

PHILOSOPHY  
OF  
IN SUBMISSION  
OR  
PARDON FOR CAIN

BY FÉLIX P.....

**A LOST CLASSIC FROM THE ERA OF ANARCHY**

*with notes on the life of Félix Pignal, exile from the French Second Empire  
and probable author of Philosophie de l'insoumission*

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# PHILOSOPHY OF INSUBMISSION OR PARDON FOR CAIN

By Félix P.....

Dedicated to my namesake Félix Dupanloup

## A FEW WORDS BEFORE BEGINNING



Monsignor,

The smoke of battles will not obscure my vision, the noise of their cannons will not deafen my ears and the glory of tyrants will do nothing to my heart.

The share of misfortunes that I have experienced has informed my soul too well, the philosophy it has suggested to me possesses arguments too penetrating, too sincere for me, like so many others, not to try to retrace the river of my tears, in order to reach the source that feeds them.

*Proud!* I will be told.... Ah! May humanity forgive me! *Proud?* I have never been.

It is because I have seen so much and believe I have understood that I wish to speak, not to seek admirers as a writer — I know only too well that in this regard the only time I would not waste would be the time I would use to turn away from it.

Call me whatever epithets you like; I accept them all in advance. I have but one thought, I envision but one glory: to stab at any time and in any place, as far as I can reach, the principle of domination. *Satan in his rebellion is my father and I make Cain a brother in his courage!*

In a moment of intimate reflection, while my thoughts floated in a circle of uncertainty, a still imperfect idea, like a ray of dubious light, which gradually becomes more certain in our eyes, procreated itself in my memory, never to leave it again.

In this world, I told myself, everyone is entwined by misfortune, as if all of humanity were the work of a malevolent genius whose primary motive was wickedness.

Now, I questioned with the greatest scruple the different positions that form the discordant harmony of what we call *society*. Then I always ended up encountering only evils and miseries in *some*, pains and sorrows in *others*, and, finally, only deceptive joys, vain hopes in *those* where I had so long believed that happiness reigned.

It would, however, be a willful omission if I did not speak of a state of singular enjoyment that I often encountered in this painful examination.

It is that of the man — I was going to say of the *being*, so as not to be mistaken about the species — who lives in the contemplation of a culpable egoism and whose eyes no longer see anything beyond his horizon.

Far from considering this state of moral torpor as a desirable satisfaction, I consider it only a disastrous repose, rendering those who enjoy it more brutal than certain animals who are deeply moved by the cries of alarm of their fellow creatures! . . . . .

Enough with morality. The principle that leads us seems to invite us to this guilt; now, let us discuss its causes, since we are what we cannot be less proud of.

In my opinion, it is not an individual fault that we must speak of, but a collective fault — of lying — under whose laws we march with as much fatality as blindness.

We are sincere or cunning, rogues or generous, depending on the different positions in which we find ourselves. The interplay of our clashes is inevitable; current society is an abyss, and the men who compose it are forced to follow its inexorable slope.

. . . . .

However, I want to love my fellow men, and the most contemptible among them will still have, instead of my hatred, my pity and compassion.

Never mind the coarseness of my style, Monsignor, it is the truth that fuels my courage and gives me reason over it, and above all, remember that it is only to the glory of the rebellious angels that I aspire, for the insubordination of the first man was the first act of his dignity.

FÉLIX P.....

P. S. Anyone who already feels shocked by these few lines should close this book, for while affirming the sincerity of the feelings that drove me to write it, I declare to the face of the universe the respect I have for the tranquility of even an ignorant person . . . . .

**PHILOSOPHY**  
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OR  
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Man is a God to man when he seeks to  
help him; this path leads to eternal glory.

PLINY.

One does not take a step in society without hearing it said that it is necessary for man to believe in a God, that is, in a sovereign being, master of all things, under whose absolute will everything works more or less well.

Well, I affirm bluntly that this doctrine is the source of all our miseries and that those — far too numerous, alas! — who support it, as much through cunning as through ignorance or fanaticism, are constantly digging beneath our feet the abyss that must engulf us.

Moreover, the current situation of mankind, which for so long has been nothing but an inextricable mishmash of greed and hatred, offers good footholds for this system.

Some mistreat others — this is beyond doubt — and to protect against rebellion, the belief in God has been invented.

