council of State; of the Court of Cassation, of the provincial aristocracy itself and its innumerable servants. It is there that the ambassadors of all the foreign powers go and that the travelers flock, sometimes numbering 100 or 150,000, speculators, scholars and artists, from all over the world. It is the heart and the head of the State, surrounded by fifteen citadels and forty-five kilometers of ramparts, guarded by a garrison that is a quarter of the effective army of the country, and which must be defended and preserved no matter the cost. All this, obviously, goes far beyond the powers of a municipality, and the whole country would rise up if, by the fact of a municipal constitution, Paris became, so to speak, the equal of the Empire; if the Hôtel-de-Ville posed as a rival of the Luxembourg, the Palais-Bourbon and the Tuileries; if a municipal decree could override an imperial decree; if, in case of invasion, the Parisian National Guard, capitulating with the victorious foreigner, claimed to compel, by the ascendancy of its example, the army of the line to lay down their arms.

It is in the capital that the academies, the high schools, even that of the mines are to be found; the large theaters; there that the great financial and industrial companies have their headquarters, there that the export trade has its principal establishments. It is at the Bank and at the Bourse de Paris that all the great enterprises, operations, loans, etc., of France

and of the world are formed, discussed, liquidated. All this, it must be admitted, is in no way municipal.

To leave these things to the discretion of a municipality would be to abdicate. To undertake to separate municipal affairs from those of the capital would be to attempt an impossible division or, in any case, to create between the municipality and the Government, between the Empire and the capital, a perpetual conflict. Separate then, in the embellishments of Paris, what it owes only to its own resources, from what comes to it from the budget of the State; separate, in the development of this immense capital, what it is just to attribute to the activity, to the industry, to the influence of its inhabitants from what belongs to the superior influence of the Government and from the country! Willy-nilly, town halls must be nothing more than branches of the Prefecture. The competition of the Hôtel-de-Ville, from 89 to 95, dealt the hardest blows to the monarchy; it did hardly less harm to the Revolution, and I am surprised that partisans of unity, such as M. Picard, dream of resuscitating such domination. No, Paris, as long as it remains what politics and history have made it, the hearth of our national agglomeration; As long as, capital of the Empire, of the Monarchy or of the French Republic, — the name does nothing to the thing, — it will aspire to the title, even higher, of metropolis of civilization, Paris cannot belong to itself. Such self-possession would be a veritable usurpation; the Government would consent to it when the departments could not permit it. Paris has a separate existence: like the Rome of the emperors, it can only be administered by imperial magistrates.

What I am saying is so true and flows so much from the nature of things that, even in a confederated France, under a regime that may be regarded as the ideal of independence, the first act of which would be to restore full autonomy to the communes and their sovereignty to the provinces, Paris, from being an imperial city to becoming a federal city, could not combine the attributes of its two natures, and would have to provide guarantees to the provinces, admitting the federal authority on the part of its administration and its government. Without this Paris, thanks to its powerful attraction, to the incalculable influence that would give it its double quality of the most powerful of the Confederate States and the capital of the Confederacy, would soon again become king of the Republic, whose domination the provinces would manage to escape only by making, as in Switzerland, the federal authority so to speak nomadic, and assigning it as its seat, sometimes Rouen or Nantes, sometimes Lyon, Toulouse or Dijon, and Paris, only once every ten years. How much more can Paris, capital of the Empire, claim an autonomy which would be for the Emperor the sharing of sovereignty, if not even an abdication!

For the rest, examine the appearance of the capital, study its psychology, and you will recognize, if you are in good faith, that Paris marched in unison with the country and the government. The more it has entered into its glory, the more it has lost its individuality and its character, the more its population, incessantly renewed by the departments and by foreigners, moves away from autochthony. Out of the 1,700,000 inhabitants who make up

the population of the department of the Seine, how many real Parisians are there? Not 15 percent: everyone else came from outside. Of the eleven representatives that the city of Paris sent to the Legislative Corps, I do not believe that there are four of the Parisian race. As for the opinion of these representatives, which is very gratuitously supposed to be the opinion of the city of Paris, what account can we make of it? Who will tell me the opinion of Paris? Is it that of the 153,000 Opposition voters? How then did they name subjects as disparate as MM. Thiers, Guérout, Havin, J. Favre, E. Ollivier, J. Simon, Garnier-Pagès, Darimon, Pelletan? And what becomes, on the one hand, of the 82,000 votes given to the Government, on the other hand of the 90,000 who abstained?... What can be said of the 400,000 souls who out of the total of 1,700,000 inhabitants are not represented? Is it through the newspapers that we will know Parisian opinion? But they contradict each other like the representatives, and for those who have seen these various offices up close, all consideration falls away instantly. Paris is a world: that means that you no longer have to look for an individuality, or a faith, or an opinion, or a will; it is a plurality of forces, thoughts, elements, in chaotic agitation. Paris, considered as a free city, independent municipality, collective individuality, originality, has had its life. For it to become something again, it would have to begin again, with awareness and resolution, a movement in the opposite direction; it would have to lay down, with its mural crown, its capital city crown, and raise the flag of the federation. If such is the signal M. Picard heard when he claimed in the name of the city of Paris the restoration of municipal liberties, that's good. We can applaud his efforts. Otherwise, M. Picard has completely misled himself, and the Government would never relinquish the administration of the capital.

As for me, I declare it in summary: I believe, as an axiom of my reason, as a general thesis, that all evolution of a finite existence must have an end, which end is the beginning of another existence; in particular, that the development of French unity, begun almost 2,000 years ago, is coming to an end; that centralization in our country has nothing more to encompass, power has nothing more to absorb, the tax authorities have nothing more to squeeze; that, moreover, the ancient spirit of the communes is dead, very dead, — witness Paris — and that the simulacrum of municipal institutions, with which we have been deceived since the proclamation of the famous Republic, one and indivisible, has had its day. I believe that we are only separated from pure communism, political and economic, by the thickness of a constitution, I mean a sheet of paper. And since, in my opinion, nations cannot die nor civilization retrograde, I remain convinced, in the depths of my soul, that the moment is approaching when, after a final crisis, at the call of new principles, a movement in the opposite direction will begin. Then and only then, but in new forms and under new conditions, will we regain our liberties. From this opinion, which is certainly not peculiar to me, I give, through the channels of the press, communication to the public, to the Workers' Democracy, from which I am at this moment only deducing the main idea. I don't know what value the Democracy will make

of my warnings; but it will at least agree on one thing: it is that with such thoughts in the soul, and on the conditions of municipal liberty, and on political centralization, we had nothing to do, my friends and I, but to send an attorney to the Legislative Body, where we knew in advance that, if he remained faithful to his mandate, he could only cause scandal; if, on the contrary, he obeyed his oath, he would become a traitor to his political religion and to his friends.

Chapter V.

The *Budget*. — Impossibility of a normal tax, with the political system followed by the Opposition and the Government. — Amortization, Endowments, Pensions, Salaries, Army, Railways, etc. — Messrs. Thiers, Berryer, J. Favre and the so-called Democratic Opposition.

The discussion of the budget is each year the occasion of immense speeches, in which one can defy the most intelligent to understand anything, if it is not the figures in their arithmetic and fiscal brutality. As for the reason for the figures, that is to say what each would like to know, there is none. All that emerges for the public from the discussion is that the Opposition constantly reproaches the Government for spending too much, and that the Government does not tire of proving to them that it would spend still more. Who is wrong, who is right, on this serious question of the budget, the Opposition or the Government? This is what I propose, once and for all, to clarify.

In the examination which will follow, it is understood that I do not accept any constitution: in my eyes all are equal. From the moment that a constitution posits or supposes undivided sovereignty, i.e. centralization, I find nothing to say in its favor: it does not lend itself to liberty, equality, economy. The deputy's main mission is to examine, discuss and vote on taxes: from this mandate there results for him the need to assess the policy of the power and to judge its actions. We will see him turn like a blind horse in his roundabout.

Let us suppose that, without worrying further about the oath, the working Democracy, whose political as well as economic principles we know well enough, sends to the Legislative Body a deputy who really represents it: the duty of this deputy would be very simple and would not demand much expense in eloquence. He would say to the House once and for all:

“We are intimately convinced, my constituents and I, that your political system, consequently your fiscal system, rests on an erroneous conception, on a false foundation. Taken as a whole and in its details, your budget contradicts the most certain principles of political economy.

“The first condition of a regularly established financial system is that the budget of expenditures, hence that of receipts, instead of increasing indefinitely, oscillates, according to the situation and the nature of the business, between 5 and 10 per cent of the national product; that in the most unfortunate circumstances it does not exceed 10 percent (the tithe, the famous tithe), and that it stays as near as possible to 5 percent (the twentieth). In this way, there will never be any borrowings, *a fortiori* never any debt, either floating or consolidated. However, you have done so well by your policy, renewed from the old regime, whatever may be said, that from the date of the Ramel liquidation, which put the Consulate so well at ease and made three quarters of its success, the tax was gradually

raised to 15, 18 and 20 percent of the total product of the country; it will soon even reach 25 percent. That is to say, it is permissible to predict that our state costs, which should not exceed six to seven hundred million, will rise in a few years to three billion. Notice, citizens, my reasoning. I speak of a proportion, not of a precise figure: I say that the budget must vary between 5 and 10 percent, minimum and maximum, of the collective product of the nation, whereas today it is more than sixth of this product. So when you answer, to explain this increase in the budget in the last twelve, twenty-four and thirty-six years, that the precious metals have fallen in value, that foodstuffs have risen in price, that everything, even the wages of the workmen, have risen, and that M. Thiers and the deputies of the Opposition agree on this fact, I reply that you are not addressing the question and you are eluding the difficulty. The country is overburdened. There is no doubt about it. No one would dare to affirm that its production exceeds or even reaches the figure of thirteen billion; and you levy two billion and two or three hundred million for the Government, approximately one-sixth or 17.5 per cent: that is what you are reproached with. Now, since the taxpayers have been complaining for quite a long time, and the causes of this fiscal exorbitance are known, we ask that you already take care of political and social reform, the only means of reducing the budget. If not, I declare the I have a mandate to refuse any subsidy and to vote against the tax.

“The second rule, with regard to public finances, is that the tax, reduced to its just measure, should be equally distributed among the citizens, in direct proportion to their income. Hence the double problem of what has been called the tax base and its equalization. But it has been proven twenty times over that, under the political conditions prevailing in the country, the tax is distributed among the citizens precisely in inverse proportion to their fortune or income. For the second time, I demand in the name of my constituents the reform of the system, I demand it immediately: otherwise I protest against any kind of tax, I do not vote the budget.”

That said, the Democratic representative, after having weathered the murmurs of the assembly and the indignation of the ministry, would salute his colleagues and would not reappear. What more could he do?

It is obvious, in fact, that a man of the legal opposition, so energetic in temperament, so strong in language as we supposed him, will never proceed, with regard to the Government and the tax authorities, with this peremptory logic, borrowed from the Manifesto of the *Sixty*. The working class, they said, had waited long enough; it is time to move from hopes to realities. And they concluded with a working-class candidacy. Good people!

Is it therefore true that between the political system fatally followed by the Opposition and the Government, and the economy of expenditure, there is an essential incompatibility, so that the country is condemned to always see its budget grow and its debt increase, without there being for that any other remedy than the periodicity of bankruptcies?

Such is the question to which I do not hesitate to answer with a categorical affirmation, an affirmation that is easy to justify, as we will see.

One cannot, in a large State like France, strongly centralized, whose action must extend unceasingly, hardly of a prompt and rapid decadence, outside on all the businesses of the sphere, inside on the social and economic domain, ever set a budget:

1. Because in a power thus constituted the chapter of the unforeseen, especially with regard to external affairs, is enormous, and that with the ordinary budget comes unceasingly to be added an extraordinary one;

2. Because, as we have previously explained, centralization being expansive, invasive in its nature, the attributions of the State continually increase at the expense of individual, corporate, communal and social initiative;

3. Because, consequently, in order to face this double need, the State is obliged to charge the taxpayers more and more, from which there results in the country, increase of the parasitism, reduction of the useful work, in a word, growing disproportion between national production and state expenditure.

Let us review some of the chapters of the budget.

1. *Allocations, pensions.* Just as the monarchy, its general staff, its pomps and all its accompaniments are the highest expression of the system, so it can be said that the part of the budget that concerns them, the least important in a mutualist democracy, is on the contrary, in a great empire, the most inviolable, an expense as sacred as glory itself. What deputy would dare to undermine it?

The sworn, centralizer, unitary, if only by position, by his oath, by convenience, knowing how to live with the powers, perfect *gentleman*, will reject any idea of mutuality, of federation, of leveling. If he believed in it, he would not, by an untimely profession of faith and a decisive act, commit himself to such a path. It would be in bad taste, crude and clumsy politics. To go and disorganize the public services, smash this superb state machine. God forbid! It is not he, a decent man, a well-made man, who will assume this responsibility: he is too patriotic for that. Is he unaware of what terrible consequences would come from such a vote? Does he not know that, as the public functions are interdependent, the expenses are also; that one cannot be touched rather than another, and that by reducing the general expenses of the nation from 20, 18, 17, to 10, 7 or 5 per cent, it would hit the entire economy of the system? In the face of this immolation, he feels his courage fail; he recognizes that between this vast hierarchy, this world of the privileged classes, this government which protects them, this budgetary regime which is its expression, and himself a kind of mystical contract has been formed, which makes him consider at present the reforms as utopias, a contract that he could not violate, although he had not taken an oath to it as to the Emperor.

For example, the function of deputy translates into budget language by an *indemnity* of 2,500 fr. per month, that is for six months, 15,000 fr. This indemnity is not the only

advantage that a deputy derives from his mandate, especially if he belongs to the Opposition. First of all, he gained the reputation of a great citizen, armed to the teeth for the defense of right, fortune and public liberties; if he is a lawyer, the noise of his speeches will earn him a large clientele; if he is a writer, a professor or a novelist, the newspapers and the publishers are going to fight over him... The consequence of the refusal of the tax, of the resignation that naturally should follow, would therefore be, for a truly democratic representative, after a session like the one I described above, the waiver of all benefits of employment. But that is what a member of the Legislative Opposition will never do, certainly not out of avarice, but by the just feeling he has of his position, of the proprieties and duties that it imposes on him. Convinced of the usefulness of his services, doubting more than ever, by the experience he had acquired in Parliament, at the Court, of men and things, of the advisability and effectiveness of reforms, would he would leave the vessel of the State to the hazard of winds and waves, leave Power unguarded, the thought of the Country without an organ? No, no, he will not desert his post... Which means, from the point of view of the budget, for which all questions of politics and morals are resolved into an article of revenue and expenditure, that between the duty of the Democratic representative and the oath of fidelity to the indemnity — I get confused — between the duty of democratic representative and the oath of fidelity to the Emperor, there is a material incompatibility.

If I have allowed myself, in connection with the budget, to touch on this excessively delicate question of the indemnity, we will see that it is in no way the effect of a malicious intention, but rather to give a starting point to my demonstration. What did I set out to prove, in fact, in this chapter? That any budgetary reform, demanded by the country, of an easy execution, I dare say it, in the system of mutuality and federation, is absolutely incompatible in the system to which the Opposition is subservient. Now, this is what we are going to touch on. If such is indeed for the sworn deputy, although titled as legal opposition, the respect of his own treatment, could he be lacking in respect for the treatment to which one gave the incomprehensible name for me of *civil list*? Would he dare to offer the slightest reduction on this subject? It would be an insult to the Prince, a sort of crime of *lèse-majesté*. M. Thiers, the man of all indiscretions, because he has the talent to say everything, did not dare to speak of it. Besides, the dignity of such a great state, the prestige of this beautiful French unity, oppose it. For such is the greatness of the power entrusted to the Prince; such must be its magnificence.

The same reasoning with regard to the princes and princesses, of MM. the Senators, of MM. the ennobled Marshals, the Cardinals, MM. ministers, etc. In a unitary regime, these are privileged articles, expenditures of majesty, which are voted on without discussion.

Here, then, is a whole chapter of the budget, and one of the most considerable, that of the *Endowments*, to which the deputy of the Opposition, whether or not he is faithful, is forbidden, *in petto*, by his oath, to touch. And the reason is, once again, that he himself is a

stakeholder in the budget; it is that he is one of the high personages of the State, and that any request for reduction of the civil list, being a derogation of the Crown, would imply proportional reduction of all the positions. Nothing cures the reform mania like the exercise of Power, like participation in the budget. Would such a reduction in the official world be tolerable? In a federalist Democracy this would not pose the slightest difficulty; with a centralization as imposing as ours, this is inadmissible.

Switzerland, whose total population is approximately two million five hundred thousand souls, is a confederation formed of nineteen cantons and six half-cantons, in all twenty-five States independent of each other, each enjoying all the attributes of sovereignty, governing themselves according to the constitutions and laws that they have respectively given themselves. Above these twenty-five states and these twenty-five constitutions exists the Federal Assembly, organ of the federal pact, which chooses from its midst, for the affairs of the Republic, a sort of executive commission, whose President, the true head of the Swiss Confederation, is appointed at *twelve thousand francs*. The Confederate citizens think that is enough. On this basis, and admitting that the great civil servants of the State must be remunerated in proportion to the population, France, whose population is fifteen and a half times that of Switzerland, would have to pay, each year, to its President federal, 186,000 fr. Would M. Tolain himself, and M. Blanc, and M. Coutant, have dared to support a similar proposition in the Legislative Body?

So let us be logical: present-day France is an indivisible sovereignty, a glorious and strong Empire, whose budget is not governed by the same laws as that of a workers' democracy, mutualist and federative. As much as the present civil list, of twenty-five millions in cash, plus the enjoyment of the domains of the Crown, would appear exorbitant in a system of interprovincial guarantee, of municipal *self-government*, of mutual association, in a word of federation, so much, it must be recognized, it is in relation with the established government. This is so true that in 1852, the concentration of power having increased with all the difference that exists between the constitution of 1830 and that of the *coup d'état*, the civil list, of 12 million under Louis-Philippe, was raised to 25. Now, ask M. Thiers, M. Berryer, if, in the event that the dynasty according to their heart should re-ascend the throne, they would offer to serve him a civil list of less than 12 millions? They will both answer you that such an idea would be indecent; and that it would be better to cut the state into 36 pieces. You want monarchy, autocracy: pay the price. We saw this in 1849, when the Constituent Assembly allocated to the President of the Republic, commanding the land and sea armies, 50,000 fr. per month. The President had no money to buy tea for his officers.

2. After the civil list and the endowments, come the *pensions, subsidies, encouragements, rewards, secret funds, relief*, etc., all the expenses of graceful administration, forming a total of at least 150 million. I don't mean that these 150 million should be wiped out with the stroke of a pen, without distinction or discernment. There are sometimes extraordinary misfortunes, urgent needs, great services rendered, which it

is up to the State to meet and which the budget can neither foresee nor mention otherwise. But I say that the greater portion of these expenses is incompatible with a system of mutuality, of perpetuity of service, where the general condition is a labor of all life, and whose avowed aim, by guaranteeing to all labor, exchange and cheap prices, by replacing benevolence and charity with justice, is to level conditions and simultaneously extinguish pauperism and parasitism. On this head, too, the Democratic representative would have nothing to vote for: he could only protest against the credit opened in the budget. The sworn, on the contrary, who has barely entered the Legislative Body foresees the day when he will leave it; who therefore thinks of securing a retirement, a sinecure; who, if he expects nothing from the Government he opposes, is ready to receive with both hands from whatever comes next; the sworn, I say, is governed by quite other considerations. He knows that charity has for its corollary favor: — is ready to receive with both hands of the next one; the sworn, I say, is governed by quite other considerations. He knows that charity has for its corollary favor: — *Let us*, he says to himself, *do to others as we wish to be done to us*, and he votes. The chapter on pensions, relief, secret funds, etc., inadmissible in a working Democracy, is indispensable to a Monarchy: it is, after the civil list and the endowments, the one that is least disputed.

3. Let us talk about the *army*. M. Thiers, who has studied this matter extensively, judged that an army of six hundred thousand men on paper represents only one of four hundred thousand under arms, and that, for a great monarchy like France, this is not enough. M. Berryer, less bellicose than M. Thiers, manages by great effort to demand a reduction of fifty thousand men, = 50 millions. But here is M. Jules Favre, the so-called republican, who suddenly demands three declarations of war, one for Denmark, one for Poland, one for Italy. If M. Favre's policy were followed, M. Thiers' four hundred thousand men would be insufficient to their task; it would take five hundred thousand, = 100 million to add to the budget. Fortunately, the Imperial Government is at this moment in favor of European peace: we are getting away with it.

Apart from the diversity of evaluations, all of this is irrefutably logical. With the system of authority and concentration within, we have, without, the politics of intervention, influence, prepotence and glory: one is the counterpart and corollary of the other. Without a permanent garrison of two hundred and fifty thousand men, the French Unity would break into pieces; without an army of a hundred and fifty thousand men, always ready to march, giving credit to our councils, no one would concern themselves with us, and it might be that the greatest and most glorious of nations weighed no more in the councils of the Providence than Montenegro or the Ionian Islands.

As for me, who is as little concerned with giving advice as with imposing laws, who does not aspire to influence anyone, and whose only ambition would be to give to others the example of labor, economy, well-being, liberty and morals, I declare that I have no use for this military state and the diplomacy that accompanies it. The four to five hundred

million that it costs us each year are in my eyes a pure loss: what good then would I charge to a representative to go through the details, then to approve the sum?...

A citizen of Holland said to me one day: Guess what is the garrison of Rotterdam, the second city of the Netherlands, seaport, of more than a hundred thousand inhabitants, mixed population, noisy, constantly agitated by work and orgy? — A regiment, I replied, thinking I was moderate. — Nobody, replied the Dutchman. There is a municipal post, which is more than enough to maintain order. The army of the Low Countries serves only in Java and Borneo, to keep the savages at bay.

Allow me to open a parenthesis here.

The *Kingdom of the Netherlands* has preserved the federal mores of the UNITED PROVINCES: this is what makes the superiority of its civilization. Belgium, on the contrary, borrowed from us our administration, our military state, our constitutional monarchy, our parliamentarianism; its bourgeoisie was made in the image of ours. As with us, the so-called liberal party has become the party of reaction, and it is the clericals who demand universal suffrage. Since its separation from Holland, Belgium, which was to rise, has fallen into decline. Is it the fact of separation? No, it is the system. Belgium's debt is around 700 million. Where does this debt come from? From its unitary diet, from his army. Take away the militarism, the centralization: Belgium, by paying half as much for its state expenses, would owe nothing; it would have saved money. But there too, the same causes producing the same effects, the same effects suggest the same ideas, which will end by bringing about the same results. There exists in Belgium a workers' democracy worthy of fraternizing with the French Democracy, and which already perhaps surpasses it. Will they be able to get along!