I will go further: I say that in order to believe in a supreme being, the *mistreated* have no need of instruction; in that respect, the soul's impulse is fatal.

Yes, it is when one is, so to speak, abandoned by everyone that the mind seeks the support of an unknown being; but as long as we have a brother, a friend, it is from him that we expect the consolations that we need for our suffering; for the joint obligation that men owe one another is of such power that the least of the people on earth still expect it from their fellow men.

A host of absurd moralists find it extraordinary that man should have recourse to a God only after having exhausted the hope indicated by his own nature: *this reciprocal protection that subjects of his species owe one another*. Well! What is so strange about man believing in his own kind before believing in what he does not know?

I have often wondered what these curious scholars meant to say, but I have never been able to understand anything in their poor maxims except this: *that if they believe they are telling the truth in the battles they wage against the laws that govern us or against those that nothing at all governs*, they resemble a Lilliputian standing on tiptoe to better discover the spots of the moon.

To find a man who loves you is to find a part of humanity, the whole of which is the only God that every man should seriously know, in order to love his fellow men and share his conscience in the true repose that so many malignant or fanatics seek in the uncertain, if not in the impossible.

Alas! How far society is from this God of whom I speak!... Every day it moves further away and walks in the direction opposite to the path that leads there; so it is obliged to fill its maxims, its catechism and its laws with mysteries or exaggerations — which are so many insults to the human spirit — in order to explain a God to its liking, in conformity with its needs, as inconceivable and as monstrous as the principle of intelligence from which it receives its impulse!

One would be tempted to believe that it is all over; for — O inconceivable labyrinth! — the world walks in the direction opposite to its primitive reason, and evil becomes more and more necessary to it. I would even add that this is an indubitable consequence of this belief that guides us, establishing in principle that *humanity must seek its happiness in God*, while, on the contrary, *it can only find one God in its own happiness*.

I declare that it is from this false interpretation of human wisdom that the laws of authority have made us *subject* rather *than* free beings, that instead of *good* we have *evil*, just as instead of *truth* there exists *falsehood*.

A brief examination of the tales made up for pleasure in *Holy Scripture* soon reveals that, although full of vague meanings, they nevertheless represent an intimate image of human decadence.

The first thing shown to us in this facetious and amusing mystagogy is a *divine being* or *Spirit* representing *authority*. Now, just as fire requires wood, authority



requires slaves, and it was to fill this void that Adam and Eve were invented and placed in an earthly Paradise.

There, these poor creatures were to live happily, according to the promise of their Creator, but under the express condition of perfect *obedience* to him. . . . a condition that already offers proof of their dependence and, consequently, of the imperfection of the happiness promised to them.

If, logically, we admit that there can be no true rest or pure freedom without perfect independence, we will certainly find it reasonable that a spirit of covetousness crept among them, along with that instinct, so natural to man, *to do what he deems fit to achieve his complete happiness*.

This, then, is the first movement of liberty, which caused the burdensome laws given to the first man!

Hence the *protests*, hence the *punishments*. Finally, hence the *disorder*, the *crime*, the *agitation*, in a word, the *consequences for those who complain to the one who commands*.

As for the time Adam and Eve had to spend in *obedience*, or rather, in *stupefaction*, it is little mentioned in the revelations. What seems reasonable to me is that they must have whispered to each other, as quickly as their eyes could distinguish the *forbidden object*. . . . .

Later, Cain murdered his brother! We must find crimes before punishments.... In any case, what a lovely family God had there!

It is unfortunate that he didn't reveal to us the upbringing he gave him; for by avoiding it, we could distance ourselves from similar misfortunes every day.

Hey! But isn't this Cain incident, albeit a bit brutal, the spontaneous logic of those who wanted to give rise to the current authority of the one I'm trying to offer a brief explanation of? This is why, despite all our common sense, we often feel drawn to believing in these traditional blunders, and this, once again, because of the similarity of social miseries they share with our times.

Don't we make Cain a worker, a plowman, and Abel a happy courtier?

Oh! Worthy grandson of God! If you had existed as they say and protested in the same way, I would immediately collect myself to better honor your memory and your courage! But, no, you are only a faithful image of those who are tortured, exploited and who, despite being the true victims, are considered to be the *murderers themselves*!

Without going any further, so as not to burden our minds with thousands of names of martyrs and of those, almost as numerous, who crucified, scourged or hanged them, let us seek to explain to ourselves why this earthly Paradise was so quickly and so logically a place *of disorders, crimes and expiations*.