4. *Navy*. —Our patriotism is distressed to see the French navy so far below that of Great Britain, and the domination of the seas pass definitively to our rivals. M. Berryer has made himself the final interpreter of this sentiment. But whose fault is it? To have a numerous and powerful navy, it would have to be supported; however, the Commercial Treaty dealt it the harshest blow (see below, Chap. ix), and the honorable members of the Democratic Opposition are supporters of this treaty. There would be a way for us to stand up to the English, an economic, peaceful and democratic way; it would be to provide us with powerful allies, such as Russia and Germany, whose fleets joined to ours would restore the balance. But the Opposition keeps asking that we declare war on Russia and Germany, split fifty-fifty with England. Unable therefore either to fill its ranks by means of the merchant and fishing navy, or to secure powerful auxiliaries, or to accept British preponderance, the Imperial Government was indeed obliged to ask the budget for the means to maintain its fleet: and this is what M. Dupuis de Lôme, commissioner of the Government, explained with a power of argument and a wealth of crushing figures. I was distressed to see so many treasures sacrificed to such an ill-conceived policy, so many magnificent constructions, which will never be used except to transport guns and soldiers;

and I could not help telling myself that with a quarter of this money, 25 or 30 millions each year, employed, not in bounties to the shipowners, but in supplies of iron, wood, copper and coal, we would give ourselves in a short time a navy as strong in personnel and material and as well stocked as those of the United States and England.

And why does our Opposition have a grudge against Russia and Germany? Because on the one hand Russia, instead of re-establishing the sovereignty of the Polish nobility, has taken it into its head, after having emancipated and endowed its peasants, to also give the land to those of Poland; and because, on the other hand, if, by the addition of Holstein, Confederate Germany should become a maritime power, it would offend England and ourselves. But what is the use of maintaining political unity at such great expense, if by it we do not obtain prepotence on land and sea? Workers, mutualists who have become statesmen would rejoice in this progress of the agricultural classes in Poland and in Russia, as well as the development of the Germanic Confederation and the liquidation of the Danish kingdom, whose leader, we end by admitting, before being beaten by the Germans, had had the folly to put himself opposite them in his wrong. But, does it have to be repeated over and over again? The gentlemen of the Opposition see things differently. They are centralizers, unitaries, constitutional bourgeois, rallied to all the aristocracies of Europe, who, taking Napoleon I as a model, Napoleon III as an instrument, pose, some as pretenders to the presidency of the Republic one and indivisible, the others as Moncks.

We were told, — it was M. Thiers if I remember correctly, — that the activity of France was immense, and that this prodigious activity required a proportionate supply, which means a strong, enterprising government and a big budget.

Note well, reader, that it is a question here, not of working, cultivating and industrial France, to which I will never refuse either enterprise or outlet, but of centralized, governed, imposed France; of that France that sometimes battles and sometimes parleys; which gambles on its own wealth, or which, believing to double it, wastes it in superfluous creations: unproductive France whose instincts, needs, feelings, appetites, opinions, are not the same as those of the other, and in which sometimes functions for the terror of Europe and the exhaustion of the country, sometimes slumbers without utility for anybody an immense force of action. Well, it is precisely this agglomerated France that I would like to transform at the same time as we would create a system of political and economic guarantees which would give back to each of us a pure loss... Alas! I feel it only too well: the day is still far off when such wishes will be understood, even by the interested parties. Suppose that one of our own, making the Legislative Body, hear similar words: all his colleagues on the left would shout *haro* at the monster; he would be declared by the Democracy of *action* a traitor to the fatherland, an enemy of *nationalities*, an agent of the *coalition*; and if, after such a scandal, he did not hasten to resign, one would be able to force him to do so.

5. *Algeria*. — After thirty-five years of possession, we should have in Algeria five hundred thousand families from Europe, that is a population of at least two million

inhabitants, French and others, most of them farmers, all landowners, forming from Bone to Oran a maritime confederation, almost as large as Switzerland, administering and governing itself, having its provincial assemblies and its general assembly, its executive council and its municipalities; and without any other connection with the mother country than the exchanges, and provisionally the sending of a less and less considerable army, for which Algeria would pay the price, by ordering itself as Charles X ordered the Swiss.

To execute this plan, there was an easy way. Land, excellent land, abounds in Algeria. This land, it was necessary, not to sell it, but to give it for nothing to all those of our nationals who would have offered to go and settle in Africa with their wives and children, and to cultivate the soil of their own hands. For those who could not pay for their trip and obtain the first capital of establishment, it was necessary to ensure the free passage of grain, cattle, implements and provisions for the first year.

It was necessary to advance by three years the leave of the soldiers who would have consented, by taking a wife, to populate the colony, and who would thus have formed the first nucleus of a national guard and native regular army. Half of what France has spent for thirty-four years in Algeria would have been more than enough for the creation of this African France.

The most urgent necessities of the mother country, the highest considerations of public economy, independent of the good employment of the funds of the State, demanded it.

In 1830, the number of the agricultural population, in France, was, to the rest of the population, about as 24 is to 8, that is to say approximately of twenty-four million hearts out of thirty-two. That is to say, three-fourths of the nation was chiefly occupied with the production of subsistence: hence the comparatively superior well-being that all men from fifty-five to sixty years of age remember having witnessed under the Restoration. Less luxury, but much more comfort, and life on the cheap.

Since 1830, the proportion of the rustic class in the whole of the nation has notably changed: it hardly exceeds today twenty-four million souls, if indeed it still reaches that figure; while the industrial population, officials, soldiers, priests, etc., included, would have increased by more than four millions. From there, a cause of manifest dearness: the foodstuffs having had to increase in price, or very nearly, 1. of the difference of four to five million more mouths to feed ; 2. of the additional work imposed, for this purpose, on the twenty-four million cultivators.

To maintain the *status quo* of the fifteen years of the Restoration, from the point of view of popular comfort, it would have been necessary, at the same time, for the industrial, manufacturing, military, civil servant, artistic, etc., population to rise by eight millions to twelve, for the population of the countryside to be extended from twenty-four millions to thirty-six, and the territory with it, from fifty-two millions of hectares to seventy-eight. What are the Rhenish Provinces, and Belgium, and Holland, overflowing with population, incapable of supporting themselves; what would the entire line of the

Rhine, reunited with France by the wave of a magic wand, have done to ward off the pauperism that was advancing upon us?

The conquest of Algeria had solved the problem. It gave us the land and offered to feed us, asking only for the surplus of our arms; by maintaining the cheapness of subsistence, while on our side we had pursued the development of our movable wealth, it would have doubled our fortune.

The system didn't want it. The land was refused to the settlers: an unfortunate thought dreamed of forming appanages of it to concessionary companies; the bourgeoisie had taken a liking to concessions of all kinds, and the Government thought of nothing finer than to recreate, by these distributions of the public fortune, a feudal system. But it would have been necessary to give, with the ground, serfs to cultivate it; and this was beyond the powers of the Government. So we despaired of Algerian colonization; the only thought was to make it an exercise field for our soldiers. So centralization, incompatible with all liberty, was reinforced in Algeria by the prepotence of military power, incompatible with labor; and the conquest of 1830, dear to the people, legitimate hope of the Nation, has become an unbearable burden for our statesmen. We have made a vacuum in Africa; we drove out the Bedouins, the Turks, the Kabyles etc.; there are not a hundred and fifty thousand Frenchmen, of all ages and of all sexes, in this same country which was for the Romans a land of abundance: there, as in Canada, as in Louisiana and Saint-Domingue, as in eastern India, we have shown ourselves incapable of possessing land.

However, what have our deputies of the Opposition imagined to revive, in our unfortunate hands, this African land? Only one thing, to double its deputation!... We would never have believed it, if we had not witnessed it, that so much stupidity could fall on a country from the height of a tribune.

6. *Quibbles of the Opposition.* — So, forced by its principle, which is common to it with the Government, to vote the budget as a whole, the Opposition is reduced to waging a war of chicanery against Power? It blames one expedition which displeases it, approves another, the motives of which, however, are in no way more solid; criticizes the writings, the accounts; adds, subtracts, cuts, trims, sizes; proposes pitfall amendments; raises questions of non-trust. The eighteen years of Louis-Philippe were lost in this game, which we are starting again today. M. Vuitry, replying to M. Thiers on behalf of the Government, was able to say, without being contradicted, that in the end, out of a budget of 2 billions and 300 millions, M. Thiers would not find 10 millions to cut. Is it worth saying about the Opposition, and was it worth keeping the Legislative Body in suspense for six months?

The Government wished to contract a loan of 300 million francs. Barely asked, immediately granted. Who would have wanted to prevent the Government from meeting its commitments, to stop the works, to deprive the bread of a hundred thousand workers, to paralyze the action of the Power? But, in granting the credit, M. Thiers placed a

condition on it, which was to make the operation so laborious that the ministry would have lost the fruit of it, and that by subscribing to it he would have recognized himself, in fact, unworthy of the trust of the country. This is what the government commissioner had no difficulty in disentangling. Such is the art of parliament, the great tactic of the Opposition. And we would send representatives to play, in the name of the working plebs, this unworthy game!

I find in a newspaper a series of amendments presented last year by MM. members of the Democratic Opposition.

“Delete 100,000 fr., salary of the Director of the press.”

Manner of pleading the cause of the freedom of the press, always in hand since 1789. But it is precisely a question of knowing if the press can be free in the system of centralization admitted by the would-be democratic deputies; if, therefore, this freedom is compatible with the system of their choice and with their oath. Because if it were not, there would be nothing to delete: this is what we will examine presently.

“Reduce by 600,000 fr. secret public safety expenditures.”

Manner of requesting the withdrawal of the law of general security. Now, notice that there is no question here for the deputies of suppressing the budget of the police, nor that of the free administration, nor any of the expenditures of majesty, the total of which amounts to at least 150 millions. It is only 600,000 francs to be reduced from this respectable total. Thus, at roughly 600,000 fr., the Government and the Opposition agree on the usefulness of all these expenses. Was it worth it, oh Democrats, to struggle so hard to win the election of the fourteen who signed this amendment?

“Deduct 92 million 22.745 fr., amount of the product of the amortization allocation.”

It is certain, it has been said a thousand times, that since its foundation amortization has amortized nothing at all; on the contrary, the funds allocated to it for this purpose have served to cover ordinary expenses. Nothing is more logical than to abolish a useless institution; but then here is what will happen. If we stop paying for depreciation the sum of 92 million 22.745 fr., we will continue to pay it for the ordinary expenses to which this endowment has been allocated, in a simple modification of entries, which in no way concerns the stock market of the taxpayer. M. Berryer, as a jurisconsult, said excellent things on this subject, but useless, the Government being at the bottom of his opinion.

“Deduct 120,000 francs, the amount of the salary of two vice-presidents. (*Department of State.*)

These 120,000 francs are, I agree, a superfluity. Would there be nothing more to glean from the 150 million mentioned above?

“Opening to the Ministry of Public Works, in the ordinary budget, of a credit of 13 millions to meet the expenses resulting from the guarantee of interest granted to the railway companies.”

I did not see clearly what it was about, and the discussion did not tell me more about it. But it seems to me strange that it was the members of the Democratic Opposition who thought it necessary to take the initiative for such an allowance. The guarantee of interest granted by the Government to the Railway Companies has generally been an act of bad administration: why not leave it entirely responsible for it?

“Opening of credits, 1. of 50,000 fr. for *studies* of a bill on free and compulsory primary education; 2. of 200,000 fr. for subsidy to the teachers' pension fund; 3. 6 million for establishments of girls' schools.”

Manner of laying down the principle of *gratuitous and obligatory* instruction, and of paying court to the people. But one calls free only that which costs no one anything; and since our excellent deputies claim, for primary education alone, millions and hundreds of thousand francs, it is clear from the outset that the tax-payers will pay; and since it is proven that the tax is paid by each family in inverse proportion to its income, it follows, by a last and fatal consequence, that it will always be the people who will pay. Now it is a question of knowing if the people can pay more than they pay; if, after so many sacrifices, they will finally obtain this much desired education; if it is possible to give it to them; if, in the end, it would be good for anything. We will return to this subject in one of the following chapters.

Thus this magnificent system of contributions, the innumerable articles of which we have seen all the Oppositions discuss, in debate with the Power, for three quarters of a century, is nothing other than the corollary of the political system, of which I repeat that the current Government is the one of countless incarnations. Whoever votes for the budget necessarily decides for the system; whoever affirms this one supposes at the same time that one. The debate, always more or less acrimonious, in which the Opposition and the ministry engage each year, is only for the satisfaction of the bourgeois conscience, which wants the budget to be verified, discussed and voted on: a useless debate, which never touches on principles and only rolls over details of application. This is proven by all our changes of ministry, constitution and dynasty, at each of which we have seen the Government change more or less in tone, language and policy, but without the budget having ceased to increase. In agreement on the totals, the Government and the parties, the ministry and the Opposition differ only on the title to be given to the allowances and how to motivate them. Now, it is precisely the budgetary totals that the workers' Democracy cannot grant, since it rejects the unitary system: therefore, what is the use of giving itself representatives?

7. *Final liquidation.* — Monarchical, aristocratic, bourgeois, episcopal, and pontifical Europe, conservative Europe, in a word, is burdened with a debt the total of which exceeds SIXTY BILLION.

This debt, for the very large part, generally dates from the French Revolution, in 1789. Since that time, it has never ceased to increase: it always increases. Thus the French debt, which the Ramel liquidation had reduced, in 1798, to 40 million om interests, that is, in capital, to 5 for 100, 800 millions of fr.; already amounted, in 1814, to 63,507,637 fr. pension 5 per 100; it was carried to the budget of 1857, for 511,525,062 fr.; life annuity included. I do not have before me the figures for the budget of 1865: but the sum is certainly not less. It is an established fact that our debt now exceeds *ten billion*.

What is the indestructible, indelible origin of all these debts? We have explained it above, at the beginning of this chapter: the regime of centralization, which obliges the State to a perpetual increase in expenditure, internally and externally. From 1798 to 1814, throughout the duration of the Consulate and the first Empire, the increase in the debt was relatively small, the greater part of the extraordinary expenses being covered by the contributions which the Emperor imposed on defeated foreigners. But in 1815, they took their revenge; invaded France was in its turn condemned to a billion in contributions; and it is only fair to transfer to the first Empire part of the present debt. It is the fantasy of unity that has hollowed out, for five years, in Italy, this frightful deficit, which, according to all calculations, brings the peninsular debt to five billion; it is the fury for *union* which, in still less time, will have created in the great American republic a debt that certain financiers carry to 16 billion, for the States of the North only. Add to that the debt of the South, and you will certainly not be far from 20 billion.

The dynastico-bourgeois system, which, in the great centers of civilization, has created this formidable debt; whoever likes to adorn himself with the title of party of conservation and economy, does he at least have the will, or only the hope, to repay this debt one day? And how does he plan to achieve this?

The answer to this question should be pondered.

In the first place, it is a principle in the conservative, dynastic-bourgeois world, whose motto is *Order and Liberty*, that a great state cannot exist without a more or less considerable public debt. This seems so outside the notions of the vulgar economics and common sense that one is tempted to take pity on the proposition, as many economists do. Looking more closely, we quickly realize that the thing is much more reasonable than it seems. The public debt, consolidated, floating, for life, in a State like France, England, unified Italy, Austria, etc., is nothing other than the attachment of the *rentier* to the budget, the bond by which the conservative world rallies itself to the fortune of the Government. How many times have you heard that a state burdened with a ten billion debt, divided among a million creditors, had nothing to fear? It was Caesar's policy. The more he took on debt, the more he increased the number of his supporters.

I am well aware, and people will not fail to tell me, that the creditors of the State do nothing other than receive the legitimate interest of their capital, that they cannot be likened to sinecurists, appanagists, dealers in free title. To this I reply, that State loans are generally contracted at usurious rates, at 6, 7, 8, and even 10 per cent; that even at the legal rate of 5 percent, bourgeois capital, invested in the State, produces twice what the land returns to the proprietors; and that this is one of the causes which, by raising the rent of money in an abnormal manner, raises at the same time that of houses, raises the price of all foodstuffs, and maintains a system of high prices, to the detriment of the masses., but to the great advantage of cash lenders.

We see, then, from this first observation, that if conservative politics incurs debts, it does not precisely insist on reimbursing them. The unitary system needs debts.

But, you will say, debts cannot increase indefinitely. If an interest of 500 million seems too heavy a load to us today, we could not carry one of a billion...

It is here that it is important to fully understand the financial system, under a Government of centralization and unity.

Of course, the creditors of the State know as well as anyone that the public debt cannot grow forever, and that by following this movement, one must end up in bankruptcy. They expect it; but what have they to fear? Did they not, in principle, by subscribing to the various loans from which the debt was successively formed, invested their capital at an interest double, triple, and sometimes quadruple that which the land usually yields? Have they not perceived this interest for fifty, seventy-five, one hundred and one hundred and fifty years? Did they not return ten times, twenty times in their capital? Have they not added to all this the benefits of speculation? Do they not know that, even in the event of a bankruptcy, they will not lose everything; that the reduction will only be partial, and that, the liquidation carried out, they will find themselves again in a relatively excellent situation?

As much therefore as much as unitarism and its policies by nature seek debt, so much they have little to fear from bankruptcy.

“History provides many examples of partial bankruptcies. Without going back to the alterations of currencies under Philippe le Bel, we find in modern times the following facts:

“*Reign of Henry IV.* — Sully reduces the interest granted to lenders under the previous reigns, and allocates the accounts already paid to the repayment of the capital.

“*Reign of Louis XIV.* — Under the administration of Desmarets, the payment of capital and interest on a host of debts was suspended, notably the funds deposited in the loan fund.

“*Reign of Louis XV.* — When Law's bank collapsed, an arbitrary reduction of the State's debts was carried out. — A short time later, Father Terray refused to pay a large number of debts, as well as the Treasury rescriptions.

“*French Revolution.* — Mandates and assignats of the Revolution undergo a large reduction. — In 1798, Minister Ramel reduced the debt by two-thirds.

“Provisional Government. — In 1848, the government of the Republic, heir to the deficit caused by the Orléanist monarchy, offered savings bank depositors and holders of Treasury bonds annuity securities instead of cash. It was a transaction, when very honest people advised outright bankruptcy.”²²

And now, as has already happened so many times, aren't we destined, a little sooner, a little later, to see it again? I therefore ask, in anticipation of this fateful deadline, if it would not be compromising the future of the working classes and betraying their interests, to push them to elections that could have no other result than to make them guarantors, in making them participate in it, of an economic order of things against which they protest?

²² See the *Manual of the Stock-Market Speculator*, 1857.

Chapter VI.

Liberty of the press. — Right of assembly and association: their incompatibility with the unitary system.

Liberty to speak and write: liberty to associate and to meet: another subject on which the Constitutional Opposition likes to frolic, to the great damage of the Power which does not know what to answer, of the Constitution, which can't do anything about it, of the Country, which it misuses, but for its greater glory and popularity itself. Really, these men must have reflected very little on the last seventy-five years of our history, to rehash to us how they exercise these liberties that their politics scares away, or they must be convinced that they are holding forth in front of an audience of fools.

What! From the invention of movable type by Jean Gutenberg in 1438 until the French Revolution, the press was considered a diabolical invention, subject to the animadversion not only of the Congregation of the Index, the least formidable of the powers that threaten it, but of all Governments, of all parties, of all sects, of all bourgeois and noble privileges; — from the Revolution to our days, to speak only of ourselves here, it has been pursued by all the Governments which, referring to the principles of 89, implicitly promised to leave it free: and we are at the point of doubting that this unanimous, relentless repression could well be due to some fatal incompatibility, rather than the will of statesmen!

The Convention *terrorized* the press; the Directory had, for its defense, to crack down incessantly against the newspapers and the clubs: it *fructidorized* them as it did the representatives of the people and the directors themselves; the Consulate ended the war with one blow by muzzling the press, both periodical and non-periodical; the Restoration has forged an arsenal of laws against it; the royalty of July fulminated its legislation of September, to which the Republic of February, four months after its installation, saw itself in the necessity of returning; finally, the Government of December 2 did not believe itself safe until it had issued its Decree of February 17, 1852.

The right of association and assembly followed the fortunes of the press. After having registered it among the principles of 89, all the police have restricted, regulated, proscribed it. With regard to the right to meet, to associate, to agree, as well as that of publishing one's thoughts by speech or by printing, our legislation has been composed, for seventy-five years, of the sum of the tyrannies that all the liberal and reactionary, republican and monarchical parties, emerging from the Revolution, have successively exercised against each other; never, ever, has liberty been truly constitutional and legal; it has always been a disappointment.

And in this series, in this reciprocity of repression, of prevention, of restriction, we always know how to see only the blindness, the constant, registered bad faith of this anonymous being that has the name Government! We accuse the princes and the

ministers, but they are never accused alone: as if the factions, the assemblies, the directories, the democratic and bourgeois republics had not shown themselves as intolerant as the emperors and the kings! It is after four centuries and more of declared incompatibility between political and religious authority and the press, after seventy-five years of revolutionary contradiction, that the representatives of the people, scholars, philosophers, jurists whose mission it should be to enlighten the public by going back to the causes of evil and by seeking the antagonism of ideas, come to simply rehash insipid commonplaces, put forward a hundred times by gazetteers with venal pens, slanderous demagogues, lawyers without convictions, pedantic dishes, and a hundred times disdained by politicians of all parties and schools! Where are we then and what benefit do we derive from our experiences? We speak of the lower empire: I am afraid we should say the lower democracy, the lower bourgeoisie, the lower scribblers. Who will deliver us from this hustle and bustle? When will we banish this talk, as much of bad taste as bad faith, plague from the rostrum, scourge of the press and of free thought?

The truth about the relationship between the Power and the press is nevertheless so easy to grasp, so obvious, so palpable!... It is true that the Power, which has a deep feeling for this truth, dares not say anything, for fear that the public, duly enlightened, would end up making against it conclusions analogous to those that it continues itself to make against its enemy. The government prefers to keep the open air, give only incomplete explanations, accuse the audacity of the parties, maintain that it is against neither liberty, nor philosophy, nor the rights of the country; that it prosecutes only abuse, lies, calumny, outrage to religion and morals; to ensure, if necessary, silence when it cannot ensure writers, and, under the guise of moderation and impartiality, to rule ideas from above by intimidating minds.

As for those whose job, erected almost as a constitutional prerogative, is to contradict everything that the Government says, to denigrate everything that the Government does, they are careful not to reveal the essence of things either: where would then be their hope and what would become of their ambition? What they want is to come to power in their turn, of course without changing the system; in the meantime, and while they hold the Ministry cornered in resistance, affect the role of the always welcome liberalism of the masses. They invoke the sacred principles of 89, the inalienable rights of human thought, endeavoring to make any repression odious, any restriction ridiculous; attributing to the inadequacy of the Power, to its erroneous maxims, to its detestable policy, the fear it has of public opinion, and consequently the war it waged on the press, as well as on the associations and meetings of citizens. Quits, later, when in their turn they are in business, protesting the excellence of their intentions and blaming the atrocity of the factions for the defensive measures that the higher interest of the state would have imposed on them! Since 89 we have been witnessing this comedy, worthy of the fair, where the superintendent is always beaten, and Harlequin glorified.

So do you want to know it, dear reader, this truth so shamefully misunderstood about the relationship of the press with the Power, a truth that everyone feels in their hearts of hearts, but that no one articulates? Well! Good God, I have just, while talking about the press, the Power and the Opposition, to point it out to you, and you did not notice it: there is a radical, essential incompatibility between the unitary state system that we have created for ourselves, that all our governments have received the mission to apply and maintain, that the Opposition affirms, and the exercise of the rights that the Revolution has guaranteed to us, right to liberty, right to labor and to assistance, right to instruction and employment, right to meet and associate, above all right to publish one's opinions through the means of the press.

There is, I say, in France, an incompatibility between the unitary system and the press:

1. On the side of the Power, because despite the principles that give sovereignty to the nation, the Power is in fact sovereign, claiming to act and be respected as such; that in its capacity as sovereign it is antipathetic to the examination, to the control, to the reports, to any discussion and criticism of its actions; all the more antipathetic as it has been given more grandeur, as its attributions are more multiplied, its power more invasive and more universal, and as thereby it feels itself the object of more competition and anger;

2. On the side of the press, because, in the economico-political system of which it is a part, and which serves as a counterweight to the Government, constituted in anarchy and monopoly, it is naturally and, except for rare exceptions of bad faith, insulting, venal, full of partiality and calumny, without principles, without guarantees, all the more eager to prosecute the Government as, even in being wrong, it finds there popularity and profit, its aim, moreover, the same as that of the Opposition, being to seize the power itself.

Between a press thus made and an excessive Power, which it seems as if one has deliberately wanted to make a bait for all ambitions, the incompatibility is therefore profound, the war inevitable.

I need to insist on this really strange side of our political system: I therefore beg the reader to grant me a few minutes of patience.

Notice first that the Government, by the immensity of its attributions, by the excess of its centralization, is organized in such a way as to arouse against it at the same time the greatest impatience and the greatest possible envy. While some would like to break it, others dream of seizing it; the same criticisms, the same reproaches will serve against it on both sides. I repeat and cannot repeat too often that this situation is inevitable; that it results from the unitary constitution of the State, from the exorbitant role that the Government is called upon to play, from the right vested in every citizen to express his opinion on the policy of the ministry, and from the ulterior motive that makes the systematic competition of minorities against majorities a guarantee against the absolutism of the Government.

Observe, in the second place, that the Power is alone against all, so that it is of absolutely no use to it to have reason, if he does not have at the same time with him a

majority that supports it, since between it and its adversaries the question is not precisely a question of right, but it is a question of force. Now, however enormous the governmental personnel, it could not stand before the majority of the nation; and since, by the nature of things, the inevitable discontent of the nation leads it to separate itself imperceptibly from the Power and to group itself against it, it is inevitable that a little sooner or a little later the nation will take hold of its own government. Add here the cases of imprudence, incompetence, temerity, etc., on the part of the high personages of the State, and you will have only added new probabilities to their defeat.

Consider now that the Government is antipathetic to all criticism and all control, all the more antipathetic as its attributions are greater, its mandate more extended, its personnel more numerous. Whoever is constituted in authority aspires to make himself inviolable: had not the Charter of 1814 made such the proper adversaries of the prince, the deputies?

Thus, alongside the head of state, there is a state administration, a state justice, a state army, a navy, works, industries, a university, etc., of the state, whose entire staff considers itself to be more or less, like the prince, an integral part of the state; who counts in the system for a little more than its services and salaries, and whom you cannot assimilate to a band of wage-earners whom the industrial entrepreneur hires in the morning and who he dismisses in the evening after having paid them for their day. It is the world of authority, majesty, inviolability. The judge is inviolable and almost sacred in his tribunal; the rural warden and the gendarme are believed in their reports until they are forged; and attacks on the person of civil servants, by reason of their functions, are punished differently from attacks on the person of citizens.

All of this, personal and material, is in reality, and despite our constitutional metaphysics, only one body, one soul, one intelligence, one will. In this great body, too close to us for us to be able to grasp the whole and follow its movements, intense passions are fermenting; terrible anger breaks out; the insult is keenly felt, the contradiction deemed unbearable. The slightest attack, directed either at people or at the system, appears to be a state crime. I leave you to imagine the weight, on occasion, in the hand of this Briarée, of a small character, titled citizen, with more or less suspect intentions, often without experience and without genius, who, abundant in his own and private sense, interferes to apply to the higher reason of the State, doubtless fallible, but of which it will never be given to him to sound the depth, the control of his opinion!... All Power, I tell you, like the head of the family in the midst of his children, impatiently endures criticism, even when benevolent: what will it be if it is insulting? What will it be especially if one has the certainty in advance that the attacks have no other goal than to dispossess the high personnel and to make pass this rich prey of the State, this distribution of favors and jobs, this handling of the budget, this immense pleasure of commanding a nation and directing its destiny, to pass all that, I say, into the hands of a faction, of a rival dynasty? Authority will rise in all its powers; as much as the opposition parties pursue the pursuit, so much

energy will the governmental army exert for the resistance. So, let the majority decide for the Power, at least in Parliament, and you will have, depending on the times, the laws of September or the decree of February 17, 1852; justice will be severe, and the Government will see itself delivered for some time from its implacable adversaries, by condemnation, incarceration, the sack of the printers, fines and transportation. On the contrary, if the Power feels its popularity weakening, it will be more reserved.

What adds to the antipathy of power for this system of examination, to the declared antagonism between it and the press, is the anarchical, immoral temperament, full of bad faith, of the latter; these are his habits of charlatanism, venality and calumny.

The primary cause of this demoralization of the press, a demoralization that has now reached such a degree that the public suffers from it even more than the Power, is that, despite the law that made them responsible and, so to speak, erected as censors, the typographers cannot engage in the examination of the writings they print; they are forced to confine themselves to the exercise of their industry. As a general rule, moreover conforming to the true principles of political economy and right, the printer does not know the content of the publications. Apart from the fairly rare cases of conspiracy, defamation or obscenity, there leaves the responsibility for their *copy* entirely to the writers.

The situation thus made, one can say that the press is delivered to all infamies. It is nowadays that we have learned to take advantage of advertising; it is also from our time that we must date the deluge of lies which have perverted public reason. On all subjects, the press has been shown to be corrupt and venal. It has made it a habit and a profession to speak, *ad libitum*, for, against or on all subjects; to fight or defend any kind of cause; to announce or deny any kind of news; to advocate or denigrate, against payment, any idea, any invention, any work, any merchandise, any enterprise. The Stock Exchange and the bank, the sponsorship and the shop, literature and industry, the theater and the arts, the Church and education, politics and war, everything has become a matter of exploitation, a means of agitation, blackmail and intrigue. The Court of Assizes, no more than the tribune, was sheltered from its lies and its frauds. Some culprit has been exonerated by it; some innocent charged with the crime. The most important questions of politics have become matters of money in its hands: the question of the Orient, sold; question of Italy, sold; Polish question, sold; question of the United States, sold. I am not saying that the truth does not sometimes escapes it, either through indifference, or because it has an interest in it, or because, by affecting a severe attitude on certain subjects, it manages to deal more advantageously, at another time, with its opinion.

What Power would feel the slightest consideration for such a press? The public has been poisoned with false ideas, benumbed in its prejudices; all the interests put in suffering, the peace of Europe at every moment compromised, the masses excited, the Government, finally, under all the regimes, discredited, ruined in public opinion, and this always at the moment when it seemed to deserve the indulgence of the country. We cry

out against repression: compared to the multitude of misdeeds, to the depth of immorality, it is insignificant. A thousand years in prison and a hundred million fines would not expiate the crimes of the press only since December 2.

Against this overflow there is no known remedy. The *regulations* can't help it. The press is by right a free industry, in which the Government does not have to intervene. The laws relating to the exercise of the profession of printer and bookseller are exceptional laws, contrary to the right of citizens, to whom alone matters of the economic order fall, and in opposition to the great constitutional principle which has made the faculty of oversight one of the guarantees of the nation. Throughout the reign of Louis-Philippe and during the Republic, the newspapers had enjoyed the unlimited faculty of reporting in their own way on the debates of parliament: we know to what extent the art of disguising and calumny was pushed. The Imperial Government wanted to put an end to this bad faith: the means was simple; it was to impose silence on the newspapers, or the pure and simple reproduction of the *Moniteur*. But that was laying down a principle that could go a long way. The Opposition demanded in the name of the franchises of the press and the interests of the journalists; the Government was forced to compromise, and, something quite irregular, contrary to the right of the public and to constitutional truth, it is to the Presidency that the abridged report is made for all the newspapers.

The *competition* is just as powerless, whatever has been said, and it is not true that the press can be its own antidote. By the nature of things, the press, especially the periodical press, is classified in such a way as to exclude new categories, which limits, nullifies competition. Thus, without speaking of the patents that limit the number of printing works, nor of the decree of 1852, which limits that of newspapers, it is obvious that there can only exist a determined number of unofficial newspapers, independent newspapers, monarchical newspapers and democratic newspapers; Catholics, Jews and Protestants; journals of finance, commerce, courts and tribunals; journals, collections, etc., etc. Now, notice that all these newspapers, as independents, are hostile to the Power: what use would competition be to it? Will it try to create new ones, in its devotion, as it did recently by publishing the *Moniteur du soir*? In a system other than ours, where the publication of government acts, official news, announcements, market prices, the stock market bulletin, the reports of academies, courts and chambers could be considered as a public service, there is no doubt that the Government would have every right to create such publications, and even to distribute them free of charge. Under the present system, any enterprise of this kind is considered as an encroachment by the State on the rights of industrialists. Also when M. Guérout, speaking for all the press, came to express his dissatisfaction with the extension given to the *Moniteur*, and to support by the most pitiful reasons the most pitiful of theses, the government commissioner confined himself to asserting the precedent of the *Moniteur* itself, assuring that it was only a matter of a *supplement*, and

protesting the respect of authority for the rights of mercantile journalism and the gas industry.

Will the Power, finally, try *general suppression*? It did not dare to do so in 1852, and the thing seems impossible. Napoleon I, according to M. Thiers, seemed in 1815 converted in this respect: what is certain is that the denial of the freedom of the press is nothing less than the abolition of the principles of 89, the destruction of all political guarantees. It is true that in this respect the Constitutional Opposition was the first to set an example, and created a decisive precedent in the last elections. Journalists who are friends of liberty, who understood their duty, would have hastened, eighteen months ago, to place their papers at the disposal of democratic committees and of all opinions deprived of an organ. Instead of that they considered it more useful to their ambition to seize the elections and to monopolize the votes: thus MM. Guérout, Havin, Darimon and their colleagues climbed to the deputation. What would they respond today if the Emperor made to the country this speech: "France, which I saved in 1851 from civil war and parliament, is once again losing itself with its fantasies of the tribune and the press. I eliminate them both. The *Moniteur* of the morning and that of the evening will be responsible for providing for all the needs of publicity."

Well! It will be said, since the press is one of the essential cogs in our political system, and since it is susceptible neither of regulation, nor of competition, nor of suppression, the simplest thing is to abandon it to itself and leave it free. This is the thesis of M. de Girardin, who, to reassure the Government, endeavors to make it believe that the press is *powerless*.

The press is an instrument of publicity, indifferent by itself to truth as to falsehood, to liberty as to despotism, which is worth nothing except through the power of the parties it serves. Now, can we say that the parties armed with the press, the right of assembly, etc., are powerless against the Power? But it is on this power of the parties that the parliamentary system is founded; and see the use they have made of it since 89.

The old monarchy, which summoned the Estates-General and made the Revolution, itself reformed by the Constituent Assembly, lasted *three and a half years*.

The first republic had maintained by its Constitutions of the year II and of the year III, all the liberties and the rights given by the defunct Royalty. Could it do less? It lasted *seven years*; it has passed, like a sinister flash, through conspiracies; it was installed by a *coup d'état*, it lived on *coups d'état*, and it died by a *coup d'état*.

The second republic had also given and guaranteed, by the Constitution of 1848, all liberties and all rights. It lasted *three years*; like the other, it lived on reactions and *coups d'état*, and it ended in a *coup d'état*.

The Governments that have abused the press, the first Empire, the Restoration, the Royalty of July, lasted longer than the others: which proves that the press is like the prostitute, a cowardly power, which bows under blows. I do not want to say that this example is good to follow, since in the end we got the better of all these Governments,

since the longest of these reigns was not eighteen years, and since eighteen years are not the duration of a state. I only want to point out that the incompatibility born of the Press is not less, whether it is chained up or left free, since in the first case it poisons the Government, and in the second it strangles it.

Do we imagine by any chance that if the present Opposition, by some stroke of fortune, came to Power, it would have discovered the secret of living with the freedom of the press any more than Napoleon III and his predecessors? The agreement would not last fifteen days. We have long known what the liberalism of these men is; we have seen them at work recently, with regard to their candidacies. One of the least accused, M. Marie, has proved to us, in the case he pleaded for the Queen of Sweden against the *Memoirs* of Marmont, that he would make an excellent censor on occasion. But, independently of the more or less peaceful dispositions of this personnel, who could, without a shudder of indignation, see them return? What! The finances would be restored to M. Garnier-Pagès, public education to M. Carnot, justice to M. Marie, the interior to M. Jules Favre! We would be saints of wood, Republicans of cardboard, as at the sight of these sworn we could not be silent; our pens failing, the cobblestones would rise. The good people, who for three quarters of a century have allowed themselves to be pampered with these comical liberties, understand this once: it is not with this slander, with this patelinage thrown like a grit on an enormous centralization, doubled by a incurable mercantile anarchy, armored with a financial feudalism which dominates the State itself, that you will arrive at *liberty* and *order*, any more than at *confidence*. The mere fact of the systematic undivided sovereignty in France, combined with your economic insolidarity, is a sure pledge to you that the days of calm and plenty will never return.

Let the Government, let the bourgeoisie know the truth of their situation. To the political demoralization manifested by the lack of importance attached to the oath, are added, as corollaries, the incompatibility of unitarism and all liberties, the impossibility of a normal budget, the despair of public happiness and progress. Everything then becomes a conspiracy against the established Government, everything is hostile to it: literary, scientific or moral conferences, poetic readings, academic sessions, inaugural speeches, public lectures, Advent and Lenten sermons, shows, banquets, birthdays, charitable societies; it must prevent everything or drink the hemlock.

Meetings and associations. — It is useless, now, to speak of political meetings and associations. How to support, alongside a centralized power, the formation of enemy centers? Municipal liberty is intolerable, but that of the clubs would be authorized! In 1848 the law on political meetings and associations seemed obscure; I remember, however, that the arguments of the Opposition, drawn from natural right and written law, did not convince me at all. The incompatibility was flagrant: it became apparent on February 21, when the single attempt at a meeting determined the fall of the Government. Was it not the meeting in the rue de Poitiers that killed the Republic? In 93, didn't the society of the

Jacobins become mistress of the Convention? And later, after Robespierre's death, didn't it have to be suppressed?...

What a pity to see former deputies, candidates for the Legislative Body, men who, through the decrees of July 27 and 28, 1848, can boast of having had their share in this legislation against the liberty of the press and the right to association and meeting, set up as advisers of the people for the interpretation of the decree of February 2, 1852; to organize, under this pretext, throughout the Empire, a vast electoral conspiracy; then, when the Power asks them to account for their conduct, when it opposes them with the formal texts of article 291 of the Penal Code, of the law of April 10, 1834, of the decree of July 28, 1848; when it publishes their curious correspondence, instead of frankly confessing their offense, instead of declaring that, placed between an incompatible right and a duty, they have sacrificed the least important to the most considerable, to protest of the good faith of their intentions, and to stammer miserable sophisms! Contemporary Democracy has seen nothing more miserable than the defense of the *Thirteen* before the correctional police. It was in this trial that we were able to judge the Machiavellianism of an Opposition which, to save its detestable system of unity, at the expense of its own dignity, deceives the Country and poses as a martyr, as if between the right of assembly and the centralization of the State, our laws and our history did not loudly proclaim that there is a contradiction.

Meetings, free associations in a system like ours, where by the nature of things grievances against the Power abound, where ambitions swarm, where parties and cliques are constantly in action! But look at what happens in the most harmless of these societies, in those authorized by the Government. Allusions are sought everywhere; they are created where the orators did not wish to make them: the more perfidious, acute and penetrating the attacks, the more obstinate one is against the authority that is preoccupied with it, the more one accuses it of tyranny. For the Power, no more justice: no explanations are admitted from it; we refuse to hear it; we organize against it the conspiracy of the serpent, which blocks its ears, says the Scripture, in order to preserve against the enchanter the freedom of its teeth and its venom. We distort its words, we calumniate its actions, we stifle it, we crush it, we proceed towards it as towards a writer in disfavor; so that in the end all that remains for the Power, whose term has come, is to heroically take its side, which is to use to the end the means that the law has placed in its hands, and to die with dignity after having fought courageously.

One objects to the example of England, what else do I know? of Belgium; we no longer dare to speak of the United States; one asks, if the English knew how to grant their liberties with their Government, why we would not do the same?

Well! No doubt we are as capable as the English of enjoying the advantages of both liberty and government. Who ever argued the contrary? But it is on condition that we will change our centralizing system and our economic system: beyond that, there is no salvation.

England is not so strongly centralized a state as France;

Its public economy is quite different from ours: if commerce and industry in England are, as with us, fully free and unsupported, it is not the same with landed property, the system of which is not that of abuse, *jus utendi et abutendi*, but of fief;

There are not three dynasties and a republic in perpetual competition: everyone recognizes the sovereignty of the house of Hanover and of Queen Victoria;

English society is not democratic: it is a kind of feudalism founded on the double landed and capitalist aristocracy;

England, finally, has remained faithful to its state religion: if it tolerates the papist cult, it is because it does not believe it has to be feared.

Now, as long as sovereignty is shared in this way in England, so long as neither the monarchy, nor the aristocracy, nor the bourgeoisie, nor the Church, feel themselves threatened, liberty, thus limited and determined, will not encounter any serious obstacle on the side of the Power. On the contrary, the day when the plebs would be admitted to the exercise of political rights, when war would be declared on the landed and industrial aristocracy, when the dynasty and royalty itself would be called into question, when the episcopate would take umbrage against the progress of popery, when centralization, activated by this revolutionary movement, should have taken on an additional intensity, on that day, one can expect it, there exists in England an arsenal of laws which one lets sleep, but of which the Government would not hesitate to make use, and the incompatibility between the Power and Liberty would appear in all its glory.

Belgium is in a similar situation: from time to time it gives us strange proofs of its Government's love for liberty, and I would have much to say about this interesting country, if the unitary liberalism with which we have endowed it deluded anyone. There is perhaps at this time, in all Europe, only Italy, where Liberty lives in a kind of intelligence with the Government: this is due to their common concern, before which all interest erases, all difficulty disappears: the formation and completion of Italian unity. And still!

My thesis would be incomplete, and something would be missing from my proofs, if I did not show in a few lines under what conditions Liberty can exist in a great State.

Let us suppose this fine French unity divided into thirty-six sovereignties, with an average area of 6,000 square kilometers and a million inhabitants. Suppose in each of these thirty-six States, the Power reduced to its essential attributions, the budget reduced to its just limits, the same principle governing both the political order and the economic order, the society, organized according to the law of mutuality, in harmony with the Government governed itself by the federative principle; above the Confederate States a Supreme Council, with almost no administrative and legal powers, with a minimal budget; whose mandate would be above all to protect, in each State, both the citizens against local usurpations and the local Governments against the insolence of factions, while it would

itself be guaranteed by the convention of all the States. Immediately everything changes, like a theater decoration. First centralization, principle of discord, with its power, its wealth, its glory no longer arouse the ambition of anyone. Almighty to protect and defend itself, since it is the organ of the Confederation, the central Power is incapable of usurpation and conquest. It doesn't even have its own territory. What, then, can parties do to it? What would they want from it? What would it bring them? The power of attack therefore decreases here as the square of the surface offered as a point of aim; liberty itself loses interest in such a war, and while preserving its prerogatives, while exercising its rights, becomes more friendly; the press, surrounded by mutualist institutions, moralizes; the complicity of the public in its turn, a very involuntary complicity, disappears with the influence of the great newspapers of the capital and the number of their subscriptions. The States forming between them a pact of mutual insurance, no conspiracy can reach them: who do you imagine is plotting and for what? Get together, associate; write and speak: what does the Government care? Everywhere order is consolidated; the Power placed under the eye and the hand of the Country, formed of the elite of the citizens, can make fun of the eccentricities of criticism, and whatever its sensitivity, leave without concern, print everything and say everything.

After this long presentation, I will abstain from reflections.

Chapter VII.

Public instruction. — That the education of the people, such as they are entitled to obtain, is incompatible with the economico-political system adopted by the Opposition and the Government. Conditions for a democratic education.

Messieurs the deputies of the so-called liberal Opposition have made a certain noise about what is called *free and compulsory education*, which they have given notice to the Imperial Government to establish. Charlatanic means of popularity, which hardly misses its effect on the multitude; in the background, remarkable juggling and sad capucinade. I have seen in Belgium the *young liberal party*, as it likes to call itself, promise itself a superb triumph over this ridiculous utopia. Beaten on all points by the *old liberal party*, it has been for shame, and the only result that Belgium got from this discussion was that , in whom we seem to be so deeply interested, begin to shout: *Neither clericals nor liberals! Neither old liberals nor young liberals!*

It must be confessed that in the last session of the Legislative Body our Opposition behaved marvelously with the Power. It prepared for it, cooked up as many victories as it wanted. Twice, during the discussion of the address, and, lastly, in connection with the vote on the budget for public instruction, it had been proved to it, by facts and figures, that no Government had done for the instruction of the people as much as the Imperial Government; that it had anticipated all the desires of the Opposition; that it had done more than it thought could ask of it; that since December 2 popular education had made notable progress; that one could not, in a day, chase away ignorance any more than one can extinguish misery; but that it was already permissible to say that it was less education that had failed the people than the people themselves who, by their inertia, failed education; that almost everywhere education was free, but that the difficulty was to make it *obligatory*, and that if the Opposition possessed this secret, the Government asked nothing better than to know it. It was amusing to see the philanthropic jeremiads of M. Jules Simon bring about positive, peremptory answers, which, if they took nothing away from the generosity of his feelings, at least made him see that, before launching into criticism, he would have done well to inform himself regarding the state of things and the efforts of the Authority.

This is how our honorable members of the Opposition, great citizens, seek opportunities for attack right and left, for they must attack, and make the miseries and negligence of power a stepping stone for their ambition. Never has parliamentarianism seemed to me more miserable than in this circumstance; it never inspired me with such disgust. I saw, on this question of popular teaching, always lamentable and always without remedy, because I could not take for cures vain palliatives, I saw, I say, the Power obtain a crown, thanks to the interpellations of those who had given themselves the special task of

accusing it and demonstrating its negligence. Appoint, appoint Opposition representatives, Democrats!

I want once again, on this big question of education, to show that the true principles are almost unknown to everyone; that it is not even possible, either to the Power or to the Opposition, to refer to it, so much incompatibility is there between their system and the intellectual emancipation of the people.