I repeat, so that no one may be mistaken about my incredulity in this regard: I consider the Pentateuch of Moses and all traditional revelations to be profound mystifications, from which one has maliciously sought to establish the *principle* of our vices and our miseries.

So be it! Since Holy Scripture so desires, I accept it for the moment.

God had therefore given his first two subjects a delightful abode, where they were to spend days full of charm.

But whether he himself was mistaken or the thing was not possible, he soon had reason to believe in this more than divine force: *That the human being wants to belong to himself alone, without having to submit to the will of a master, that is, an oppressor*. And as the transgressions of the latter's laws began, his punishments could not be long in coming.

Are not all these fables very much in keeping with the logic of serfdom? God is said to have said:

*I command you, because you must obey me; and the consequences responded: that he was not obeyed because he commanded!*

So what had the serpent to do in these beautiful places? Poor beast! It is always the serpent I am speaking of — it is no longer he who is the first culprit; he is also himself only a consequence of evil, or if you prefer, of a bad principle.

Certainly, would not the spirit of covetousness be the first to come to us, when, beside us, and moreover, within our reach, there exist some pleasures that we are forbidden to dream of and which nevertheless seem so truly to belong to us?

Without mystifying the mystification further, I seek, on the contrary, to distance myself from the meaning that certain minds attach to the story of the forbidden fruit; I admit, without strategy and without pretending to be innocent, that it is an apple that someone wanted to talk about.

For to believe in certain things, one would have to have wanted to invent a God to mock him, by making him simpler or more stubborn than the last of men who, if he had succeeded in making puppets in his image, would still want to help with the functions of their members.

This was certainly not God's first attempt, for before the disobedience of Adam and his wife, subjects much more perfect than they had already had to rebel in his divine domain. Thus, the final proof of his bad work had to make him understand that men as well as angels could not bear authority without becoming guilty.

It is unfortunate for us that the impotence or bad faith of this creator stopped his work. Perhaps, animated by a just fantasy, he had finally understood that the only way to have peace was to create beings similar to himself, but equal to each other, one of whom could not be guilty without his fellow creatures sharing in his guilt. Now, would it not be the same with all their wills? It is up to them, then, to arrange for themselves greater happiness... nothing was easier for them.

But the wishes of this God, which were without a doubt the primary causes of the celestial turmoil (for, without authority, there is no disobedience!), are likewise the inevitable and rational consequences of the power attributed to him; from this I conclude: *that with power there is no tranquility, not even in the heavens!*

However, before condemning belief in God as so fatal to man, let it be permissible to discuss it down to its deepest mysteries. Perhaps therein one would find the Gordian knot of our rest and the secret path to human salvation.

Could it not be that this God to whom nothing is impossible had traced this path according to the plan of an extraordinary whim?

Let us take this hypothesis: with the cunning, one must be skillful. If, for example, when creating man, he had intended that the latter be happy only after having achieved liberty, would it not be our right and our duty to fight to the bitter end?

I agree that it is a great sacrifice for children to overthrow the authority of their father; but he has already overwhelmed us with such harsh trials that one would be tempted to believe that we should perhaps reckon with ourselves, grow bolder, and overthrow his power, so that one day, in the same Elysium, he would at least have to take into account our courage!

Let us not mock, for if we must accept this God of Scripture, we must also believe what it says about him. Is there not something of this inhuman strength in the orders he himself gave to Abraham for the sacrifice of Isaac? They say that he made us in his image! So it is not a crime to resemble him!

See, later: he imposes on himself the pain of sending us his son, so that we have to degrade him, insult him, crucify him, who knows? Put him to death! And all this

perhaps to encourage us in this game. At what price, it is true, but one degree higher and we might have had peace!

Moreover, since it is clear that mastery undoubtedly requires serfdom, to avoid being serfs, let us overthrow authority. That done, we will have proven to tyranny that to redeem itself, humanity cannot shrink from anything, not even from the greatest sacrifices!

It is not against our reason that we must be angry, and if our philosophy seems ridiculous in its way of seeing things, let us seriously examine the very ridiculousness of the principle it seeks to combat, and a just pardon will soon be granted to us.

A tooth for a tooth! The law of the *talion*. Such is the battle we still have to wage against divinity.