Since it was on the occasion of the budget that the question of popular education was raised and that every year it comes up in the chambers, it is from the point of view of the budget that I want to examine it in my turn.

Let us first posit as a principle that there is and can only be something gratuitous that costs no one anything; that education, as well as food, clothing and housing must be paid for; that if the one who asks for it and to whom it is given does not pay, another will have to pay for him, which amounts to saying that *Free and Compulsory Education* comes under the category of institutions of CHARITY, of which the Manifesto of the *Sixty* declared that they had had their day and that the people no longer wanted them. Whence it follows that the Government, which gives gratuitously, as M. Jules Simon claims, primary education to so many thousands of poor children, is only a distributor of alms; that, if it is only a question of teaching, willingly or by force, as best they can, to read, write, count, recite the paternosters, to a few million poor children, the Government could very well discharge itself from this care and leave it to the benevolent societies, parish priests, sisters of charity, brothers of Christian Doctrine, united with the municipal councils. But we touch here on an incompatibility of another kind: a Government with great centralization cannot allow anything to happen outside of its own initiative, not even the teaching of the Cross from God, not even alms. There is a whole State within the State in the Societies of Saint-Vincent, the relief societies, the schools of charity, the presbyteries, the factories, and the Brothers!...

We are sometimes accused, we socialists, of serving only reheated food. But who invented free education, the charity of education, if not the so-called liberals, plagiarists of the Gospel, who were the first to give the mission to the apostles to preach and teach the nations, without worrying about payment? By adding *obligation*, these so-called liberals manifest their despotic disposition; they retrograde beyond the first Christian communities.

So what are the fundamental principles of education in a just, mutualist and free society?

In the first place, the instruction of man must be, like progress in piety of old, so designed and combined that it lasts almost a lifetime. This is true of all subjects, and of the working classes even more than of professional scholars. Progress in education, like progress in virtue, is for all conditions and all ages: it is the first guarantee of our dignity and our happiness.

But there is a time of preparatory education, a time of schooling, during which the child and the adolescent hardly do anything other than acquire elementary knowledge, practice the work of industry, remaining thus, in part at least, at the expense of the families, until they are able to provide alone for their further education and subsistence. It is this primary period of education, the second of human life, that we have to deal with: it extends, on average, for both sexes, from the age of seven completed years to eighteen, years, that is a lapse of ten to twelve years.

It is important to observe two things here. First, instruction must include apprenticeship; the separation of literary and scientific instruction from industrial apprenticeship has been judged by those who have been most concerned with pedagogy (see Rousseau's *Émile*) to be a bad thing, and all modern tendencies are against it. Secondly, the education demanded by the new Democracy must be from all points of view far superior to that which the average worker receives today, and which is only the badge of poverty. What we ask for is no longer this servile education, what comprised the feudal hierarchy presently reforming itself, and to which pagan property accommodated itself; it is a seriously liberal education, at the height of universal suffrage, which contributes, with the institutions of mutuality and guarantees, with the workers' association and the federation of the communes and provinces, to maintain a certain level between the corporations, conditions and fortunes. Outside of that, the child sent to school will always be only a young serf trained for servitude, in the best interests and security of the upper classes: now, we want civilized and free workers.

Let us therefore seek, roughly, what should be and what would cost, in a democratic and regenerated France, education. The most intimate solidarity, as we will presently be convinced, existing, for this great interest, between the provinces and communes, I establish my calculation, not on a commune, taken as a model, but on the whole of France.

I suppose the population of the eighty-nine departments of the Empire to have reached the figure of 40 million souls: counting the foreigners not listed, it is not much lower.

Of this number, 8 million, slightly less, from the age of seven years completed to that of eighteen years completed, are called to attend schools. It is of these 8 million children and adolescents of both sexes, the most interesting part of the nation, that it is a question of making intelligent, educated, hardworking, honest subjects, capable of becoming in their turn worthy founders of families, skilled workmen and foremen, devoted citizens, etc.

Just as literary instruction implies a fairly considerable plurality of knowledge, which imposes a plurality of teachers and teachers in schools, so also professional instruction, such as sound political economy, the dignity of Democracy, and the security of subjects require, implies a certain plurality of industries, which presupposes a plurality of masters and foremen, a plurality of schools and workshops, and, consequently, in certain cases, the displacement of young people.

I leave aside the organization of the courses, the teaching methods, everything that does not come directly under the budget.

1. Tuition and learning fees: paper, pens, ink, office supplies, books, physics, chemistry, geometry, and labor instruments; school furniture, study rooms; fees of teachers, professors, masters; trips: etc., etc., 0 fr. 15 cents, per day and per pupil, or for the year 54 fr. 75 cents, and for eight million young people 438,000,000.

2. Food and maintenance, laundry, medicine, etc., etc.: — 40 cents, per day and per pupil, that is to say for the year 146 francs, and for eight million young people. 1,168,000,000.

Together	1,606,000,000.
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I say *sixteen hundred and six million*, at the lowest price, that it will cost, year after year, for the education of 8 million young people of both sexes, out of a population of 40 million souls. This calculation is no exaggeration: fifty-five centimes per day and per pupil, from seven to eighteen years old, for the cost of food, schooling and learning, is certainly a most modest estimate. Supposing the product of the nation of 12 billion, the savings of 2 billion, which is very exaggerated; the consumption of 10 billion: the eight million young people, forming one-fifth of the population, would cost only 1,606 million, that is to say less than one-sixth of the national expenditure: which is certainly below the truth.

Now, all this expense must be paid, and indeed it will be paid, or else education will be abandoned. By whom will it be paid? To find out, let us start by seeing what is being done today.

Literary, scientific and professional instruction, as it is given today, is paid for:

1. By the State (universities, institutes, academies, colleges, high schools, etc.);
2. By the municipalities;
3. By public benevolence;
4. By the families;
5. By the students themselves.

What is not paid, causing a deficit in the budget, is not long in causing a deficit in education, and as a consequence the ignorance of the youth, misery.

To what extent does each paying category enter today into the cost of education.

The budget for public education, paid by the State, is 25 or 30 million, I cannot say exactly. However, whatever the present conditions of society the total expense of educating our youth, up to the moment when they are able to earn their own living, one can regard the sum charged to the State as insignificant, a trifle.

What the communes pay, I do not know, but certainly it would be exaggerating to suppose their quota equal to that of the State: that is to say 50 million for the two.

Should a third sum of 25 million be attributed to public benevolence? So be it: the result will be that, on an expense that cannot be evaluated in a good system of public education at less than 1,606 million, the State, the communes and public benevolence

would not provide 75 million, or 5 per cent., because it would still be necessary to deduct from these 75 million the school fees paid by the parents. Is it clear, according to this calculation, that neither the State, nor the communes, nor public benevolence put together, can do anything or almost anything for the education of youth? Why are they talking to us about free and compulsory education?

The true payers, those who bear almost the totality of the burden, are the parents and the young people: the first, by the advances of all kinds which they lavish on their offspring; the latter by their work, throughout the duration of their apprenticeship.

Now, what is happening with this endemic misery, against which we cry out for education, and which is itself the greatest obstacle to education? It is very often the case that the family is unable to give the child the food, clothing and other accessories that are essential for attending school and the workshop. Quite to the contrary, it is the family itself that demands the service of the child, and which is the first to exercise over him this system of exploitation which others will continue in its wake, and which will only end with the life of the subject. The consequence is that school is abandoned as soon as possible, long before the young man has furnished his intelligence, often even before it is attended at all; it is in the second place that one chooses the most elementary trades, those that require almost no apprenticeship, often even, as for school, that one abstains from acquiring a profession. No more industry than literature, misery upon misery.

It would therefore be necessary, according to the principle of free and compulsory education, for the State, replacing the poor family, to bear all the costs of educating the children; that moreover, in the not rare cases where the family draws some service from the child, the State should pay the parents an indemnity. Suppose the number of poor children, whose parents are absolutely unable to afford any education, at only one million, at fifty-five centimes per head per day, it will therefore be a sum of more than 200 million a year that it will cost the state. Where are we with it? But this expense will be much greater: for if out of eight million children between the ages of seven and eighteen, we assume only one million to be completely destitute, the other seven million are far from being able, with the sole resources of their parents, to receive the complete education, such as the workers' Democracy demands and is entitled to obtain; I dare say that barely the eighth, a million, would be able, through their families, to obtain the benefit. It is therefore still a more or less considerable subsidy that the State will have to provide to the families, or better still to the primary, higher and professional schools responsible for the instruction, maintenance, food, etc., of the children.: 400, 800, 1,200 million per year! Where do you expect the State to take such sums?

Thus it remains proven, by the simplest calculation, that in the present state of our society, the education of the youth, with the exception of a privileged elite, is a dream of philanthropy; that, like pauperism, ignorance is inherent in the condition of the worker; that this intellectual inferiority of the working classes is invincible; much more, that in a hierarchical political regime, with a capitalist and industrial feudalism, an anarchic

mercantilism, this instruction, in itself desirable, would be a pure loss, even dangerous; and that it is not without reason that the statesmen, while occupying themselves with the education of the people, have always reduced it to simple elements. They have all seen that in a higher degree it would become inharmonious, and, through the obstruction of capacities, a grave danger for society and for labor itself.

So, no hypocrisy, no vain demonstration of popularism. The gentlemen of the Liberal Opposition have too often testified to their antipathy towards socialism to deny their convictions today. With a few million to distribute to teachers, they agree with the Government, which their constitutional mandate is to harass. What they want for the people is not education; it is quite simply a first initiation into the elements of human knowledge, the intelligence of signs, a sort of sacrament of intellectual baptism consisting in the communication of speech, writing, numbers, figures, plus a few formulas of religion and morals. What matters to them is that in seeing these beings whom labor and low wages retain in a forced barbarism, stared at by daily fatigue, bent down to the earth, the delicate natures that bring honor and the glory of civilization, may at least see in these workers doomed to pain the reflection of the soul, the dignity of the conscience and, out of respect for themselves, not have too much to be ashamed of from humanity .

Well! What, in the present state of things, is absolutely and radically impossible, becomes easy in a mutualist system, which, with the just sentiment of the right of the masses, but without the slightest thought of innovation, confining itself to doing what has been done throughout the ages, will only be done with more unity and intelligence.

Here is the whole system in a nutshell:

1. In principle, every head of family must be in a position to provide, through the exchange of his services or products, for the initial expenses of educating his children, from the day of their birth until the age of seven to eight years old. This faculty of the head of the family is guaranteed by the economic reform, with which this is no longer the place to concern ourselves here.

2. From the age of seven until eighteen, the education and instruction of the youth will be continued, either by the parents themselves, at home, if such is their desire; or in special schools, instituted and directed by them and at their expense, if they prefer not to entrust their children to public schools. The greatest freedom for this object is left to the parents and the communes, the State intervening only as an auxiliary, where the family and the commune cannot reach.

3. In the State schools, the principle is that professional instruction must be combined with scientific and literary instruction, consequently the young people, from the ninth year and even earlier, being compelled to manual, useful and productive labor, the expenses of education must be covered, and beyond, by the produce of the pupils.

This is what happens with all the peasants, whose children are employed at an early age in the work of the fields, at the same time as they receive instruction from the village; — what we also see in trades and factories, where apprentices, working without or for

pay, pay for their apprenticeship with their work, while continuing their studies in mathematics, drawing, etc.

Let us admit, in order not to overload this youth, and to maintain a link between the schools and the families, that the latter remain responsible for these three items, *clothing*, *linen* and *shoes*; which will reduce by about a third the work to be demanded of the children, and will bring to the account of the families a sum of 500 millions, that is to say one franc per week and per family.

The Government, either by the organization of the great works that concern it, of which a good number can be carried out by the youth of the schools; either by arrangements made with agricultural and manufacturing operations, shipyards, factories, ports, mines, as well as with heads of industry and trades, is responsible for generalizing the application of this great principle; to deal with companies, contractors, manufacturers and artisans; to receive the price of the work carried out; and, all expenses paid, to distribute the surplus to the pupils, as wages, in proportion to the capacity and services of each.

We understand, without my needing to say it, that the Workers' Associations are called upon to play an important role here. Linked to the public education system, they become both centers of production and centers of education. The supervision of fathers does not abandon the children; the working masses are in daily contact with the young army of agriculture and industry; labor and study, so long and so foolishly isolated, finally reappear in their natural solidarity. Instead of confining itself to a narrow specialty, vocational education comprises a series of works which, taken together, tend to make each pupil a complete workman. Free industry finds its account there. The security of families, that of the State, gain even more. The apprenticeship contract, formed under the protection of public education, finds itself by the power of the new, grand institution, converted in a pact of mutuality between all the fathers of families of various professions, who, so to speak, only exchange their children.

As for the salary to be allocated to this youth, as for the product to be expected from its exercises, what could one find exorbitant in it? There is nothing in all this, I repeat, which is not practiced every day, and fifty-five centimes a day, on the average, does not represent an exorbitant task, any more for young girls from fifteen to sixteen years than for boys of eighteen.

I have said and I maintain that in a system of industrial association, of political federation and of mutualist guarantee, nothing is easier than to organize such a system of education and teaching, which, comprising the scientific and professional instruction, food, laundry and lodging, the whole equivalent to a sum of *sixteen hundred millions* a year, WOULD COST NOTHING either to the families, or to the communes, or to the State. I now add that, under the regime of political authority, of industrial and financial feudalism, of *bohemian* artistic and literary, mercantile anarchy and reciprocal exploitation that prevails everywhere, nothing or almost nothing of all that I have just said is practicable.

Neither the labor nor the subsistence of the families, the first educators, are guaranteed; neither literary and scientific instruction, except in rare cases, can be combined with industrial instruction; nor is large industry and the labors of the State organized with a view to those millions of young laborers, whose lost strength is enormous, and who would deliver their labor so cheerfully and at such low cost.

Are you still surprised that our youth is badly brought up; that the little it learns is worse than complete ignorance; that, repressed in the narrowness of its fragmentary functions, our working class shows itself so unworthy of this beautiful name, and that rather than that of class of laborers, it deserves that of class of mercenaries! Hateful contradiction! We have eight million young people between the ages of seven and eighteen, whose produce, valued at 10 centimes to 1 fr. per day, counting only three hundred days of work in the year, would cover and beyond the 12 or 1,300 million that they would cost the Country, leaving the families to bear only the cost of clothing, linen and shoes. And these young people, we don't know how to take advantage of them; and because, for lack of knowing how to take advantage of them, we do not know where to take the expenses that their education demands, we abandon them to the exploitation of their unfortunate parents, or, what is worse, to the great speculators and monopolistic industry, and ignorance drives them back into the limbo of mendicity and crime.

Hence that hideous leprosy of the ignorance of the masses, which the most consistent of our statesmen have come to regard as of providential necessity, and which the high exploitation would perhaps be sorry to see cured; — hence those institutions of charity, which one would think were invented expressly to give inferiors just the degree of knowledge that conscientious obedience demands; hence finally the impotence and hypocrisy of liberalism. Our deputies of the Opposition ask for 6 million 250,000 fr. credit to be added to the budget of 1865 to carry out studies (!) on *free and compulsory education*, to establish in the meantime girls' schools, and to give some encouragement to schoolmasters. Another time, if their request is granted, they will solicit new millions for *trials*. How all this testifies to a true democratic feeling! Above all, what good faith, what devotion, what science of society in this *free and compulsory* education!... Well! Gentlemen, have the courage of your doctrines, and do justice to this Government, which, in the naivety of its philanthropy anticipating your wishes, does things perhaps even better than you would like. The question of democratic teaching is beyond you: you have neither a lofty enough heart nor a vigorous enough conscience. What would you do, staunch enemies of socialism, of mutualism, of guarantism, of federalism, implacable adversaries of workers' candidacies, what would you do with these eight million young people in whom it is a question of developing, through an integral education, as Fourier said, the greatest number of aptitudes and to create the greatest capacity possible? Will you tell them that their hopes are vain; that there is no place on earth for so many skillful people, artistic workers, of industrious scholars, of workers who can do without interpreters and lawyers? Would you dare to admit that in your half-party system of

hierarchy and anarchy, of coalition and competition, you need, and in large numbers, laborers, men-machines, proletarians? Back then! You are not made to represent us.

Chapter VIII.

That the guarantee of labor and exchange is incompatible with the unitary system. — How political centralization and capitalist and mercantile feudalism are allied against the emancipation of the workers and the progress of the middle classes. — Free trade conspiracy.

I. — In the second part of this work, Chap. XIV, XV and XVI, we have shown, and more than one opportunity has since offered to reiterate the remark, that political centralization has as its main corollary and counterweight mercantile anarchy, that is to say the negation of any economic right, of any social guarantee, in a word, of any mutuality. As much as governmental unitarism shows itself to be incompatible with the freedoms of 89, always promised and never granted, just so much it reconciles marvelously with speculative agiotage, the insolidarity of the producers and the coalitions of the monopoly. The economies of the system have understood this; it is the basis on which they based the hope of a new aristocracy. — To you, the exploiters of the masses, the adversaries of equality and of the middle classes, would gladly say to the prince; to you, the political realm; to us, the empire of interests!

One would only have an imperfect idea of what I called, at the beginning of this third part, *Political incompatibilities*, if I did not show that they have their development in what capitalist industrial exploitation brazenly calls its *liberties!* I choose for this demonstration the great conquests of the new feudalism: free trade and the freedom of coalitions.

The Opposition has allowed the debates on the commercial treaty to pass without once asking to speak: it limited itself to voting silently with the majority against M. Pouyer-Quertier and his adherents. It is convinced *in petto*, this brave Opposition, that the Imperial Government, in signing the treaty of commerce, has deserved well of the country, and envies it this initiative; but it would have cost it to make its feelings known in this respect. A Deputy of the Opposition would think he was betraying his mandate by occasionally doing justice to the Government with the same energy that he accuses it of: such are the seekers of popularity, such is their policy.

I have regretted that the Emperor, before embarking on a path that he did not know, in which his religion could not fail to be deceived, had not thought fit to put on the agenda of France as a whole this question of free trade, by proposing a great contest, the published documents of which would have served to form the opinion of the country and that of the Legislative Body. I would have undertaken to treat this subject, as I did for *taxation*, *literary property*, the *federative principle*, the *law of war* and the *treaties of 1815*; and my heart tells me that between the charlatanism of some, the presumption of others and the ignorance of almost everyone, I might have succeeded in sparing a nation a political act that posterity will appreciate with the same severity as all those of the same kind, which ill-advised advisers made their governments adopt in other epochs.

It would be impossible for me, for the present, to embrace in all its extent a subject as vast as that of international trade. Such a question would be completely beyond my scope. All I want to do today is to bring to light this curious fact, which few people expect, namely, that the theory of free trade, under which the treaty of commerce was prepared, advised and, in the end, signed, is an economic lie, and that this is what results from the most recent revelations of the Government. I would be happy if this thesis, of which I am only giving the substance here, and which has never been well understood, were developed by a writer with more leisure than I have, who would rely on all the documents, figures, statistical facts, political and philosophical considerations that it contains.

Of all the rights of man and of the citizen, the one to which the working classes hold the most, and with good reason, since on it depend their subsistence and their liberty, is the *right to work*; let us speak more correctly, if we do not want to be corrected, it is the GUARANTEE OF LABOR. Now, do you know, workers, why the Constituent Assembly, in 1848, refused to give you this guarantee? For a very simple reason, which you will judge: it is that, in order to guarantee labor for the workers, it would have been necessary to be able to guarantee the placement of products to the bosses, which the Assembly, which any unitary, anti-mutualist government, allied to mercantile and anarchic feudalism, is radically incapable of doing. Guarantee, I tell you, to the manufacturing and commercial bourgeoisie, working for the internal market or for export, the investment of its goods, and it will in turn guarantee you labor and wages: it will ask for nothing better. Otherwise, your right to work is a dream, a real causeless effect, and the power that would ensure such a commitment in your name would be lost.

Well, something which no one seems to have suspected, this double guarantee of labor and exchange, so precious to the master as well as to the workman, had formerly received a first outline, in what we called in political economy, *balance of trade* or *protectionist system* expressed by CUSTOMS.

In a republic, the protection given by the State to the labor and commerce of the country, is a contract of guarantee by virtue of which the citizens promise each other reciprocally for their sales and purchases, preference, all other things being equal, over that of foreigners. This preference is inherent in republican right; with all the more reason, allow me to make the observation in passing, to federative republican right. Without that, what would be the point of being a member of a republic? What attachment would the citizen have to an order of things where he would see his labor, the products of his industry, insultingly disdained for those of foreigners?

In monarchical states, the principle is different, although the result is the same: it is the Sovereign, Emperor or King, head of the political family, natural protector, who gives their guarantee to commerce and to labor. Until 1859, under all reigns, this thought had been dominant in France. The King, to whom the Constitution gave the right to make *treaties of alliance and commerce*, knew that by reserving a protection, a customs tax, in favor of the industry, agriculture and commerce of the nation, he only stipulated in the

name of all interests, as an organ of their mutuality. It was a first milestone in economic progress, the cornerstone of future guarantism, of future freedom and equality.

Customs, I know, is a most inconvenient establishment; enormous abuses were introduced there: where do we not find some? How many times have customs duties only been instruments of monopoly, the secret of the most illicit fortunes! How often has the protection intended for labor and commerce been changed in favor of backward industries or absurd enterprises? Before making a weapon of free trade, monopoly exploited protection: let us not be afraid to proclaim it loudly. Our enemies are everywhere, fronting on all sides and pulling out all the stops: this is what makes the solution of the economic problem so difficult. I therefore do not come to defend customs, which labor no longer needs. I only want to justify its intention, but the abolition of customs is not, as one would almost like to believe, the last word of science; and I repeat, against interested calumnies, that the aim, the primary thought of this institution was to create between producers and traders a bond of guarantee, the immediate consequence of which was the guarantee of work for the workers. Those who made the treaty of commerce dare they say that they were the least concerned about this grave interest.²³

A consequence of this mutual protection, in a country where it would have been applied with intelligence, is that the collective of producers and traders, it is that the State itself, finally, by guaranteeing the preference of sales and purchases, would have been led, in their respective interests, to guarantee themselves also, with the best qualities, the lowest possible prices, consequently the reduction to the minimum of the State expenses or taxes, bank charges, exchange, commission, of circulation, etc., which, in present-day France, form at least 25 percent of the cost-price.

Thus, the guarantee of labor for the workers; guaranteed opportunities for teachers; reduction of taxes on the side of the State and public services; reduction of interest to be collected, in all forms, by capital, on the production and circulation of commodities: here is a first glimpse of what the idea of protection contained, what was at the bottom of this ugly thing, customs.

²³ "Penal Code, Art. 417. — Whoever, with the intention of harming French industry, smuggles directors, clerks, or workers of an establishment into a foreign country, shall be punished by imprisonment of six months to two years, and a fine of 50 to 300 francs.

"Art. 418. — Any director, clerk, or factory worker who communicates to foreigners or French people residing in a foreign country, secrets of the factory where he is employed, shall be punished by imprisonment and a fine of 500 to 20,000 francs. — If these secrets have been communicated to French people residing in France, the penalty shall be imprisonment of three months to two years, and a fine of 16 to 200 francs."

We move so quickly today that it's quite possible that we forgot to repeal these two articles, which have become useless since the Treaty of Commerce. However, the intention behind them is unequivocal; how is it that we so quickly passed over this prohibition?

So when free-trade economists, academics, professors, state counsellors, journalists, some even ex-manufacturers, supported by the English Bright and Cobden, proposed to Napoleon III to settle, by his autocratic authority, a question of national interest and mutual right, a question that fell within imperial jurisdiction only insofar as the Emperor had to consider himself the father and protector of all, His Majesty would have been justified in replying: "Well! What, I have only one means of arriving at this guarantee of labor which the republic could not give to the workmen; and this means, you speak of depriving me of it, for the glorification of a vain system! In the same way, to arrive at the reduction of the tax, to tame the fisc and to curb its invasive humor, I have only one resource, it is to oppose to its demands the need to keep the cost price of our products as low as possible: and you encourage me to let go of the budget, by breaking between the departments, the municipalities and industry, this powerful bond of mutuality! With regard to this financial feudalism, finally, which dominates the Power and makes us all tremble, we also have only one way, which is to learn to do without its services by practicing more and more this salutary mutuality: and you speak of further aggravating this burden of capitalism, by associating foreign interest with it! But what will become of us when, all solidarity extinguished, the national economy plunged into anarchy, everyone will have put themselves on the rise; when the landlord will double his rents; when the worker will demand a wage increase; when the banker raises the rate of his discount; when the merchant increases the price of his goods; when I myself, finally, I will be obliged to raise the salary of the civil servant and the loan of the soldier?... Guarantee me labor for our millions of workmen; guarantee me a fair salary for this labor, guarantee me the easy collection of a tax of two billion and soon five hundred million; secure the Empire against this aristocracy which will soon swallow us all up; and I will do what you ask of me; I will deliver to your experimentation the great industries of the country, agriculture, viticulture, extraction, construction, breeding, etc. I agree to become, for a few years only, the responsible publisher for your free trade."

It was not with this reserve that the Imperial Government seized on the question: it is true that no one was found among its servants and friends to show it the truth through the sophisms that assailed it. The suggestions of envy have been taken for justice; we have disregarded, denied, in the name of liberty, economic solidarity, the foundation of liberty and of the State; the last link that united the working class to the bourgeois class was broken; the field of operation of cosmopolitan agiotage, of speculation without a homeland, has been widened; we were not even insensitive to the pleasure of doing the thing we should be most suspicious of, since it was of all the most agreeable to England. So, as expected, the budget has not stopped rising; life has become more and more expensive and difficult. But the government could say, and this would be its glory, if it was necessary to believe its imprudent counsellors, that it protects from now on no one, neither the workers, nor the masters, nor national labor, nor national commerce, nor industry, nor agriculture, nor even the national territory, since it depends only on foreign capitalists,

friends of free trade, to acquire the finest plots. And reciprocally everyone, seeing himself abandoned to his own strength, will be able to say that he no longer clings to his nationality. What do the departments now care about a France to which they will owe nothing? One of two things must occur: either they will support, by their sole effort, foreign competition, and in this case they will be indebted only to themselves; or else they will succumb to competition, and then they will be able to accuse that France to which fate has attached them.

But let us know what this famous theory of free trade consists of, to which, by the strangest of fortunes, it was given to prevail, in France, under the reign of a Bonaparte and for the benefit of England, over the economic reason of the country, and possibly on the mass of French interests.

II. — The free trade evangelists, Cobden and Bastiat, argue in substance:

1. As to the *principle*: That all this mutuality is useless, that neither producers and consumers, nor workers and employers, nor the good faith of transactions and public morality, nor the security of the Nation and the State, require it; — that a system of mutual guarantees having as its object the neutralization of the unfortunate effects of competition, monopoly, property, use of machinery, credit, taxation, etc., would be a disguised obstacle, worse than the inconveniences to which we would propose to bring remedy, worse than the customs; that the safest thing for everyone is therefore to promise nothing, guarantee nothing, neither labor, nor exchange, nor quality, nor cheapness, nor probity, but to stick to liberty pure and simple, full and complete, and to act according to its interests; that it is not Right, Justice, Morality, Religion, Police, which is equal to Liberty, anarchic liberty, absolute liberty.

2. As to the *effects* of free trade, either with regard to the labor of the workers, the outlets for trade, the danger to be run for less advanced industries, or in relation to the outflow of cash and the financial crises always and closely followed by the commercial crises; free trade theorists claim that all these apprehensions are chimerical; that ultimately the products are not exchanged for cash, but for products; that if, between two nations, A and B, which trade with each other, there is a metallic balance to be paid by A this year, next year this balance will have to be paid by B; that, in fact, the more money abounds in a country, the more its relative value, as a commodity, diminishes; the more, consequently, it tends of itself to flow back towards the countries which lack it, that is to say, to be exchanged for commodities; that thus the balance is carried out, without deficit for anybody; finally, that not all climates are suitable for the production of any kind of wealth, it would be the worst calculation for a nation to persist in producing dearly things for which nature has not equipped it, and which come to it from elsewhere at a lower price.

Such is, reduced to its most concise and freed from the declamations that obstruct it, the theory of free trade. It is neither less nor more than what I have just said, and it could not be neither less nor more: since if it made the slightest reservation against the absolute

liberty of the individual in favor of the social, the national, the theory would no longer exist.

Free trade, *even without reciprocity*, do you hear? that is to say, with all the inequalities that nature and fortune, capital and poverty, civilization and barbarism, have accumulated among men. Certainly, I cannot believe that Mr. Bright and Mr. Cobden, in their conferences with Napoleon III, pushed their principle so far. *Without reciprocity!* there was enough to rouse the imperial good sense tenfold.

I warned that I would not enter into a long developed discussion of free trade: the goal that I propose to myself at the moment is not that. I limit myself, after having summarized in one page this famous theory, to indicating as summarily the elements of its refutation.

The free trade theory, considered in its philosophical formula, is very widespread today, it reigns elsewhere still than in political economy, and tends to substitute itself wherever it occurs for the principles of Morality, Law and of Art itself. This theory, radically false, is the same as that so well known and so discredited, that of *Art for Art's sake, Love for Love's sake, Pleasure for Pleasure, War for War's sake, Government for the Government's sake*, etc., all formulas which, disregarding morality, science, right, the laws of logic, of nature and of the mind, come down to this one: *Liberty for Liberty's sake*.

No, I say, it is not true that Liberty can, by itself, supply the laws of Conscience, the principles of Science and Taste; in other words, it is not true that Truth, Reason, Duty and Right, Love and Taste are resolved in this single term, Liberty. Intelligence is something other than Liberty; Love and Art, something other than Liberty; Society and Justice, *a fortiori*, something other than Liberty. Of these various principles indispensable to the social order, none is given in Liberty, although all require it; and that is why it is not enough that either exchange, or labor, or credit, or property be free, in order for them to be declared equitable, and still less guaranteed. I affirm, as much as a man of the world, Liberty; I want it and claim it; but it is not enough for me. I claim, moreover, in my economic relations with my fellow men, Truth, Mutuality and Right, just as I want in Art, taste and reason; in industry, utility; in science, of exactitude and method. Now, these conditions, without which Liberty does not exist for me, any more than Art, Philosophy, Science, etc., are precisely what is lacking in the *free trade*.

If the principle of free trade is, *a priori*, demonstrated false by philosophy and morality, the factual considerations alleged in its favor are equally false and controverted.

It is not true that a nation should abandon the industries that produce the least for it, to stick to those that produce the most for it. This would be giving up three quarters of human labor. All production has its starting point and its material in the ground; but the soil is not only distinguished according to aptitudes; it also diversifies according to its fertility. And since the land had to be divided among its inhabitants, it is necessary, by virtue of political and social solidarity, that the most favored protect, in some way, from the superiority of their cultures and their industries the less fortunate.

It is not true, on the other hand, that inequalities of climate and terrain can, over time, by dint of capital, labor and genius, compensate for each other, as the international competition demanded by the free traders supposes. The causes of wealth are changeable; industry changes in its turn, and the social milieu, by its variations, incessantly affects the market, production itself. Today to one the palm of the exchange; tomorrow to another: to make this mobility, this antagonism, an international law, instead of providing for it by a pact of mutuality, isn't this, as I was saying earlier, seeking competition for competition's sake, exchange for exchange's sake, instead of a universal guarantee, to institute a humanitarian agiotage?

It is not true, as the economists falsely claim, that coined gold and silver are a commodity like any other, behaving in the same way as others on the market, so that the cash balance to pay to one nation by another may be an indifferent thing: no, that is not true, the financial crisis that we have been witnessing for six months, a crisis that has caused the discount rate to rise from six to eight per cent, and which has ended up by transforming itself from a financial crisis into a commercial and industrial crisis, demonstrates this.

It is not even true, understand this well, gentlemen of free trade, that even in the case of perfect reciprocity, I mean where the balance of trade would be equally favorable to both parties, the advantages are equal; account must be taken of the plus or minus, either of useful value given by nature, or of exchangeable value created by labor and which exists in products.²⁴

It is not true, finally, and this negation results from the preceding ones, that, among the people who would have constantly the favorable balance, all is profit and increase in wealth: alongside the enriched exporters and their adherents, there will always exist, and inevitably, a mass of workers, their compatriots, ruined or impoverished.

Such are the principal propositions that I would have liked to develop with extent against the jugglery of free trade; unfortunately, this is not the place for me. Besides, what good is it? The promoters of the commercial treaty are as convinced of their truth as I am; it is enough, for the moment, that I prove, by their confessions and by the declarations of the Government, that their theory is an economic lie.

When M. Pouyer-Quertier came, in the last session of the Legislative Body, to criticize the commercial treaty, to establish, with mountains of figures, the enormity of our deficit, when he showed that in this treaty, worthy counterpart of those of 1786 and 1717, all was profit for England, all disadvantage for us; how, as imports increased on our side, labor, and the sum of wages, and the security of the workmen diminished at the same time; the

²⁴ See on this subject, *Catéchisme de l'Économie politique*, by M. DUMESNIL-MARIGNY, Paris, Guillaumin, 1863; *Les Libre Échangistes et les Protectionnistes conciliés*, by the same; — *Équilibre économique*, by JULES LE BASTIER, Paris, Jules Renouard, 1861; *Désorganisation et Matérialisme*, by the same. The writings of these two authors seem to me to leave something to be desired in terms of clarity and certainty of demonstrations; but the facts cited by them deserve all the attention and are of the greatest interest.

camp was alarmed, the faces were pitiful. What would become of governmental infallibility if the situation denounced by M. Pouyer-Quertier continued for another year or two?... So we did not mock the old prejudice concerning the balance of trade: what would one not have given to have it at least equal? We did not treat the great Colbert, founder of French industry and commerce, creator of all the magnificence of Louis XIV, as of little genius, for having surrounded this nascent industry with so much protection. We weren't kidding with these huge outflows of cash. What was the answer to the deputy from Rouen? Was he told that the lack of reciprocity which was betrayed at every moment in the applications of the Treaty was an absurd grievance; that reciprocity was nothing, that freedom was everything; that what made the excellence of the principle on which the Treaty had been based was precisely that it had been able to exempt the contracting parties from all reciprocity?... Then, going into detail, was it pointed out to M. Pouyer-Quertier that he was wrong to worry about the balance that we might have to pay in specie, since in the end *products are exchanged for products*, and that, even if we had to allow mortgages to be taken on us or cede some portion of territory, as unitary Italy does, we could be certain that sooner or later the specie would return? Was it replied to him, when he displayed the sad state of our navy, that this very special inferiority, too well noted, far from being an evil for us should rather be considered a good, since it followed that the freight was more expensive for a French ship than for an English ship, and England placing itself at our service for this purpose, we were justified in regarding this country as our tributary?...

No, none of this, none of what the theoreticians allege in their books, has been opposed to the worthy representative of French commerce. Care was taken not to bring such arguments before the Legislative Body. The majority would have risen in indignation. We have diminished, as much as we could, the distressing facts cited by the orator; the accuracy of some of his calculations has been disputed; finally, passing sentence for the years 1859-1862, it was said that the future would change relations; that we did not yet possess all the documents for 1863, but that, according to the facts already known, there was every reason to hope that, this year 1864, the balance would become favorable to us.

That is to say that, in all this discussion about the Commercial Treaty, a discussion in which, independently of the size of the interests, it was a question, something much more serious, of a doctrine, the doctrine of free trade, not a word borrowed from this doctrine has been alleged by its defenders; on the contrary, protectionist considerations have been used to defend it; we talked about its future results as we would have done about those of customs! It has been said that France, considered as an industrial power, recognizes no rival; that at labor as in war, she would shine, when she wanted, in the first rank; that she herself had no idea of the immensity of her resources; that her great fault was to mistrust her genius; that if, in the beginning, she had weakened on some points, she would soon regain all her advantages; that then, instead of accusing the initiative of the Government

of imprudence, she would thank her wisdom for having rid herself of all these obstacles, etc., etc.

It was the time for our patriotic deputies to exclaim: Who are we fooling here? What! We are supposed to be united with England by a treaty of free trade, and we reason from protection! To those who reproach the Government for the enormous disproportion of our imports to our exports, to those who demonstrate to them that the balance is two or three hundred million against us, they reply: Patience! you will have it in your favorable turn!... But do our patriotic deputies, with their verbiage, hear a word on economic questions? Others tend the net; as for them, they are responsible for clouding the water. Talk to these great politicians about the principle of *nationalities*: All in good time. It is not defined any more than it is seen, but they will tell you about it for three hours without spitting or drinking. Is it national labor, national industry, national guarantees, of all what in a nation really constitutes nationality, for them it is materialism, selfishness, chauvinism: they no longer understand it. Oh! England is well served by the French press and the French tribune. Our Opposition speakers are at the level of our writers. Let them cross the strait; they will be received as friends and brothers.

Certainly, the Government of the Emperor can boast of having been more fortunate than logical. If we can refer to the documents provided by the administration, the year 1863 did not resemble the previous ones; the year 1864, they flatter themselves in advance, will resemble them even less. Not only did the figure of our exports for 1863 exceed that of our exports for 1862; it still exceeded, and by far, that of our imports. So we have *picked ourselves up*. The Government, which the predictions of M. Pouyer-Quertier made tremble, is out of peril. The balance has returned to our favor. It is to us that the foreigner will have to pay a balance, which will not be less, we are assured, than 255 million.

“The total of goods *imported for our consumption*, in 1863, was 2 billion 367 million, against 2 billion 198 million, in 1862, and 2 billion 442 million in 1861.

“The total of *French goods exported* was, in 1863, 2 billion 622 million. In 1862 it stood at 2,243 millions, and in 1861, at 1,926 millions.”

“Thus, in 1863, contrary to what had happened in 1861, which had served so well as a text for protectionist declamations, our exports far exceeded our imports: here it is, despite the partial closure of the American market, arriving at 2 billion 622 million.”

The administration triumphed over these figures: it did not seem to suspect that they were, from the point of view of principle, the condemnation of the commercial treaty. Note, however, that the English continue, more than ever, to congratulate themselves on the good effects of this treaty. No doubt, more reasonable than we are, they do not want to have a favorable balance, much less to enjoy reciprocity. Note further that it is just at the time when, according to the official accounts of the customs, the metallic species should return to us by the hundreds of millions, that we are in the grip of this financial crisis that

shakes the economic world to its foundations. But I hold the administration to be truthful: what would it reply to M. Pouyer-Quertier, if returning to the charge, he made this speech to it:

“Oh! We are therefore no longer at the theory of free trade, since we rejoice so wholeheartedly, true protectionists that we are, that the balance is in our favor. Well, let us reason in this order of ideas, from which the Government of the Emperor would have done well never to deviate, and let us push the reasoning to its final consequence.

“To arrive at these formidable totals, 2 billion 622 million goods exported, against 2 billion 367 million goods imported, in all 4 billion 989 million exchanges; — to *support the British competition so valiantly*, as you like to brag yourselves, how did we go about it? This is what needs to be clarified now.

“First the Government freed from all duties or considerably reduced the raw materials intended to supply *our national labor*. This resulted in a deficit for the Treasury, which had to be covered by other receipts. So far we do not see that there has been much profit for the nation. Then, the Government having made the first sacrifices in favor of the Treaty, it was the turn of the producers and exporters to effect their relief. We will, without a doubt, have renewed the machines, improved the processes, multiplied the tests; wages have been reduced; we were satisfied with lesser profits; reductions were sought on discount, exchange, commission, freight, etc. What was the amount of these sacrifices and favors? How many years like 1863 will it take for us to cover it? To the premature advances of the contractors, were added the sufferings of the employees: what compensations, on the more or less real benefits of this immense traffic, will be allocated to them? They have already united for the rise, to the great displeasure of the bosses: do you think that a little protection for everyone would not have been preferable? Comparing the two situations of 1858 and 1863, is it certain that our international trade, whose quantities have just taken such a formidable increase, leaves us a proportional profit? Because if, as one might expect, the profit was the same, the result would be glorious: we would have worked more in order not to earn more. Supposing further that our current foreign trade profits are higher than they were five years ago, are they worth don't you think a little protection for everyone would have been preferable? Comparing the two situations of 1858 and 1863, is it certain that our international trade, whose quantities have just taken such a formidable increase, leaves us a proportional profit? Because if, as one might expect, the profit was the same, the result would be glorious: we would have worked more in order not to earn more. Supposing further that our current foreign trade profits are higher than they were five years ago, are they worth the extra trouble we took, the more serious risks we ran? Out of eighty-two articles listed in the table, there are seventeen of which the issues, instead of increasing, have fallen together by thirty-two millions. Shouldn't the excess profit obtained by the sixty-five others also compensate those? No solidarity of this kind exists among us between the various industries: far from it, the spirit of the treaty of commerce would rather be to erase every trace of it. Should

the infirm be allowed to perish? It would diminish us as a production organism. Will we impose new taxes on their behalf? It would be protection. — And our navy, where is it? Will we drop it, for want of remunerative freight? But we hold on to our navy, and a navy is impossible without a merchant marine. So, we will add to the freight demanded by the English ships a certain percent bonus to the native ships, so that they can support the struggle. But that is protection. We will pay a premium to our fishermen: also protection. Even if the success, such as it is, of 1863 could guarantee us that of the following years. But nothing is more daily than trade; the advantage obtained this time may be lost next year, so that, without speaking of unemployment, oversupply, overproduction, crises and bankruptcies, we live, solely because of competition, in perpetual alarm.”

This is what M. Pouyer-Quertier and his friends would be entitled to object to and what should be answered, before congratulating, as we do today, the results of the trade treaty. And when we would have provided all these clarifications, what would we have proven? Only one thing: it is that the French people are a people of resources; that their industry is marvelous, their resignation even greater; that there is no rashness from which they cannot, through devotion, deprivation and genius, redeem themselves; but by no means that the theory of free trade is a truth, still less that this vast system of import and export can bring happiness to a people. Quite the contrary, it is proven, by the example of England and Belgium, that if trade and the export industry are for a certain number of capitalists and entrepreneurs, the source of large and rapid fortunes, they are at the same time, for the working classes, the cause of the most profound misery and the most irremediable servitude.

III. — A few more words on this subject, and I will conclude.

Free trade, like *free labor*, *free competition*, and a host of other things that it is fashionable today, in certain circles, to call *free*, can be taken in two very different senses. Either it is, in fact, a question of the liberty of trade, surrounded by all the guarantees of sincerity, mutuality and equality that economic right demands, and of which we have spoken previously in the second part of this work; in this case, it is clear that the liberty of trade thus practiced can only be fair, useful, fruitful, absolutely irreproachable; it is hardly necessary to add that we are, to the highest degree, free traders. Or else, one only hears talk, with the economists of the English school, of exchange made *ad libitum*, in complete license, outside of any reserve of right, of mutuality, equality and security: in this case, it is no less obvious that such traffic, traffic of surprise, anarchic and full of bad faith, is only a gross lure, which any honest economist concerned with the interests of his country will repel with indignation. This way of understanding free trade is the one we reject and fight with all our might; we have given some of the reasons for this, which we will recall in a few lines.

The effects of trade *ad libitum*, or anarchic trade, devoid of all guarantees, must be studied from two different points of view: first, according to whether the goods exchanged by the two nations will be in respectively unequal quantities, and that one having more

delivered than received, more exported than imported shall receive from the other a balance in cash; or second, depending on whether the quantities exchanged having been the same, the balance will be in equilibrium, and that there will be no balance to be paid by anyone.

The first of these two cases, that of the inequality of deliveries giving rise to a cash balance, is the only one with which we have dealt up to the present, as we have been able to judge from the last discussion of the Legislature. Everyone, opponents and supporters of the Commercial Treaty, representatives and ministers, men of the Power and of the School, understood perfectly what would be serious for French interests if there was a constantly unfavorable balance. Financial and monetary crisis, purchase of precious metals, mortgages taken by foreigners on the national territory, are the least consequences which were to result from it. So, in the face of the alarming facts denounced by M. Pouyer-Quertier, the free trade lie could not hold. All sophisms have been forgotten; and we had no rest until, on the basis of official statistics, we thought we could say to the country: be reassured; we will have to receive this very year a balance of 255 million in cash!... Neither the prudence of the Power nor bourgeois criticism have ever gone beyond that.

All is not said however, because the cash of our banks will have been preserved, even increased; and from the fact that, on both sides of the strait, the mass of traders would have lost nothing, or even would have made profits, it would not follow that the situation of the country would not have become worse.

Whoever says FREE TRADE, in the sense in which this word is used by the anarchic school, naturally says, and in the same sense, *free competition*: these two expressions can be considered as synonyms. This is not all: to free trade and free competition are added, by the law of analogies and the force of consequences, and always according to the same negative definition of liberty, *free industry, free credit, free culture, free property, free mortgage*, etc. All these categories of liberty can be summed up in a single formula, which will be *free political economy*, that is to say anti-legal, anti-mutualist, anti-social.

We know the good and bad effects of free competition practiced from people to people, on the largest scale; we have seen, and daily history testifies, that it is manifested by differences, which means balances of 200 to 300 million, proportionate loans, cessions of territory, dragging in their train subjugation, disinheritance, denationalization. In France, so as not to leave our own country, the high bank is held mainly by foreigners: English, Dutch, Belgians, Germans, Swiss, Jews, etc.; the best of our properties in Touraine, Burgundy, Bordeaux, etc.; our most precious vintages have also passed into the hands of foreigners. The French people, working class and middle class, will soon be at home only farmers and wage-earners.

And, indeed, just as free trade or free competition implies as corollaries, free industry, free credit, free speculation, free coalition, free property; likewise, *big commerce* and big competition, organized by international free trade, bring about *big industry, big banking,*

big companies, big interests, big speculation, big culture, big property: what you can summarize by this formula: free CAPITALIST-INDUSTRIAL-MERCANTILE-PROPRIETARY FEUDALISM.

A few figures, a simple calculation will give you the secret of this frightening transformation, so often denounced for twenty-five years.