Let man, if he wishes to cure his impotence, know how to take advantage of this last stratagem; the philosophy of reason assures him the success of victory, and this encouragement alone must spare us this peril.

Moreover, why should we tremble at this audacity? Is not humanity, under the weight of its suffering, at bay, at its last extremities? Therefore, it has nothing more to lose... Courage to attack! Courage! Our servility offers us a glorious pretext that alone would justify our rebellion. And since a people is honored when it knows how to overthrow a tyrant, how great would our triumph be if we succeeded in destroying the principle of tyranny!

It is a fact that tyranny is an evil more violent than any evil that could result from our independence. This is why each of us should seek to belong to ourselves, so that human tribulations (if we must have any) are not the result of a shameful mistake, and so that the wicked are everywhere unworthy of our respect, for God is an imaginary torch, so fatal to humanity that he guides it in the path contrary to its happiness and makes society guilty before the criminal it punishes!

With him, it is man who bears the odious task of torturing his fellow man and the victim the shame of patiently enduring oppression!

So marches society, entangled in the chains it imposes on itself! Ashamed of the blood that covers it! Without respect for its own tears, and swollen with a crime that will suffocate it, if a pleriosis does not save it from its final attack.

Is it in an eternal and foolish hope that the human spirit must huddle, awaiting the remedy for its regeneration? Ah! How man mistrusts his subjective goodness;

his hope in eternal heaven is only a palliative that will change nothing in the paralysis of his happiness and will never destroy the ulcer that constantly hollows out him in the place where his dignity should grow.

Let there be no mistake, the illness of man is not incurable, although it stems from a canker that both eats away at and infects him; but the remedy is unique. It is to attack the ulcerous principle that vitiates the blood of society and corrodes its arteries.

How many talented men have tortured their minds, occupied their genius, and spent long and tiring nights seeking the means to cure the human race of the disease of which I speak; but — O fatality! — these learned sages or proud ones have been forced to recognize their impotence! And men, silent in their hope, still swallow the drugs of their candid empiricism every day!

A useless race at least! I would say to them, stubborn charlatans or cunning perpetrators of crime, will you always see only the consequences of evil, without ever wanting to speak of evil itself!

What do you want then?

To wipe away our tears without consoling our hearts? Impossible.

To relieve the world without removing its burden? Impossible.

The end without the means? Impossible! Impossible!... Yet you do not deny that society seems to you an enigma in which you can only decipher the suffering that tortures it, the powerful alarms that tear it apart, that crime seems to establish itself there in broad daylight and under the noses of humanity, that the titles of *commanders*, *governors*, *exploiters* and *thieves* have their *derivative* consequences. In short, that armed against each other for many centuries, the oppressed have not been able to free themselves from their oppressors, that in a word the rod that whips them seems to grow spontaneously in the fields of all societies, without man being given the means to destroy it!

In truth, if we did not carefully and sincerely discuss the cause of all these tensions, we would remain convinced that we are truly condemned to live in eternal misery.

Certainly, what else can we say? When a hundred different forms of government succeed one another with their usual fevers, which are always taken as the solution to our woes, and when *legitimate* grievances still exist afterward, as before...

What can we say when men, whose every profession of faith seems so certain to be a sure guarantee of their selflessness, nevertheless only end up as tyrants?

What can we say when one popular party triumphs over another only to further tangle the tyrannical thread?

What can we say, finally, about those thousands of martyrs whose names appear in letters of blood on every page of the history of our revolutions?

It is indeed true that at first glance it seems to us that the rod that strikes us is guided by a just hand, that the sword that pierces us rightly drinks our blood and that all our tears flow for the greater glory of the heavens...

O shame! Were you never great enough to silence those who prove by stupefying logic that man is forever condemned to the violence of his fellow men; that the path of evil is the one we must follow, just as the hope of a future life is the only remedy we need for our ills!...

However, if the desire to enjoy by anticipation delivered us from this bad faith that pursues us, and if with an upright, sincere and persevering mind, we were willing to analyze the mysteries and decrees of the murderous force that commands us, we would soon read a better destiny in the future; for slavery is repugnant to man, it is true, but the time is approaching when authority will wound him to the heart!

This done, humanity, resting on the dignity of man, will march unhindered on the path to its glory and happiness. While today this feeble and dying man hates his brothers and still cries: *Hosanna in excelsis Deo!*

But we open our eyes and see:

That the *Deus* of the Latins is only the *Theos* of the Greeks, that *Jesus* is a copy of *Buddha*, that the *Sad-der* of the Mobed is the original of *Genesis*, that Muhammad refutes Jehovah, that the Pontiff of Rome condemns the Greek Pontiff, that the Church of the East wants to stifle its rival, that Christians with or without a pontiff, that Calvinists, Lutherans, Jacobites, Nestorians, Iconoclasts, Anabaptists, Presbyterians, Contemplatives, Shakers and a host of other sects are nothing but the fruits of insatiable greed.

Could you imagine, without laughing with pity, this innumerable troop of religionists, each in their own way, cursing and making fun of one another, but all fanatics to the point of sealing their stubborn beliefs with their blood?

O sweet irony! Sustain my gaiety and make me laugh at the Vedas, the Koran, the Bibles and the Zendavesta.

Make me laugh at all these indications of ignorance called Fot in China, Budso in Japan, Buddha in Tibet, Jésus, Krisen, or Jesus among us. At all these merciful gods who want only stupidity, murder, and carnage... I almost fell silent...

Well! Why should I laugh at some without mocking others?

Doesn't belief offer the same stupidity everywhere? Doesn't it give rise, wherever it reigns, to the fixed idea of dying for the glory of an imaginary being?

Catholicism has had its inquisitors, but let one go and laugh somewhere in India at the way one purifies one's soul, and one will see that cow dung, like Eucharistic paste, is something that could cost the laughers dearly.

Now, since I have begun and have had the courage to laugh at this doctrine, will I be so cowardly as to spare the others? Because in India you would not honor the spirits of cows, and in Kalmyk or on the banks of Lake Baikal you would mock those who consecrate the excrement of their pope; just as among Muslims you would not take a single step to go to Mecca, I would have to keep quiet about a few strands of flour ground into a paste, and even more so, believe in the presence of at least an immense God in that small piece of refined and consecrated bread called a host!

Well, if I cannot do it out loud, I will laugh to myself at Fot and his laws, at Moses and Sinai, as well as at the twenty-four thousand nocturnal apparitions of the angel Gabriel to the Prophet coming to dictate the laws of the Koran, which promise the elect ever-renewing favors and always chaste virgins! I will laugh at the partisans of Ali and Omar, these two sister but rival sects, mutually overwhelming each other with curses and insults; of the trouble the Reformed Church takes to be the least absurd and the most bearable, of Catholicism and its faith, of the Pope and his indulgences, of priests and rabbis, of the son as old as his father, of this woman who remained a virgin at the risk of losing her mother's name, and even of this salt water to which they give the power to repurify innocence...

Of this piece of leaven that we eat with the voracity of a cannibal and whose destiny is the same as that of any other food.

I will laugh at Adam, Eve and the forbidden fruit, as well as at their creator who, not content with having punished them, still condemns their children, whose evil

would clearly be his own work! Yes, I will laugh at this fantastic being, for whom nothing is impossible, except to find a way to be happy without cruel and ferocious revenge... I will laugh at Christianity, grafted onto the Jewish religion, which it burdens like the antlers of a deer burdening its head...

I will laugh at the Jew, the Christian and the Muslim, relying in turn on the Koran stolen from Genesis, on Genesis plundered from the Sad-der and the Zendavesta.

I will laugh at the long contemplation of a single being occupying the entire universe before his six-day labor, at his manifestation and at his whim to engender himself to become Brahma, Chib, and Vishnu, creator, destroyer and preserver!...

I will laugh at the pride of the former, at the victory of the latter and at the trouble Vishnu took to preserve the world, having been transformed into a wild pig!... At the courage he still had, despite being bitten on the foot by the devastating serpent Calengam, to crush its head.

I will laugh at hell, at the places of darkness and the Ondera, at the Celestial Bridge of the Turks, so fragile and so sharp that a single fly, because of its wings, could perhaps cross it without fear of falling into the abyss of the condemned that lies precisely below!

Finally, I will laugh at all religions, their relics and their mysteries, so that I may retain the impartiality and reason to mock every fanatic.