Under what conditions can a country feed the largest number of inhabitants, providing everyone with the greatest possible amount of well-being? Do you know it, brave wage-earners, who will never own an inch of land, and who clap their hands at the words of *free trade* as well as that of nationality? Have you even thought about it?

The answer is easy, and just on its statement, you will not doubt its certainty: *it is when everyone is a proprietor, when fortunes are most equal, and when everyone labors.*

I do not believe that a single economist, not even an aristocrat, doubts the truth of this proposition. Now follow my reasoning.

Present-day France has approximately 54 million hectares of surface area.

Of these 54 million hectares, there are approximately:

Workable land	21,000,000 hectares
Vineyards and vegetable gardens	2,777,000
Meadows	4,834,000
Various crops	1,000,000
Moors, pastures, heathers	7,800,000
Woods, forests	8,500,000
Rivers, lakes, streams, pools, canals, etc.	213,800

A family of landowning peasants, cultivating with their own hands, and composed on the average of four to five persons, can live comfortably on a property thus composed.

Arable land	3 hect. 0 ares
Vineyards and vegetable gardens	30
Meadows	54
Various crops	12
Share of waters and forests, moors, heaths, etc.	96
	<hr/>
Together	4 hect. 92 ares

In a nutshell, a family of farmers, made up of four to five people, will live comfortably on a property of approximately 5 hectares in area. It will find in this exploitation, in addition to the contribution to be paid to the State, a supplement of foodstuffs which will serve it with the industrial products, sheets, linen, cutting tools, furniture, pottery, etc., of which the agricultural household is made up: what we will estimate, with tax, one-third of consumption.

From this, we find, that the population of France, under this system of small property and universal labor, could be 9 millions of agricultural families, winegrowers, etc., giving

together 40 million inhabitants; plus a third of this number for the industrial population, civil servants, the army, etc., or 13,500,000; in all 53 million 500,000 people for the whole of France. Many people claim that France would feed twice that.

Now, how far is the current population of the Empire from reaching this figure? — About 16 million.

What is the cause of this deficit? — The cause, as I said just now, is that the landowners are in the minority, that fortunes are very unequal, and that too many people do not labor, or are engaged in unproductive labor. The cause is *big competition, big industry, big banking, big companies, big speculation, big property*, in a word capitalist, mercantile, industrial and proprietary FEUDALISM, to which we leave complete liberty to to develop at the expense of the middle and working classes, and which at this time is working to generalize throughout Europe and on the face of the globe, through free trade.

We have just seen that, to provide a comfortable living for a peasant family of four or five people, and also to provide them with the means to pay for the various industrial products required for their well-being, with taxes, 3 hectares of arable land, 30 ares of vines, 50 of meadow, etc., were sufficient, in all nearly 5 hectares. — This territorial area, part cultivable, part non-cultivable and abandoned to the public domain, is far from sufficient for a family living on rents, which, consequently, does not labor. In my country, which is perhaps not one of the best, but which is not the worst either, the land rent, net, is about 50 fr. per hectare of arable land: so that to provide a family of small country bourgeois with an income of 5,000 fr., it takes no less than 100 hectares of land, not including the necessary accessories in meadows, brush, pastures, etc., *thirty times* what is enough for a family of working peasants!... Weigh this, democrats who admire free trade: the property necessary for a bourgeois family, living modestly, but only on its income, is to that which the hardworking peasant demands, as 30 is to 1. The rest is commensurate.

The area of built properties, serving to house the entire nation, was estimated, twelve years ago, at 241,842 hectares; that is to say, supposing the number of families at 10 million, 241 square meters per family, an estimate much too low, since, especially in towns, a number of houses are on several floors. A house with an area of 241 meters is a large peasant's house, and if it has one floor, it can pass for a castle. Now, how many families in the aforementioned towns occupy less than 40 square meters!

That is not all: the great proprietor needs avenues, parks, courtyards, backyards, lands, alleys, dead ground: there especially shines the magnificence. A particular individual spends more on this extermination of the soil than a whole canton on its local roads.

According to some statistics, we can estimate the quantity of butcher's meat, charcuterie, poultry, fish and game consumed in France at 900 million kilograms, that is, per person and per year, 22 kilo. 5, or even better, 62 grams (two ounces) per head per day. The prices vary, according to the qualities and the choice of the cuts, from 1 fr. 20 to 3 fr. 60 per kilogram for beef; 90 cent. at 2 fr. 20 for mutton and veal; 1 fr. 40 to 1 fr. 60 pork. Supposing that under a regime of mutual guarantee and equality, the production of

meat was not more considerable, these 62 gr., or half a pound per peasant family per day, would be better than nothing: there would be just enough to grease their soup and rub their bread. But that's not how things are. With us, as in England, in Flanders, in Holland, those who can afford the meat eat large quantities of it, so that if the number of those who take part in the consumption can be increased to 12 million, there are 25 million souls who abstain from it.

It is calculated that 30 million hectoliters of wine are harvested in France, year in and year out. Of this number, 5 to 6 million are converted into eau-de-vie, and as many may be delivered for export. There remain 20 million hectoliters for daily consumption, that is to say 50 liters per head and per year, or if you like better, about one drink per day. Any individual who drinks more than one canon of wine in his day obliges another individual to abstain from it.

Here is roughly what the daily food of the worker in Paris consists of:

Bread, 750 grams	fr. 30 c.
Soup	15
Meat and vegetables	50
Wine, quarter of a liter	20
Coffee	10
	<hr/>
Total	1 fr. 25 c.

Now let's make the menu, not of the millionaire, but simply of the wealthy and modest man:

Lunch: Coffee, cutlet or beefsteak	1 fr. 50 c.
Dinner: Bread	20
Meat, fish, poultry	1 50
Soup	50
Vegetables or salad	75
Dessert	50
Wine	1
Coffee, liqueurs	80
	<hr/>
Total	6 fr. 75 c.

Nothing is easier, as we see, for an ordinary man than to consume, without fatigue, as much as five others: the question is whether he can pay. But that is not the point right now. Is there an economic relationship between this inequality of enjoyment and free trade? To which I reply that no one will have the slightest doubt on this point, provided he reflects on what has just been said in the preceding pages, which we are going to summarize in a few words:

In a democratized society, where land ownership has been made divisible and alienable; where the share in the estates is equal; where the peasant who cultivates pays a higher price for the land than the rentier, who leases it at 2 percent, where, finally, by the equality of civil and political right, there is an energetic tendency to leveling, there remains only one means of preserving parasitism and the inequality of enjoyments, it is to combine together: 1. *centralization*; 2. *taxation* (See above, Ch. I); 3. the *public debt* (*ibid*); 4. the *big monopolies* (financial companies, railways, mines, gas, notaries, stockbrokers, etc.); 5. *economic unrest* or *anarchy*; 6. *liberty from usury*; 7. *free trade*.

As a result, in order to support, I will not say magnificently, but comfortably, 250,000 families, or one million people out of a workforce of 40 million, it will be necessary, at the rate of 10,000 francs on average per family, to deduct from the consumption of the country 2 billion 500 million; — land rent not being sufficient, since it hardly yields more than 50 francs net per hectare, it will be necessary to organize a vast mercantile and industrial feudalism; to create a host of public jobs, sinecures; — the production of cereals will have to be reduced in order to increase that of oats and fodder, i.e. meat, by the same amount, since the quantity produced, of all kinds, will not be enough to provide half a quarter of the inhabitants; it will be necessary to reconstitute large properties, sumptuous estates, where luxury has space and extends at ease; it will be necessary, in a word, to reduce the population, since there will always be too many of them, as it is easy to convince oneself.

Free trade is the mainspring of this machine. Through it, anarchic competition is elevated, in all exchangist countries, to its highest power; petty trade, petty manufacturing, are crushed; the small culture is to a certain extent affected; the middle class annihilated, the working plebs tamed; all this all the more surely, as the last and harshest blow from outside seems the effect of fate and leaves no room for complaint; and that, thanks to the prestige of this word *liberty*, so strangely prostituted, the workers themselves have been made accomplices in their own misfortune (see next chapter).

Thus the inevitability of things leads European societies to a kind of tacit pact which, if not put in order by the perspicacity of public opinion and the vigilance of Governments, could one day be formulated in these terms:

1. A coalition is formed between the great proprietors, great exploiters, contractors, ship-owners and speculators of Europe and the globe, against the associated multitude, in guarantee of the small proprietors, small capitalists, small industrialists, traders, carriers, plowmen, and generally against all the workers, day laborers, laborers, employees or salaried employees, tending, through political and civil equality, economic right and the contract of mutual societies to leveling conditions and fortunes, and consequently to the defeat of the aforesaid great proprietors, great capitalists, etc.

2. The association of small proprietors, small capitalists, etc., having for principle and means of action their protection and mutual guarantee, the coalition of large capitals, large industries, large properties, adopts the contrary principle, insolidarity, or free trade.

3. By virtue of this principle; the price of goods of all kinds is fixed by the allies provisionally at a rate that will make it possible to put an end as soon as possible to the competition of the guarantist associates, and to bring their industries and properties into the great ones.

4. At the same time, the industrial-agricultural specialty will be determined by itself in each region, and will be fixed by common agreement on the kind of production in which it will excel. — Land of inferior quality will be replanted in forests, natural meadows, or given over to common grazing. The coalition regards it as a duty for it to stop the exorbitant population growth by a strong organization of big capital; big industries, big estates, and free trade.

5. After the victory of the coalition, there will be an economic and definitive constitution of society, on the basis of a new hierarchy, which will forever fix the rights, relations and obligations of all, as well as the prices of products. and services, salaries, incomes and dividends, and put an end to revolutions.

When I give free trade this name of coalition, it is understood that I am not accusing the men of Power and the representatives of the aristocracy of capitalist, mercantile and industrial conspiracy: no one, neither in the upper and middle bourgeoisie, nor in the Government, nor even in school, has ever followed the consequences of free trade to the end: the intelligence of those concerned, we have seen by the speeches delivered to the Legislative Body, has never gone beyond what has been called the *balance of commerce*. What I wanted to denounce is the connection of economic facts, from which is born, in the Government and in the aristocracy, a kind of logic or instinct which makes them go to their goal with a certainty which resembles premeditation. But, I repeat, the economic knowledge of this whole world is far from attaining this depth; and if there is one trait that characterizes the upper classes today, it is, as I have shown elsewhere (Part II, ch. ix), the total absence of principles, or, to put it better, the absolute lack of understanding of the ideas that make them move, and the bias of a day-to-day existence.

A final word now on the conduct that the democrats opposed to free trade had to adopt in connection with the Trade Treaty.

According to the Constitution of 1852 and most of those that preceded it, the Head of State *makes commercial treaties*. The Constitution of 1848 took care to repeat it in proper terms. Napoleon III, in signing that of 1860, had therefore only made use of his prerogative. Also M. Pouyer-Quertier, while criticizing the treaty, did not allow himself to ask for its termination; he limited himself to humble remonstrances, begging that we stop on this path if there was still time.

But we, mutualist democrats, what could we have said? No doubt that among our own there is more than one who would have liked to see our ideas, so radical, so clear, produced in the open forum: That the treaty violated the law of guarantee, fundamental, according to us, in the democracy and in public economics; that the government, in interpreting as it had done the imperial prerogative, had misunderstood the meaning of the Constitution;

that it is up to the nation itself, convened in its general councils, its chambers of commerce, its *comitia*, to determine, in agreement with the prince, the conditions of its exchanges with foreign countries; but that one cannot, since 89, recognize in the head of the State a sort of omnipotence over commerce, industry, property, values, wages; finally, that the conduct of the Power was contradictory, since, after having proclaimed the principle of free trade to make the treaty of commerce, it endeavored to justify the aforesaid treaty by arguments borrowed from the system of protection; consequently, that the abrogation of the treaty was demanded.

But notice that such a declaration of principles, supposing that it had not been arrested from the beginning as offensive, would not have escaped an order of the day, which would have declared it incompatible with the established economico-political system. Don't you see, in fact, that everything here is in harmony and works together: centralization and economic anarchy; big budgets and big monopolies; public debt and mortgage debt; liberty of usury and free trade?... His speech delivered, the representative of the mutualist Democracy had only to resign; was it worth applying and taking the oath?...

Post Scriptum. — It is useless, it seems to me, to insist further and to explain in detail how, with the principle of mutuality, the Workers' Democracy intends to solve the problem of international trade, so inappropriately named free trade. It is obvious that where the insurance premium would be reduced to 1/2 or 1/4 percent; where transport by water would be carried out at 1/2 centime per ton and kilometer, those by iron at one and 2 centimes at the most; — where commercial paper would be discounted at 1/2 or 1/4 percent; where agricultural and industrial credit, organized on other principles, would consist chiefly of supplies sold on a long-term basis, not in specie, which would be equivalent to loans at 2 percent; — where the public debt and the current mortgage debt would be extinguished; where the tax would be reduced by half and even by two-thirds; where, by a better understood organization of property, a territory like ours could support nine million agricultural families; where industry would be made interdependent with agriculture; where public education would be reorganized on the principle of child labor, from 9 to 18 years old; where the workers' association would have laid its broad foundations; where governmental centralization finally would have given way to provincial and municipal autonomy; it is evident, I say, that the problem would be solved; protection would exist, where the workers' association would have laid its broad foundations; where governmental centralization finally would have given way to provincial and municipal autonomy; it is evident, I say, that the problem would be solved; protection would exist, where the workers' association would have laid its broad foundations; where governmental centralization finally would have given way to provincial and municipal autonomy; it is evident, I say, that the problem would be solved; protection would exist, *ipso facto*, under the least onerous, most liberal and most effective conditions; Customs would be useless and could everywhere be abolished; and every nation

master at home, sure of itself, would have nothing to fear either from competition or from foreign mortgages.

Chapter IX.

Labor coalitions: an insoluble question in the current economic-political regime. — Curious Phenomenon of Social Contradiction. — Role of the Opposition.

It was the Imperial Government that seized the Legislative Body with the law on coalitions: the initiative had been taken by the Emperor himself in his opening speech. The majority was not very favorable to the project: they felt the danger of touching on burning questions, where, whatever course one takes, the disadvantages always balance the advantages, and the discussion of which only ever leads to trouble and embitterment. However, the majority passed the law: first, because it was the majority, and a majority rarely resists the will of the Power, then, because it imagined, following the example of the Government, that this would please the workers.

In the Opposition, some, they were two, supported the bill, judging it popular; the others, bidding on the Head of State's proposal, proposed the outright repeal of Articles 414, 415 and 416 of the Penal Code. It sounded like an assault between legislators, to see who knew best how to overthrow the social order. It was, as usual, a race to the steeple... for popularity. M. Émile Ollivier was appointed rapporteur for the law and responsible for supporting it at the podium. M. Jules Simon, according to what transpired in the public, had pronounced first for the maintenance of the articles of the Code, which was assuredly the wisest course. Then, suddenly turning around, he decided, in the name of the Opposition, to support the contrary thesis. Moreover, the public has been able to judge, by the prolongation and the disorder of the refutations, what obscurity still reigns over these ambiguous questions, and how important it is that a man, before seeking the legislative mandate, makes sure of the state of his understanding.

Certainly, if our honorable members, before throwing themselves into the debate, had taken the trouble to find out about the question, they could have given the Government a proud lesson in economic right. Penetrating the most secret motives of the law, after having brought out its fundamental flaw, they would have shown, with increasing energy and evidence, its contradictions, its disappointments, and they would have delivered it in shreds to the complaints of the masters and in the common sense of the workers. Unfortunately the Opposition does not know the first word regarding these things: as for keeping a prudent silence, as it had done with regard to the Commercial Treaty, there was no reason to count on it. To abstain, when the Government took the defense of the people in hand! What an attitude for elected Democrats!... So they spoke: we will soon judge them by their speeches. In the meantime, I tell the workers: they can flatter themselves that they have been strangely mystified in this circumstance by the talkers. May this serve as a lesson to them for the future, and teach them never to compromise with Right and Truth.

I. Those of my readers who have never heard of what I called, some twenty years ago, the *economic contradictions*, will doubtless not be sorry if I show them here one of the most curious samples. I only warn them that they owe me at least five minutes of attention: for them it is a matter of following an observation for five or six pages. I will try to make myself as interesting as it is clear.

In 1843, a vast coalition of coal exploiters was formed in the department of the Loire; it produced a great commotion throughout the country, and provoked numerous complaints. Following the example of the proprietary companies, the miners joined together in their turn, and having been unable to obtain the increase in wages that they were seeking, went on strike. What was, in this circumstance, with regard to both, the conduct of the authority? And first of all, what did right say, what did morality prescribe? This is what we will see in the following lines, which I wrote a little later, while the coal coalition was still lasting, in 1845:

“Will the Power intervene to bring back competition between the companies, prevent the cartel, and keep the price of coal low? Art. 419 of the Penal Code seems to make it a duty for it; in reality, it cannot. The coalition, which the public conscience has not hesitated to denounce, a presumable, probable, indubitable coalition, is here covered by a regular association, against which no objection can be raised. The accusation that would be brought would be entirely of intimate meaning, not of certainty; hence it would be arbitrary. Note, in fact, that anarchic competition, which since 89 forms the basis of our economic system, has as its corrective the commercial society, which can very well serve to disguise a coalition, but which is nevertheless something other than a coalition. In the circumstances, how can we affirm, despite the acts, that we are dealing with one rather than the other? Provided there is no disorder, the Power will let it go and watch it go by. What other conduct could it take? Can it prohibit a legally constituted trading company? For the *Réunion des mines de la Loire* is a trading company. Can it force neighbors to destroy each other, by delivering their products, in hatred of each other, at a price lower than that of cost? No one would dare claim it. Can it forbid them to reduce their costs by a common direction? It would be absurd. Can it set a maximum? It would be an attack on the liberty of trade, a violation of the law of supply and demand. If the Power allowed itself one of these things, it would overthrow the established order. The Power cannot therefore take any initiative here; it is instituted to protect equally property, and competition, and association, except the collection of patents, licenses, land contributions, and other servitudes that it has established on the properties. These reservations made, the Power has no right to interfere in the operations of commerce and industry, as long as they do not offend good faith and order, as long as they do not present the characteristics of *coalition* provided for by article 419 of the Penal Code. Society has not given the Power any mandate for this. Social right, or better said economic right, which we would have to invoke here, is not defined; who knows moreover if this economic right would not be precisely the negation of this competition claimed against the Coal Companies by the consumers their

customers, a competition which was not imposed on them either by the law of 1810, which made mineral wealth, buried under the ground, a new kind of property?"

So here is what the true position was. The law of 1810 had created in the department of the Loire a multitude of mineral properties. Tired of being ruined by crazy competition, a certain number of owners form an anonymous company, give themselves a single administration and direction, reduce their costs, reduce the number of their workers, attempt at the same time to reduce wages and, finally, to raise prices — and the public, and the workers cry out. But how did the associated owners violate established right? Not at all, respond here by common agreement all the economists. Between the producers and the consumers of coal no pact has been made that obliges the former to deliver coal to the latter at a fixed price, any more than the latter are obliged to pay the former an invariable price. No such guarantee exists between them: all are governed by the common law, a law full of contingencies, that of *supply* and *demand*. If the coals of the Loire seem too expensive, that the consumers agree to bring some from Alais, Épinac or Grand'Combe; let them bring it from Belgium or England; let them dig new pits. This is their guarantee; that is right; that is the law.

Those of my readers who have understood what I said above, Part II, Ch. IV to IX, regarding the mutualist idea, which today forms the basis of democratic emancipation, as opposed to the anarchic or bourgeois idea, will feel all the better what was, in 1845, in the presence of the coal coalition, the position of the Government. Economic right, then as now, was the very absence of right. However, since it was by virtue of this non-right that the question had to be judged, except for more or less obscure reservations of the Penal Code, I maintain that the extractors of the Loire, although the public conscience rose up, and no doubt with good reason, against their monopoly, were within their rights, and that the Power had nothing to reproach them with.

So that is what is clear. In 1845, after a period of fierce competition, during which the price of coal fell far below what it should have been, the Loire companies merged: immediately people called for a coalition. I was on the spot: in my opinion, if one could not affirm that the merger was a pure coalition, there was a coalition in it. In this respect, and to the extent that I indicate, the public conscience was not mistaken. But this coalition was impossible to seize; one can even and one must say that, with regard to the social milieu in which they acted, the allies were relatively within their rights; they had, so to speak, by doing a thing iniquitous of its nature, put themselves in order; they allowed themselves nothing more than what every merchant does who takes advantage of the security of the monopoly that is momentarily granted to him by circumstances to raise his prices; in a word, they agreed with legality.

Well! It is this double character of fundamental immorality and conventional legality that we surprise in the same fact, the character of immorality coming from an abuse of property and from a coalition against the general interest, and the character of legality coming of free association in an anarchic milieu; it is this double character, I say, that

constitutes the economic contradiction; and I add that as long as anarchy exists, and is considered as the form of economic right, this contradiction is insoluble.

Now let us look at the workers' coalition. I return to my quote.

“But when the miner took it into his head to defend his wages against the monopoly, by going on strike, and to oppose coalition to coalition, it was something else: the Power had the miner shot. And the public to accuse the authority, partial, it was said, sold to the monopoly, etc. — As for me, I confess that this way of judging the acts of authority seemed to me much more sentimental than philosophical, and that I cannot associate myself with it without reserve. Possibly we could have dispensed with killing anyone; it is also possible that more people would have been killed: the fact to be noted here, by the jurist and the economist, is not the number of dead and wounded: that concerns the hospital; it is the very principle of repression. Were the workers within their rights, as we have just seen that the companies were within theirs; and if they were not within their rights, can one say that the Power that drove them back at bayonet point was not within its own? The whole question is there. Those who criticize the authority would have done the same, except perhaps for the impatience of the repression and the unfortunate accuracy of the shooting; they would have repressed, and they could not have done otherwise. And the reason, which one would try in vain to ignore, is, a painful thing, that in this system of anarchic economy the limited partnership is a legal thing, the law of they could not have done otherwise. And the reason, which one would try in vain to ignore, is, a painful thing, that in this system of anarchic economy, the society is a legal thing, the law of *supply* and *demand*, with all its unfair and subversive consequences, a legal thing, while the coalition of workers, followed by the strike, being neither of association, nor of competition, nor of *supply* or *demand*, could not, in any respect, be considered legal.”

It pleased the Legislative Body, in 1864, to legalize what the legislation of 1845 considered illegitimate, namely, coalitions; and it will perhaps be objected that this variation in the legality of the same fact deprives my reasoning of its character of absolute certainty. But, first, I make my reservations about the law of 1864, which I put far below that of 1845, as I will show presently; moreover, I ask the reader to notice that I am reasoning about the workers exactly as I reasoned just now about the companies; that if I reject the right of coalition among these, I also reject it among these; and that the only difference that I make between one and the other, is that the first had to cover their offense by a regular association, while the second invoked no other right or pretext than force. Let me now finish my exposition.