Well! What, could five hundred religions in the arena with their hundred million swords raised crush me better under my reason than if I were a Samanean or any other idiot wanting to fight against the fiery fanatics of the four hundred and ninety-nine other ways of believing, all more or less contrary to mine? No, no... Although I know that a presentiment, the essence of which I know very well... would drive them to rise up in fury against anyone who would not accept any... But what does this presentiment matter to me, when I admit no reticence in such a serious matter — and, in passing, I beg the man of good faith to let me know a reason better than the one that animates me, in order to prevent me from reproaching all these sects for what they reproach each other for? Is there for the wise man an obligation to be a hypocritical or a mad?

Let us admit, however, that by cunning and to ensure my victory and facilitate the evidence of my reason, while pretending to be in search of the best of beliefs, I should sometimes make myself a Brahmin, a Jew or a Christian.



From the height of the pulpit of one of these camps, could I not confuse the other two and vice versa by passing from the first to the second and the latter to the last?

A Brahmin will say yes to me for the Jews and the Christians... A Christian will say yes to me for the Brahmins, and the Jews and the poor children of Israel will say the same to me for the others... So that an upright and impartial mind, devoid of animosity for his belief, could not help laughing with me at so many contradictions!

Let us not tire our memory too much by trawling through the customs of past centuries; the times in which we live and the things that surround us must be the focus of our discussions, just as all our efforts must tend to make our condition better and more honorable. Besides, what is the point of taking so much trouble to explain all the stupidities of believers, all the absurdities by which they have been duped? Is it necessary to have a thousand pages written in attractive language to give a straighter path to the mind of the credulous? Does not everyone know enough today, if they wish, to appreciate at their true value so many enormities; which we would like to combat? Is not one of the first articles of faith of Christianity that we must believe that Gabriel wanted to carry the soul of Moses on a chariot of fire? — but that God spared him the trouble by doing it himself!

If this alone cannot suffice to turn a Christian away from Christianity and its laws, it is a very painful thing; but I will always consider foolish and simple anyone who would constantly wash the backside of a buzzard to clean it; it is a place that always gets dirty.

Let credulous Christians (for many are not) believe whatever they want. Let them believe in Edith, Lot's wife, transformed into a pillar of salt. Let them even believe in her menses: if they want, they have the right to be mad as we have the right to pity them, and no philosopher, I suppose, has had the rash idea of bringing them to their senses. It is to the undecided that we address ourselves, to relieve them of the pain of uncertainty, and to the unbelievers, to give them reason for their disbelief, so that in future races, if the reign of truth is still far from us, there will remain men to oppose the stupidity of liars, who will perhaps prevent the fables of Tom Thumb and Gargantua from taking the rank and dignity of our canonical laws...

So much the worse if the Muslims are stupid enough to believe in the divine laws of the Dove who simply came to eat grain from Mohammed's ear, who had

accustomed it to this deceptive maneuver, or to believe with the same confidence in the docility of the mare Alborac, on whose back Mohammed made the journey to the heavens. All this is still very painful; but let these poor Muslims believe, then. It is the best thing for them to do. Above all, let them be submissive...

As for me, I declare that it is not the history of all the gods we are told about that has made me incredulous. It is only the fanciful idea they generally have of wanting to be visible everywhere other than where we could see them. If a king in France had the whim to make himself evident and notorious in this way, a regency would not wait for his fall; everyone would cry: To Charenton! To Charenton!...

But the only God who seems to me tolerable to acknowledge, if indeed this name must not disappear from all language, has no absolute will over us; it is the intellectual fluid having the universe as its reservoir and which refines itself in the springs of our imagination, even more mysteriously than the nutritive sweats of the earth are distributed to the roots of the plants that absorb them. This fluid gives us faculties that are regulated by no other law than those we impose on them.

Thinking otherwise only leads to prejudices that creep into our intelligence and engulf it under heaps of absurd ideas that ultimately rob the soul of its greatest strength, its greatest right, that of free will, making us nothing but subjugated, ignorant and unhappy beings.

At this point, one of two things must be true: either we are free or we are nothing but carnal machines, dependent on a great, strong power that controls all our actions.

If we are free, it is up to us to delve into the folds and recesses of our conscience to see if we always act according to the sentiments of irreproachable conduct.

But he who makes God a supernatural being, with arbitrary wishes over the world, soon makes him responsible for his actions, or at least no longer takes the trouble to delve into the depths of his heart to see if the latter truly enjoys all the tranquility due to one whose conduct conforms to the laws of humanity.

Now, no longer knowing himself, it is no longer surprising that he should come to disregard his fellow man!