I was therefore saying that the workers of Saint-Étienne and Rive-de-Gier, who in 1845, under the impulse of a feeling of justice which I do not deny, united and went on strike, acted in flagrant violation of the law; that to give their coalition an appearance of right, they should have, instead of assembling tumultuously, first formed themselves into a workers' company for the extraction of minerals, just as the masters had formed themselves into a public limited company for the extraction of minerals. joint exploitation

of their properties and the sale of their products. Without this condition, the said workers could only be regarded as a multitude of disturbers whom no legal form protected against the presumptions of justice, and against whom the Power was called upon to crack down despite having them.

In short, the miners, whose interest, in harmony with the public conscience, murmured against the abuse of monopoly, and who, I expressly acknowledge, were not wrong, in their heart of hearts, to complain, were in no way eligible to unite as they claimed. They violated the law, a law of order and high social morality; they were not in order; they exceeded, in the external forum, their right. And it is this double character of justice in the complaint of the workers and of immorality in their strike that constitutes a new contradiction, inevitable, fatal, like the one we pointed out just now, and, in the environment where it produced, insoluble.

The contradiction goes still further: it does not exist only in the respective acts of the workers and masters; it is found, much more odious, in the favor generally granted to the latter, and the repression that is the ordinary privilege of the others; it is here above all that I beg the reader to restrain his feelings, and to consider things with the cold gaze of pure intelligence and high justice.

It seems, is it not true, that this is giving far too much importance to formalities whose sole purpose, among both workers and employers, would have been to disguise something bad in itself: the combination. What does it matter whether the owners were associated or not, if the result for the public and for the workers was the same: a rise in prices and a fall in wages? What does it matter, on the other hand, that the workers formed themselves into more or less regular companies of workers, if, for the owners, the result remained the same: a rise in wages? It was up to justice to assess the actions of each and to punish all.

This is what is objected, and to which it is difficult not to grant at least an appearance of fairness. But a closer examination once again brings down this sentimentality, by showing that in these struggles of coalitions between workers and masters, struggles that almost always end to the advantage of the latter and to the detriment of the former, interests of a higher order are at stake, I mean the realization of right in the social body, manifested by the observation of legal forms, and the progress of mores, which does not allow violence, even if it is a hundred times right, prevails over the law, even if the latter only serves as a palliative for fraud.

Let the workers know it, then, not for their confusion, but for their quickest advancement: it is this ignorance, this lack of habit, I would even say this incapacity for legal forms, which has made their inferiority until now, and motivated so many times the rigors of the Power against their mad insurrections. Let them meditate on the wise words which we have already quoted from their new organ, *L'Association*:

“What is a newer and currently more interesting question is to know, not only whether the man of the people is capable of expressing a political vote; it is to know whether a

group of workers, forming spontaneously (and according to the superior rules of right), can constitute itself into a workshop and release, from its own bosom and by its own resources, the initiating force that sets the workshop in motion and the guiding force that regulates its activity and provides for the commercial exploitation of its products.”

Above all, let the workers not forget that, under the regime of economic anarchy and non-reciprocity in which we live, society, more or less leveled as to political right, has remained for all the rest feudal. And didn't the working classes prove, in 1863 and 1864, by giving the mass of their votes to the bourgeois, that they accepted this inferiority? The working plebs, whose noble aspirations I serve here to the best of my ability, are still, alas! only an inorganic multitude; the workman has not placed himself on the same plane as the master, as results from the obligation of the livret and of art. 1781 of the Civil Code, as follows: *“The master is believed on his affirmative. An article that Napoleon I translated brutally: The word of the worker is not worth that of the master.”*

This is why, going to the bottom of things, I dared, in 1845, to write again these painful words:

“As long as labor has not made itself recognized as sovereign, it must be treated as a serf. Society only exists at this price. That each worker individually has the free disposal of his person and his arms, that can be agreed; but that labor bands, without regard to great social interests, any more than to legal formalities, undertake by coalitions to do violence to the liberty and rights of entrepreneurs, that is what society cannot allow at any cost. To use force against the contractors and proprietors; to disorganize the workshops, to stop work, to risk capital, it is to conspire for the universal ruin. The authority that had the miners of Rive-de-Gier shot was very unfortunate. But it acts like the old Brutus, placed between his love as a father and his duty as consul: it was necessary to sacrifice its children, to save the Republic. Brutus did not hesitate, and posterity has not dared to condemn him.”

(Economic contradictions, vol. I, Chap. vi.)

Thus, whether it is a question of bosses or workers, the contradiction is complete: it consists in the fact that, on the one hand, by adopting the point of view of anarchy or economic lawlessness, advocated by the school, demanded by the high and middle bourgeoisie, and, tacitly at least, recognized by the legislator, coalitions, strikes, monopolies, monopolies, are free and of right; — on the other hand, from the point of view of social solidarity and justice, which no one can misunderstand, the same coalitions, strikes, monopolizations, machinations for rising and falling, are illicit by their nature and must be suppressed. I add that as long as economic anarchy, counterbalancing governmental centralization, is regarded as one of the pillars of society, the contradiction that I have just named will be insoluble, and all the evil that results from it without remedy.

What has the Legislative Body now claimed to do by its law on coalitions, and what has it obtained? This is what we have to examine.

II. — Presented by the Emperor, supported by one part of the Opposition, envied, denigrated by the other; passed, not without regret, by the majority, welcomed with satisfaction by the working masses, surrounded by everything that could assure them of popularity and prestige, this law nevertheless had its source in the depths of Malthusian thought. It is, like so-called free trade, selfishness elevated to governmental power. Perhaps that is precisely why everyone wanted it; so distorted are consciences today; so many opinions, in the different classes of society, go against their principles, their tendencies and their definitions!

Let us go back to our origins. Thanks to the establishment of universal suffrage, the people have risen a notch in the political order; the bourgeoisie seemed to descend in proportion. But what the latter has lost on the one hand, we can say that it has regained on the other, the development of industrial and financial feudalism, which dominates the Empire and holds politics in check, forming here a kind of compensation. In short, the country has remained at the same point, constituted on governmental unitarism and economic anarchy, from which are engendered the inferiority of labor with regard to capital, the antagonism of classes, the contradiction in the laws, reciprocity of exploitation and common immorality.

Far from working to resolve this dualism, the Government, following the example of its predecessors, sought rather to extend it in the interest of its preservation. What more could it wish for, with a needy bourgeoisie, always ready to accuse the Power; with a destitute plebs, convinced that the State holds in its mysteries the sources of wealth? What, I say, could have been more agreeable to a Government of centralization and insolidarity than to see everyone instilled with this theory, which is so convenient for it: one thing is the system of interests in a nation, another thing is that of the State; others are the attributes of society, others those of the government? To the first the initiative, hence the responsibility for all that concerns the public economy, production, circulation, credit, wealth, benevolence, property, labor, wages, exchange, etc.; to the second, the purely political prerogative, administration, police, justice, war, public works, etc. Let the people, without encroaching on the functions of power, without demanding anything from them that goes beyond their faculties and their attributions, learn to use their rights; let them know the extent of their duties; let it show itself, within the limits of its liberties, fruitful and bold; that while keeping a wise reserve on the affairs of state, it develops in itself the spirit of enterprise, expecting nothing but from itself, its intelligence and its efforts. Therein lies true independence for a nation, the principle of well-being and glory. On these conditions, Frenchmen, order will never be disturbed among you. Any misunderstanding between the Country and Power will vanish; the most cordial understanding then reigning between the citizens and the Government, we shall finally see that conciliation, so precious and for so long sought after, between authority and liberty.

It is in this spirit of dualism that the advisers of the Government seem to have for some years thought of an economico-political act hitherto unexampled. This terrible responsibility for order and well-being that has always been made to weigh on the established powers, we have undertaken to throw it back on the nation, to which we seem to be saying:

You complain of the general dearness, and you blame it, among other things, on the unproductive consumption of the State. — But is it the Power that you have to blame? Blame rather the insufficiency of the harvests, that of labor, the blunders of commerce and industry, all things that concern you exclusively, but which come out of the competence of authority. — You are shouting against the increase in rents. And what do you want me to do about it? The price of rentals, like that of bread, meat, and all merchandise, depends on the eternal law of *supply* and *demand*, a law which the Power has not made, and which it does not depend on it to reform. — You point out with bitterness the growing pauperism, and the *bankruptcies* that multiply? But whose fault is that? Do you not see that these two facts are the opposite of each other, and that if one seems to detect a lack of wealth, the other no less certainly denotes the incapacity of speculators, producers and manipulators? — You denounce the monopolies, very well. In this respect the Power has done for you everything that depended on it: it has inaugurated free trade among you. What more could he do? — Now it's the financial crisis. Well, to the liberty of trade, I propose to add the liberty of usury: will you finally be satisfied? Don't you say every moment that liberty is the remedy for all ills? Is it my fault if your imports required considerable outflows of cash? Can I use stones to create gold and silver?...

It was in this chaotic, incandescent environment that, on the proposal of the Emperor, who for some years had taken to postponing convictions pronounced for offenses of coalition, the Legislative Body had just launched its famous law. We said to the workers and to the masters: You, you protest against the excess of labor and the low salary; you, you protest against the demands of the workers and the nullity of your profits. It is not up to me, it is not up to the State, to the Government, to interfere in your workshop discussions. However, I want to give to some a new guarantee, to others an additional immunity. I abolish the offense of combination, defined by articles 414, 415, 416 of the Penal Code. Combine against each other, or agree; now it's up to you. Have a good and tough war; you are the masters, the Government washes its hands of it. Only do not compel anyone, *non compellite intrare*. Henceforth freedom of coalition, freedom of strikes, like free trade; like free usury, like free labor, like all freedom to do or not to do, will be inscribed among the rights of man and of the citizen.

Perhaps if the myopic Opposition had discovered these motives in the blank lines of the bill, they would have taken it from a whole different point of view. It would have said to itself that the Power, in order to discharge its responsibility accordingly, abandoning questions of economic right and creating, by way of guarantees and freedom, universal antagonism, it was up to it to take in hand the defense of this economic right. But the

Opposition understood nothing of what was happening before its eyes; and today it is the Opposition, not the Government, that we have to convince.

The principal arguments presented by the rapporteur, M. Émile Ollivier, in favor of the bill, arguments adopted by the entire Opposition, which only objected to the actual text of the law, are three in number; we will repeat them one after the other:

1. The offense of coalition, said M. Ollivier, exists only by the will of the legislator; it can therefore be abolished by an act contrary to this will. Considered in itself, the coalition is nothing other than association, a perfectly legitimate fact of its nature. — Let us note in passing the remarkable intelligence with which the rapporteur grasped his thesis. He understood one thing very well: it is that, if there are facts which, by the effect of a social convention, can be made licit or illicit, there are others illicit by nature, which no law can exonerate, and in favor of which all that would be done would be null of itself: so that, if the laws of morality are immanent in the conscience, they are higher than the conscience, they are universal, imprescriptible, immutable. — Of this number was, a year ago, the fact defined by the Penal Code, under the name of coalition. Who was right, M. Ollivier, orator at this time of imperial thought, or of the Code of 1810?

To which I reply that the new law, which, subject to certain reservations, authorizes coalitions, either on the part of the bosses or on the part of the workers, is bad, because any coalition is, by its nature, a harmful, immoral act, therefore illegitimate. Common sense, universal experience and the proper use of language agree in proclaiming it.

That the coalition is an *association*, as claimed by M. Ollivier, I agree, but on condition that one will recognize with me that it is an association in *subversive mode*, and for this reason always taken in bad part. On this point, politics and political economy are expressed in the same way. I do not have the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie* at hand, but here is what I read in a lexicon published by Ch. Nodier.

“COALITION: Concert of measures practiced by several people, with a view to harming others or the State. — Meeting of different parties; league of several powers.”

This is indeed the true meaning of the word coalition, a meaning on which I repeat that everyone, politics and political economy agree, and that it is impossible to change, since, if we managed to change this sense, another word would have to be created to express what people have always wanted this one to mean: an association against the interests of the public or the State. Who is it, — I do not say the writer or the philologist, but the man of the people, — so uninformed as one supposes of the things of this world, so foreign to grammar and logic, who does not understand marvelously that a coalition of entrepreneurs or merchants is not the same thing as an association of these same characters; similarly that a workers' coalition is not the same thing as a workers' association? Just as a coalition of parties, as we have seen so much under Louis-Philippe and the Republic, is not the same thing as an association or fusion of parties? As the coalitions formed by the Kings of Europe against the French Revolution were not political

alliances like the Quadruple Alliance of 1832, like the one that almost formed in 1854 against Czar Nicholas, or even like the Holy Alliance, created with a view to the perpetuity of the European equilibrium, and into which all the States of Europe first entered?

The famous *famine pact*, of which so much was said in the early days of the revolution, was the product of a coalition; never, although the allies give themselves the title of associates, will we see there what is called a trading company.

It has been claimed, in favor of an unfortunate policy, to rehabilitate a suspect term; we went so far as to want to rehabilitate the thing; for this purpose the monstrous expression, *right of coalition*, has been coined. This is how we pervert, with languages, ideas and customs.

Well, no: there is no more a right of coalition than there is a right of blackmail, fraud and theft, any more than there is a right of incest or adultery. No dialectic, no definition, no convention, no authority will ever make such facts legitimate; that the appropriation, by force or by fraud, of the property of others, or libidinous love with the wife of one's neighbor, can be assimilated to acquisition by work and marriage; this is what the Legislative Body has implicitly recognized, by reserving certain cases where this pretended right of coalition would be considered as abusive, that is to say where the coalition would reappear such as it was seen before, harmful and culpable.

And what constitutes this malfeasance of the coalition? What makes it guilty? It is up to us to make that clear.

Any producer, worker or master, any merchant, has the right to obtain from his product, service or merchandise a remunerative price or wage; — and vice versa, any buyer or consumer has the right to pay for the product or service of others only just what it is worth. The observance of this rule is one of the conditions of public happiness.

But how to obtain this fair wage-price? In the present state of society, the right to an equitable remuneration, either by the producer or by the consumer, has only one way of being exercised: commercial liberty. In other words, the only guarantee of a sufficient price or wage offered to all, whether they sell or buy, is free competition.

Thus, against the arbitrary exaggeration of the price of commodities, the consumer has as a guarantee the competition of producers and merchants among themselves; — against the demands of the wage-earners, the boss or entrepreneur has the competition of the workers; — against the avarice of the masters, the workman has the competition of the masters among themselves, and his own; inasmuch as it is optional for workers to associate and compete with their masters.

Economic Right has taught us to develop this guarantee of free competition. Thanks to the principle of mutuality, we can in most cases dispense with having to come to an onerous competition and in pure loss: after having recognized the need for consumption, and amicably discussed the cost-price, the mutual promise of delivery and acceptance of the products, in quantity and at a determined price, suffices. But we are not, far from it, in

a mutualist regime; and that is why, despite its serious drawbacks, liberty or competition, our only guarantee, must be kept out of reach.

Now, what is the purpose of coalitions? Precisely to destroy commercial liberty, to annihilate competition, and to substitute for it — what? — constraint. Constraint, when, through the monopolization of goods and the connivance of the holders, trade, previously multiple and free, is transformed into a monopoly; constraint, when, by a secret convention of the contractors, the workers, too numerous, pressed by need, suffer a reduction in wages; or else when, by a strike of their workers, the masters must resign themselves to their demands. In all cases, there is a violation of commercial liberty, suppression of the economic guarantee.

But any commercial transaction carried out by one of the contracting parties under the influence of duress is nothing other than extortion, which can motivate a complaint and give rise to damages. How id the authors of the new law not see it? Is liberty in human transactions in their eyes so indifferent that the State can, without inconvenience for individuals and for society, with advantage for all, on the contrary, abandon its protection? Would they have imagined, by any chance, that by authorizing any kind of combination, they would increase liberty everywhere and by the same amount, consequently competition, and ultimately cheapness and wealth? That would be the most deplorable of errors on their part. Where the world is given over to constraint; where force alone makes law and right, labor is synonymous with slavery, commerce is pure brigandage, society a den of thieves. It is not only the most rigorous logic that says so; it is common sense and the practice of all the centuries.

I regret, for the parliamentary glory of M. Émile Ollivier, to have to say it; I regret it for the Legislative Body and for the Government; I regret it for my country and for the Workers' Democracy: the law that authorizes coalitions is fundamentally anti-judicial, anti-economic, contrary to any society and to any order. Any concession obtained under its influence is abusive and null and void, and may give rise to claims and criminal prosecution.²⁵

2. But, it is said, and this is the reporter's second argument: if it is optional for a worker to ask for a raise in salary or to give leave, why should not the same option be granted to several? Why not to all the workers of the same workshop, of the same corporation, of the same city? How could what is lawful coming from one be sinful coming from a multitude?

I was surprised to find this sophism in the argument of the illustrious lawyer; he proved to me, among other things, that M. Émile Ollivier, with his marvelous ease of

²⁵ In a recent publication, an economist of the official school wrote these very words: "The best remedy for coalitions is the liberty of coalitions." — It is exactly as if he had said: The best remedy against theft is to return to Spartan law, the liberty of theft. The best way to put an end to libertinism and bastardy is to declare love free, and all bastards children of the State. How many times have I not said it, and how long will it be necessary to repeat it: these people have neither the moral sense nor the feeling of liberty.

speech, was ignorant even of the rules of logic. What! It is to know that the conclusion from unity to community is not true! And why is it not true? Because a collectivity is a unit of higher order, whose functions and attributes are all different, often the opposite of those of the simple unit. M. Ollivier has his Civil Code; he is not a communist, we all know that; he is a devoted defender of property. Well! Does M. Ollivier know how property differs from community? Quite simply, this one is collective, while the other is individual. *Get out of indivision*, as the Code speaks, there is the innovative, capital, the revolutionary fact that constitutes property. What would M. Ollivier reply to a communist who, summarizing his argument in favor of the right of combination, would say to him: Is it not more so, in an undivided community?... M. Ollivier exclaimed one day in the middle of Parliament: *I am a republican!* Really, the way he reasons about the right of coalition would make me doubt it, and I ask him the same question as before: What, according to him, distinguishes the republic from the monarchy? It is, among other things, that in the monarchy sovereignty is summed up in one man, the King; while in the republic, it is distributed in a Senate, an *assembly of kings*, said the philosopher Cyneas to Pyrrhus. However, what would M. Ollivier reply to a partisan of the Empire who would say to him: You bow before the majesty of an assembly, organ and representative of the Nation; how much more should you honor the Emperor, in whom are summed up the power, the wealth, the authority and all the liberties of the People?

I would be ashamed to insist further. You ask how coalition differs logically and legally from unity? It is that the coalition is a collectivity, and that as such it is destructive of competition, while the action of a single person is powerless.

3. The last reason alleged by M. Émile Ollivier in favor of the law is the worst of all. Some have pretended to believe that the bosses, possessing, by reason of their superior position and their small number, the faculty of uniting with impunity, the only course to be taken by the legislator was to equalize the conditions, by putting the workers on the same footing as the masters and ridding the courts of all kinds of lawsuits. What do you say, reader, to the invention? Yours, mine the steel wool! Isn't that doing policing, order, right, in the manner of *my uncle Thomas*? (V. PIGAULT-LEBRUN.) Follow in its consequences this beautiful principle of the neutralization of crime and misdemeanor by the faculty granted to all to commit them, and tell me what need after that Society can have of a Government?

Thus, under the pretext of raising the working class from a so-called social inferiority, it will be necessary to begin by denouncing *en masse* an entire class of citizens: the class of masters, entrepreneurs, bosses and bourgeois; it will be necessary to excite the working Democracy to the contempt and hatred of these frightful and elusive coalitions of the middle class; it will be necessary to prefer mercantile and industrial war to legal repression; the antagonism of classes to the police of the State; the regime of force to the discipline of the law; and, faced with this fatal necessity, the Opposition will not protest; it will not try to enlighten the Power, when the latter, in the thoughtlessness of its

liberalism, preoccupied with the well-being of the workers, cries out without knowing it: Down with the bourgeois! It will answer it, on the contrary: Kill, kill!

But where is the proof that bourgeois coalitions are easier to unveil to the knowledge of justice than labor coalitions? Although less noisy, are they not, by their effects, just as apparent as the others? Are they not witnessed by all those who suffer from them, workers and consumers? And if it were true that impunity was acquired for them, whose fault, please, would it be? Wouldn't it be precisely that of the Power and its police? So that the calumny against the bourgeois class, admitted by the Opposition, would only be a means of covering up the lack of vigilance of the authority! Have you considered, clumsy reporter, where your argument could lead?

What lays bare the spirit of the law on combinations, at least as far as the Opposition is concerned, whose duty here, more than ever, was to oppose, and who did not oppose, who far from opposing bid, it is that after having replaced articles 414, 415 and 416 of the Penal Code, it has left, without modification, articles 419 and 420, of which all the energy is drawn precisely from the suppressed articles, that is to say from the very offense of combination.

Art. 419. All those who, by false or calumnious facts deliberately sown in the public, by *over-offers* made at the prices demanded by the sellers themselves, by meeting or *coalition* between the principal holders of the same commodity or commodity, tending not to sell it or to sell it only at a certain price; or who, by any means or fraudulent means whatsoever, have caused the price of foodstuffs or merchandise or of public papers and effects to *rise* or *fall* above or below the prices that the natural and free competition of commerce would have determined., will be punished by imprisonment of at least one month, at most one year, and a fine of 500 fr. to 10,000 francs. The culprits may, moreover, be placed, by decree or judgment, under the supervision of the high police for at least two years and at most five years.

Art. 420. The penalty will be imprisonment for at least two months and at most two years, and a fine of 1,000 to 20,000 francs, if these maneuvers have been practiced on grains, grits, flour, floury substances, bread, wine, or any other drink. The surveillance that may be ordered will be for at least five years and at most ten years.

I ask how liberty *of coalition* can be allowed in the new articles 414, 415 and 416, then withdrawn in the maintained articles, 419 and 420?... I will doubtless be answered that in the first three articles it is a question of the coalitions of the bosses against the workers, tending to *force the lowering of wages*, and of the workers against the bosses, tending to *force a rise in wages*; while in articles 419 and 420 it is a question of meetings or coalitions *between the main holders of the same commodity, tending to sell it only at a certain price*. — But, and it is here especially that I protest against the new law, the coalition for the rise or the fall of wages, is absolutely the same thing as the coalition for the rise or the fall of the products, goods and foodstuffs: this is what the former legislator understood when he wrote his § V, title II, book III of the Penal Code, a paragraph which

is nothing more than the development of the same idea. Any product, indeed, commodity, commodity, or VALUE whatever, consists of labor; therefore, any coalition aiming to bring about the rise or fall of it, has the result of bringing about the rise or fall of those. Logic, law and economics agree here. Therefore, if it is just, in the interests of free trade, industrial competition and the fair price of foodstuffs, to repress any coalition or maneuver aimed at bringing about an increase or a decrease in them, it is just, with all the more reason, to prevent coalitions and meetings tending to raise or lower the price of labor, since it is labor that all values are composed of. And reciprocally, if it is just, moral, useful to make free any coalition of workers or masters, tending to the rise or the fall of wages, with all the more reason, it is just,

In a word, the liberty of coalitions for the rise of wages implies the liberty of coalitions for the rise of commodities, foodstuffs, grains, flour, drinks, etc., the freedom of monopolizations and monopolies, the liberty of *over-supplies*, which is none other than the liberty of bidding, and *vice versa*. From the point of view of competition, or, what comes to the same thing, of commercial liberty, the only guarantee of a fair price and a fair wage, the labor of the workers and the goods of the bosses do not form separate categories before the law; they constitute one and the same category, subject to one and the same justice.