This is how one becomes fanatical to the point of madness and daily forgets the respect and devotion one owes to other persons.

No, it is not up there in the celestial regions that one must transport one's mind to discuss the only power that reason allows us to call God. We would lose our minds there, like so many others, if we wanted to constrain our imagination. Let us then leave these worlds to those who inhabit them, and let us discuss with our hearts if at least we want answers.

Those who believe in a master God respect him only because they fear his wrath!... Now, I ask you, what honor is there in that for this idol and those who worship him?

They still dare to call him the Almighty Father! Something that undoubtedly imposes on us the title of Brothers... Truly, would it not make one shudder with horror if one knew a father who, although less powerful, would allow his own children to tear each other apart before his eyes! So it was with the barbarians who created this vampire in their own image!

But it is much more obvious that to live peacefully with oneself, it is enough to question one's heart and probe one's conscience. Is it not certain that if we live according to the same principle, from the same elements, this power of each of us could not, without suffering violence, be guided against the direction of our reason, that is to say, that we could not, without departing from or deviating from the laws of humanity, constrain ourselves to feelings other than those dictated by the principle of our moral and material complexion.

For if we were to enjoy another life after the one we spend on earth, and that this second life were to be eternally good or bad, would it not be to ourselves alone that the right and the honor of preparing ourselves for it belongs, without needing to believe that this existence depended on a superior being, unless it is said that we are here below only the cogs of a powerful and invisible engine.

If this were so, are not all the movements of a cog the consequences of some force? And if this force is primarily spiritual, would not all these cogs still function according to its desires? Then, for whom would the punishments we are told about be? For whom would Purgatory, Hell, the Devil and his train be? And above all, to render justice to whom? To the engine? But it would be the the thing that demanded it! Demand, then, that the pendulum of a clock stop when the spring that moves it forces it to move!

I believe that the best reason that could still be drawn from this foolish hypothesis is that the engine would want, through its punishments, to render justice not to itself, but to humanity.

Now, to live in peace and die in the same way, let us fulfill our duties towards men; if after that the engine punished us, it would be shameful for it!

To do violence to our conscience, which is nothing other than a part of human reason, is to do violence to the body of which we are a member, and to believe in the God-Being of whom we are told, we must truly have a mind made outside of all reasonable supposition; thus, can the morality that this system gives us be more frightening, more hypocritical and more atrocious?

As for me, I laugh at those who might point the finger at me and cry anathema, and those themselves have had ignorance or the vice of an infamous inveterate lust. I raise my hand in front of the universe; let them be observed carefully and it will be seen if I speak the truth.

Their *powerful, good, vengeful and wicked* God is only the product of a malignant fantasy whose goal was a combination of hierarchical powers in which, alas!, they have been marvelously successful; For, with this fact, a dead end has been dug for the intelligence, in the void of which they encounter only uncertainty, impotence or madness. And then, is it not easy for the *covetous* to appropriate what they desire when their victims could only oppose them with a *mutilated body and soul*?

Let us pause for a moment.

It is important, however, to know that the crimes of this erroneous doctrine today make it almost necessary to the man it has brought down, and that it is unfortunately for this reason that it is now more difficult to combat and overthrow.

I have truly observed myself that most unbelievers only disbelieve because misfortune has constantly tormented them on earth, and that once they have reached the height of their bitterness, the impiety they manifest is nothing more than boasting implicit in a disgust for life. Let us beware of such people... for evils have so irritated their minds that they are already renegades only out of revenge, and when rage accompanies madness, the furious are to be feared!

It must be without hatred or anger that we take the beacon of humanity to guide us; otherwise, for the greater peace of mind of his fellow men, madmen must endure all that is astonishing and humiliating in this old imaginary lantern called God.

I repeat again, there are those who worship God out of fear. These are weak-willed people who see him as a vampire constantly banging the knocker their ignorance has riveted to the door of their brain.

Others worship him out of selfishness; these are the most numerous and believe so well in the inequality of men that, since they pray to him, they still expect to enjoy the privilege of being his protégés.

Others, finally, and these are the most to be pitied, having languished constantly since they came into the world, only hope in him, for when nothing more offers hope to the one whom evils have stupefied, their soul often seeks consolation in visions, chimeras, which their mind creates nonetheless, beyond what is both imaginable and true.