How then, I repeat, was the new legislator, reversing the economy of the Code given by the old one, able to authorize certain combinations, while he allowed the prohibition of others to subsist? Where did this inconceivable subversion of logic, science and right come from? Is it not, as we have noted above, because the Government, wishing to lighten its responsibility for all the economic accidents of which the bourgeoisie and the people so frequently complain to the Power, — high cost of subsistence, increase in rents, foreign competition, monetary crises, commercial crises, insufficient wages, etc., — imagined, on the strength of his advice, that he could change, with the definitions, the nature of things, and decided, to the applause of our so-called economists, to proclaim, alongside the liberty to labor, free competition, the liberty of supply and demand, other equivocal and contradictory liberties, destructive of the first liberties, of international exchanges: liberty of usury, liberty of Job-jobbing, liberty from monopoly, liberty from coalition? One word sufficed to confuse everything: liberty of good and evil, of true and false, of justice and injustice!... Here at least, the Government can invoke as an excuse the sincerity of its intentions, and the vogue of its Malthusian liberalism; but the Opposition, what excuse, what pretext, what idea can it invoke?

And now that I believe I have overturned the scaffolding of sophisms on which the presumptuous tribunes thought that they could establish imprudent legislation, allow me to address a few words of frankness to the working Democracy. Surprised in its ignorance by the bill, poor, discontented, easy to fascinate and seduce, it had no time to consult, and let itself be taken in by the bait of a salary adjustment; that is also its excuse; who would have the cruelty to lay the blame on a whole multitude who believe themselves, not without reason, wronged, and who are hungry?

But, said ancient Wisdom, hunger is a bad counsellor, *malesuada fames*: and all that we have said hitherto of the law of coalition would, it must be admitted, have little effect on the minds of the masses, if we did not reveal to them at the same time its disastrous consequences.

In the present state of things, prices and wages have only one guarantee of equity, liberty of transactions, vulgarly competition. This guarantee we have shown to be insufficient; and it is because all producers, traders, consumers, workers and masters have the feeling of this insufficiency that they indulge in acts of disloyalty punishable by law, such as *monopolization, agiotage, coalition*, etc.; but acts in which there almost always exists, alongside the principle of iniquity and bad faith, an element of justice, as we have pointed out in the coalition of coal miners of the Loire, then in the counter-coalition of workers. Such is the origin of the contradiction that we have pointed out as much in the law that defends and represses coalitions as in the coalitions themselves: the inadequacy of the guarantee. This is not a reason, for some any more than for others, to violate the law and to constrain liberty, since in such a matter any constraint, from whatever place it comes, implies extortion and theft; with all the more reason is this not a motive for the legislator to let go of the bridle on violence and fraud, and to establish the liberty of combinations as a right, since such a liberty is nothing other than a criminal liberty. But if the insufficiency of the guarantee accuses the imperfection of the law, it also comes in attenuation of the crime; and it is especially in the interest of consciences, which one must never despair, that true science shows itself and seems so scrupulous in disentangling here what we have called contradiction.

Currently the working classes, abandoning bourgeois practice and rushing towards a higher ideal, have conceived the idea of a guarantee that should free them both from the risk of lowering prices and wages, and from the fatal remedy coalitions. This guarantee consists, on the one hand, in the principle of *association*, by which they prepare themselves, across the whole face of Europe, to constitute themselves legally in companies of workers, concurrently with the bourgeois enterprises; and on the other hand, in the still more general and powerful principle of MUTUALITY, by which Workers' Democracy, consecrating from now on the solidarity of its groups, prelude to the political and economic reconstitution of society. It is there, in the combined energy of these two principles, association and mutuality, on which we need not insist further, that is found the system of moral and material guarantees to which civilization aspires.

I therefore have the right to address to the workers this reproach:

Why, supporters of association and mutuality, do you abandon your Idea, this generous, renovating idea, which must carry the modern plebs well beyond the old noble and bourgeois society? Why this hostility, which suddenly appears among you, against your masters? — “We can do nothing against the bourgeoisie,” said the Manifesto of the *Sixties*, “and the bourgeoisie, for its part, can do nothing without us.” Have you forgotten these words, or was it just hypocrisy on your part? It seemed, at the last elections, that a pact

had been signed between you and the bourgeois. Did you break this pact, ostensibly taking your side against your bosses on an equivocal question?

I understand that you take advantage of the facilities of the law in order to obtain the redress of a few petty grievances such as are found everywhere in human affairs; I accept that on this occasion you have asked for the benevolence of entrepreneurs to alleviate your situation: what I disapprove of is that, committed by your words, by your principles, by your actions, committed by votes that I do not hesitate to call imprudent, you have suddenly displayed the most unjust pretensions, and you are with joy of heart constituted, with regard to those whose alliance you once sought, in a state of war.

Under threat of a strike, some, the greatest number, demanded a salary increase, the others a reduction in working hours; some both at the same time. As if you did not know, long ago, that the increase in wages and the reduction in working hours can only lead to universal inflation; as if you could be unaware that it is not a question here of reduction or rise in prices and wages, but of a general equalization, the first condition of wealth!

Some went further. They have claimed to impose, with the increase in wages, their equality. Sad reminiscence of Luxembourg, which the Manifesto of the *Sixty* had nevertheless condemned, emphasizing free competition.

Once on the slope of arbitrariness, the workers' democracy does not know, no more than despotism, how to stop. In certain trades, employers are forbidden to hire a single man against the will of the allies; prohibition to train apprentices; prohibition to employ foreigners; prohibition to apply new procedures, etc. Of association, of mutuality, of progress, we shall soon no longer speak, if the workers, following the example of the great monopolists, have the faculty of substituting extortion for free competition.

And what have you, in the end, obtained by the exercise of such a fine right? What disappointments to record already, and how many still await you!

First of all, to organize a coalition, you have to come together and agree. Now, the right of coalition does not imply that of assembly; and many of you, if I am well-informed, have incurred convictions for unlawful assembly.

For the coalition to be effective, it must be unanimous; and this is what the law has provided for, by prohibiting, under severe penalties, any attack on the liberty of labor, which opens the door to defections. Do you, workers, hope to maintain this heroic

unanimity against private interest, against corruption, against misery? The history of the porters of Marseille testifies to the contrary.²⁶

But if the legislator of 1864 was able to grant you the right to unite against the masters, by that very fact it granted it to the masters against you. It is therefore the organized war between labor and capital. Which of the two do you think, as it stands, triumphs over the other?

An establishment with a capital of three million employs 1,000 workmen who, one fine morning, go on strike. The contractor refuses. At the end of fifteen days, the workmen will generally have exhausted their savings, that is to say, at 2 fr. per day and per worker, a sum of 30,000 francs. The establishment will be quit to pass in profit and loss a sum of 5,000 fr., interest at 4 per cent for fifteen days, of a capital of three millions; i.e., per share, 0 fr. 84 cent. At the end of a month, the worker having exhausted his resources, will have to resort to pawn shop. The capitalist will only have lost a twelfth of his interests, the capital will not be affected. Obviously the game is not equal.

And what will the workers do, what will they say, if the masters, armed as well as they are with the right to unite; armed with free trade, free competition, free usury, bring in workers from abroad? What will they do if they ask the army for it? What will they do if the masters, alleging the stagnation of business, a commercial crisis, dismiss half the workers, the loudest and worst, and keep only the best and most docile? What will they do if, faced with foreign competition, entrepreneurs close their workshops; if national labor is vanquished, and vanquished by its own dearness, they renounce their industry and go into liquidation?

I said it and I repeat it: a fatal position is made in this moment with the middle class. I don't care to accuse anyone, not the Government, who thought they were doing an act of liberalism by signing the Treaty of Commerce, changing the law on coalitions, and having studies a still more fatal law on the liberty of usury; neither the high bank, nor the big

²⁶ Since I mentioned the Marseille Porters' Society, I will allow myself to say a word about it. The old legislation had preserved a corporate privilege for certain categories of workers. Such were the porters' companies of Marseille, Madares, Lyon, the forts of the Halle, etc. In this respect, these companies could be likened to ministerial offices, notaries, attorneys, stockbrokers, etc. Naturally, this privilege implied a certain discipline on the part of the associates, the obligation to remain at the disposal of their leaders, and consequently the prohibition of organizing a competing service against the Company. Well, what happened? With the law on coalitions passed, a certain number of porters, under the pretext of liberty of labor, accepted proposals that the Company deemed contrary to its interests; and, when it demanded, when it pronounced the removal of offenders from its ranks, it saw itself condemned by the courts and blamed by the democratic press! However, the law on combinations, which forgot so many things, did not explain the legally authorized privileges, and it is a question of knowing whether the Company of Porters continues to exist under the old conditions, or if it must be considered dissolved. What is certain, at least, is that the port service had become in certain cities, for the workers who had the privilege, a sort of common heritage, and that this heritage will perhaps be taken from them. They will have, instead, anarchic, unlimited competition, and the right of combination.

companies, nor large proprietors. No one has the slightest awareness of what is going on within him: if it were possible to imagine an incarnation of destiny, and to give this incarnation a soul, a spirit, a consciousness, I would say of this world, anarchic and feudal at the same time, that being unconscientious, hence irresponsible, like the destiny it represents, all accusation falls before it. What I accuse are first of all the counter-revolutionary instincts of the time, the principle of which is in socialist terror; it is this system of political concentration, balanced by anarchic capitalism, a system incompatible with the freedoms and guarantees of 89, having their own expressions in the middle class.

Does it not seem that this middle class, within which the more inspired working Democracy declared, a year ago, that it wanted to be completely absorbed, is working on all sides with a kind of fanaticism to demolish it, that it wants to bring it back to wage labor? Every day bankruptcy makes large holes in the ranks of the petty bourgeois; something more unbearable still, the embarrassment continues, the day-to-day life, the secret misery decimates them. The workers saw only their own anguish; they do not suspect the bourgeois tribulations. Having become, by the law on combinations, the auxiliaries of the capitalist aristocracy against small industry, small commerce and small property, they will undoubtedly vote, in 1869, for the candidates of the administration; it will make sense. Free coalition, free usury, deserve on their part, against their natural allies, this proof of devotion. Let them think about it, however: it is not by these contradictory acts that they will take the lead of civilization and reform society. It is not by giving themselves up, vile souls, to the fantasies of the counter-revolution that they will make them believe in the power of their Idea, and that the political capacity will rise in them to the height of economic science.

CONCLUSION.

From this book, the product of such profound study and such a powerful meditation, on the most arduous matters of economic and political science, there emerge, after an attentive reading, a few simple ideas that we ought, according to the desire of the author, to summarize here.

For a people to make its action felt efficaciously in politics, it is not enough that it be invested with universal suffrage and that it exercise its right to vote; it must have *consciousness* of its situation and its strength, and it must vote with full awareness of the facts.

The emancipation of the working class will begin only the day when they have a clear notion of their own interests.

According to Proudhon, the working classes have only made their true entry in the political scene in the last elections, with the Manifesto of the *Sixty*. It is only then that, in a language of their own, they have attempted to express their own ideas.

But they have not been able to find the political line that could lead them to the most efficacious manifestation of these ideas.

The working classes have interests distinct from the bourgeoisie. They must have a politics distinct from the bourgeois politics.

Universal suffrage is a truth, a reality, only if lends itself to a regular manifestation of that diversity of political interests.

Political legality is that, exactly that; it is nothing else. It can consist only in that balance, that ponderation, that just proportion to be established, by means of the electoral organism, among all the forces that must coexist, without being confused, in society.

In France, in the present state of things, with the complications of the electoral system, lacking the guarantees that best insure serious preparation for the election, in the absence of a truly independent press, in the presence of the doctrine that makes it a duty to the government to not abandon universal suffrage to its spontaneity, the working classes are not in a position to give a positive expression to their ideas or their interests.

They can manifest their ideas and their interests only *negatively*.

They can be taken into consideration only by refusing their direct participation in a politics which does not permit them to clearly produce their pretentions.

If they should vote, in order to prove that they value their right of suffrage, their vote must be by itself the expression of that dissent, of that will to remain at a distance.

The protestant does not go to the mass of the Catholics.

The catholic does not go to the sermon of the protestants.

The free thinker does not go to the sermon or to the mass.

The worker voter, for the same reason, must not go to the Church of bourgeois politics.

That was the important meaning of the *blank* vote, which was not understood in 1863, but which certainly will be one day, as soon as the working classes will come to take good account of their situation.

What is that situation? What must it be?

It is that of the people who, having need of great reforms in the economic order, must desire that their intervention in politics furnishes them the means to obtain these reforms.

The best politics, for the working classes, will be that which best leads them to that end.

If it happens that the worker politics disturbed the combinations of the capitalist politics, it must be because the workers know to accept the capitalists as adversaries. There is nothing in that that is not natural, inevitable, necessary. Politics is not a matter of sentiment. It is, at base, it must only be the struggle resolved, the legal struggle of interests. In sum then, as would be the economic idea of the working classes, such would be their political idea.

Politics is nothing, if it does not aim to resolve all the great economic questions; the accession of the working classes to the right of political suffrage is nothing, if its result is not to give them the legal means to improve their social condition.

The workers will propose their idea; the capitalists will combat it. Both are right on some points, and wrong on others. The discussion, the polemics of the press, and electoral tactics will do the rest, and the public reason will settle the debate.

That is liberty! That is equality! That is order!

Nothing would be more false than to conceive of order as the suppression of all questions, of all discussion, of all antagonism.

In the last elections, the workers entered the lists with a program issuing from themselves. What did they say? What did they demand?

They said that the interests of labor, in the present economic order, are far from being treated as favorably as the interests of capital.

They demanded that this unfavorable situation of labor with regard to capital be relieved.

They demanded that in all the relations of civil or commercial life, in all transactions, in all contracts, the laborer should be, with regard to those with whom he contracts, on a footing of perfect equality.

They demanded, whether it is a question of buying, a question of selling, a question of borrowing, a question of giving or taking a lease on a house or field, or of stipulating a labor contract, making a trade, or undertaking an industry, or forming a company, that the laborer enjoy the benefit of the same legal advantages as the capitalist.

They demanded that all the great enterprises of public utility, that all the great economic institutions be conceived and established in favor of labor as much as capital.

Advantage for advantage, utility for utility, service for service, product for product, equitable assessment of the services exchanged, without any privilege of situation, without

any recognized precedence, without any legislative favor to the profit of one of the parties and the detriment of the other; that is, according to the workers, what labor has in interest in demanding, what it demands, what it wants to obtain, and what it will obtain! That is truth, right, and justice!

And that is what is called *mutuality!*

It is in that idea of mutuality, so simple and so strong, of which we have made, in the second part of this work, some striking applications to the vital questions of political economy, that is found, according to Proudhon, all the future of the people, all the futures of the workers.

It is there that we find the development of the principles of 89.

It is there that we find the true politics of the working classes.

Any politics that is not the implementation of this idea is not, should not be theirs. They only take in interest in it, if it is to seek all legal opportunities to separate themselves from it and to oppose their protest to it.

Proudhon did not conceal any of the numerous obstacles that this worker's politics must encounter.

Those obstacles are very considerable in the political order.

Proudhon made them the subject of the third part of this book. He set out there everything that, politically, is incompatible with the ideas and tendencies of the working classes.

According to him, there is nothing to await, for them, from legislative action, as long as their efforts are hindered by the system of centralization that dominates all the political and administrative institutions in France.

The system of centralization is an obstacle to liberty in its very principle.

Nothing is possible, nothing if feasible by the initiative, by the spontaneity, by the independent action of individuals and collectivities, as long as they are in the presence of that colossal force with which the State is invested by centralization.

The centralizing or unitary State can undertake anything, direct everything, regulate everything, prevent anything, do anything, without encountering effectual resistance.

The force of action of the individuals and groups, fragmented in the electoral districts, in the limit remits of the municipal and departmental councils, is dominated, crushed, in all its manifestations, by that enormous power that places, on every question, in every affair, the forces of the entire nation against the isolated individual or group.

The relation, true between all the interests, between all the ideas, is artificially modified, artificially disturbed by the intervention of the State.

As soon as the State opts for one of the ideas, for one of the interests in a struggle, it provides it with an artificial strength, which gives that idea or interest an importance out of proportion with its natural strength.

If the State involves itself in the support of religion, it crushes philosophy, without that being the effect of the proper power of religion.

If it sustains philosophy, it crushes religion, without that being the effect of the proper power of philosophy.

The same thing occurs if it takes the part of free trade against protection, or of protection against free trade.

The same thing, if it is inclined to the side of the bosses against the workers, or the side of the workers against the bosses.

What necessitates, in politics, that idea of *mutuality* that is the economic program of the working classes, is that, in the political order as well, all things, all ideas, all interests can be reduced to equality, to the common right, to justice, to balancing, to the free play of forces, to the free manifestation of ambitions, to the free activity of individuals and groups, in a word, to *autonomy*.

Centralization must be reduced, groups and individuals must regain in their public liberties everything that is excessive in the presentations of the State, all the power of which it has made an exorbitant delegation to the Government and Administration.

It is at this price, and only at this price, that liberty will be established in France, rationally and firmly.

We can get an idea of it through the countless guarantees that individual and collectives liberties find in the Swiss and American institutions, without the true *unity* being compromised, and by the most proper combinations, on the contrary, to realize it, since they derive them from a *contract*, from a free convention between the *parties*, and not from constraint or absorption.

What we call in particular the *pact of guarantee* between States, is nothing but one of the most brilliant applications of the idea of *mutuality*, which, in political, becomes the idea of *federation*.

The working classes could not reflect too much on this important subject.

Independent of the obstacles that the working classes find in the political order, in the system of centralization, which is the very antithesis of the idea of *mutuality*, they find a considerable number within themselves, in their intellectual and moral aptitudes.

And it is here that, by his own request, we have to give the thought of Proudhon some development.

The working classes still share nearly all the false ideas of the times.

They like militarism; they delight in the crowing of the sword; they have a weakness for the soldier's *bravado*; they still give preference to the one who fights well over the one who thinks well or labors well, as if courage should not be only the auxiliary of great moral energies.

In questions of foreign policy, they always allow themselves to be troubled by passion. Either they exaggerate French vanities and pretensions, or they forget French interests too much. They only have notions about *nationality* that are full of errors. They give in, without reflection, to the impulses of a banal sentimentality, and no longer want to

understand, in nation-to-nation relations, this idea of justice, of weighting, of balance, which they aspire to make prevail in relations from individuals to individuals.

They love rhetoric, that plague of true democracies. They have admiration for orators who cannot reason, for speeches that cannot conclude, for images that are not ideas, for sentences that are not arguments.

They are fooled by almost all the affected sentiments, by almost all the declamations of modern literature.

They lack the sagacity that recognizes and thwarts charlatanism.

They want to be flattered, courted.

They have a passion for pageantry, magnificence, uniforms, embroidery. They want luxury in Government. They imagine that this luxury is theirs, because it is paid for by them. They put vanity into it.

All this is very contrary to democratic simplicity; regarding all this, they greatly need to correct themselves.

This people, so proud, so proud, as a community, is very far from having the same dignity, the same pride in the relationships of private life.

There are workers, in large numbers, far too many, who, in addition to the agreed price of a job, ask for a helping hand, *something for the boy*.

Servants demand discounts from suppliers or themselves deduct from the expenses for which they are responsible. They laughingly call this *making the handle of the basket dance*.

Coachmen, waiters in hotels, cafes, restaurants, messengers, valet parking, and a host of others, derive their main profit from *tipping*.

What happens to the dignity of a voter who, after having received the agreed price of a job, asks for *two cents on top of the deal*?

It is in the essential data of universal suffrage to bring about, in popular morals, a reform that eliminates all these miseries.

If the people no longer want alms, they should begin by rejecting from their habits everything that resembles begging...

The worker, too often, does not have the respect of the public, of the customer, of those who employ him. He doesn't take the job seriously; he lacks accuracy; he makes promises, knowing he won't be able to keep them. As soon as the master's eye is no longer on him, he *wanders*. He doesn't do as much as he can do, or doesn't do as he should. All this must disappear.

It is imposed on democratic politics to elevate the instincts of the people, to broaden their intelligence, to improve their morals, to develop in them the feeling of individual and collective dignity. Charity has had its day; it produced its works, great and beneficial, as long as it was only an impulse of the heart. Combined with the concerns of politics, transformed into a means of influence, it begins to be nothing more than a resource of egoism, a social convenience, a spirit of conservation of course. This charity, which is

nothing more than skill, is no longer a virtue. It must give way to justice, today more moralizing and more powerful than it. The people must today derive from their rights the relief that they formerly derived from compassion. We will see if, for the improvement of popular destiny, justice is not, as much and more than charity, capable of working wonders.

The working classes unite, in the towns and in the country, all the productive aptitudes; they have for them numbers and force; they begin to have consciousness of their social importance. It is necessary that they have for themselves science, right, justice, in its most rigorous sense; they must rise to the level of legality, considered as principle of consistent action, and render themselves capable especially of the practice of that legality, transformed into an intellectual and moral lever. In these conditions, their predominance is ensured; in these conditions, they cannot fail to have for allies all that active, capable, sane part of the bourgeoisie, which rises also more from labor than from capital, and all of that class of the lettered, of artists, of scientists, who live for ideas, incline naturally to progress, and still form today the elite of the nation. The day when they place themselves within the law, they will take the law for their own, they will dominate it, they will be it. The legitimacy of their power will no longer be contestable or contested.

Their force will be of political force only if it is reasonable.

Their coming will be a consecrated act, a social renovation, only if it is the result of an irrefutable science, the consequence of certain principles, the development of a proven tradition, the victory of true logic over the sophisms of the school and of the academy.

It is necessary that the vanquished interests be forced to be silent, that the wounded prides be forced to contain themselves, that the disappointed ambitions be forced to renounce the old skills of the see-saw politics, and to bow before the true power, before the power of ideas and of right.

How are we to conceive of a resistance that would have to be produced against a popular mass armed with universal suffrage, become capable of a measured will, knowing to put an idea in its vote, and being able to express that vote with millions of suffrages?

No, that is inconceivable.

It is impossible that the people, feeling that they can so well be its master, would not want one day to do so.

Well! When it wants to be that, it will be, legally and irreproachably.

And, if this book is understood, that will be soon.

This was the hope of Proudhon, in writing it. It should be the ambition of those who have been able to appreciate the teachings of the great writer, to aid, by propagating them, in the realization of that hope.

That ambition, in order to finish by a rapprochement would not be without connection with the dominant idea of this book, would be worth more than that of representing a worn-out politics in the legislature.

END.