For this reason, it must not be said that belief in this God revives the hope of the one who suffers. No, no, it only serves to give them cowardly patience, and that is just what the exactors of this world need in order to make it easy for them to continue their demands.

Yes, it softens and even removes the thought of stiffening against those who deceive you, and while the simpleton thinks about eternity, heaven, hell, purgatory, God and the devil, there are columnists who know how to take advantage of it, no doubt so as not to give the lie to this adage: That there is no harm but good comes!

We must understand the means used to deceive the multitude, whom we then call vile or contemptible; otherwise, belief takes root, and for the love of God, we suffer all evils, leaving our children the sole and sad legacy of *servility*!...

Blessed indeed are those who could live by religion and prayer; but we are no longer in the age of miracles. Today, for the most fervent of our evangelists to be content with a fishbone, one would have to admit that it would strangle him... something he will never venture as long as the credulity of those who listen to him allows him the means to have good meat at his disposal.

However, the reason for disbelief does not require us to curse God! Do not forget this, on the contrary, remember it; but let us disavow it, let us conscientiously deny it when so much disbelief has convinced us... Whoever cursed him would unfortunately still believe in him too much, and an inevitable fate, the result of his weakness or bitterness alone, would strike him sooner or later, even if only in the midst of a few hallucinations.

Yes, indeed, it is a delicate and conscience-shattering thing to want to force oneself to disbelieve without anything compelling you to do so or supporting a just disbelief. But once the deceivers' veil has allowed us to see the scheme, it would also be cowardly on our part to accept and follow without question the abusive laws they preach to us, not with devotion, but with determination; not for the love of their God, but for the love of themselves.

Monsignor Dupanloup is riled up, rages and curses! The proportion of the exploited increases every day. Perhaps, emboldened by their numbers, religion, along with bayonets, will no longer be of anything to their fate.

How could one believe in freedom if the mind is so easily distorted in favor of dependence? As long as the mind tolerates any *subordination*, the body must endure *servitude*; this is a disastrous but inevitable consequence of any belief in God.

Let the child first be taught his duties toward his fellow men, instead of accustoming his imagination to mysteries and later, if he wishes, he will entertain eternal visions. Then there will be far fewer madmen and more honest people in society.

I myself admit that religions most commonly command praiseworthy things, that they urge their believers to love one another, that they counsel self-respect and devotion to other men, etc. But once again, for a single one of these exhortations to be practiced, the principle of dependence from which it emanates must not lead the mind in a way that contradicts this morality.

Nothing could be easier to understand: a grandmaster wants or demands representatives, the representatives, lackeys. And when you have lackeys, you use them; it becomes almost natural.

I have more hope in Catholicism than in any other religion; I seem to see it closer to throwing off its own chains, because in it people are beginning to laugh at clerical contortions, which no longer pass for gravity; because, finally, the Catholic himself knows how to invoke irony and often mocks a missal as much as a grimoire.

Let us beware; mockery is an extreme that borders on contempt, and if we mock, it is certain that our nephews, if they are not corrected by a rectification, a reform of the Church, will mock it completely.

Society is incontestably in disorder, a disarray that pierces the heart of those who observe it, and every day, as if to advance its ruin, murderers seek to complicate the knot that binds it to misfortune, to confusion. In vain, nature seeks to pierce the debris that always entangles it; new darkness is cast over it like a veil, which must steal it from the sight of humanity, and constantly one hears the muffled cries of a multitude who languish and die unhappily.

The tears, the complaints and the weapons of those who suffer have yet been unable to change anything in their distressing condition.

We don't understand each other, they say; the cowards hide. And they do well! I would reply, for the Gordian knot of their salvation is not in the string of tumults.

What's the use of rebelling today, if tomorrow you reestablish or allow to be reestablished the colossus that crushes you, if tomorrow in other forms you reconstitute the teeth that bite you, the jaw that crushes you, the throat that swallows you, the stomach that digests you, if tomorrow, in a word, the authority you have overthrown is reborn fresher, stronger, and consequently more violent and more formidable, what's the point? Answer me then.

For many years, the democracy has been astonished to see its soldiers so scattered and discordant; but nothing is less astonishing, in my opinion. The division of interests divides the interested parties, among whom there is a permanent dissension, which ensures and guarantees the principle from which it draws its source, which unfortunately often forces the exploited to be the exploiter of another.

Let us console ourselves, however, because despite everything, nature is emerging and the democracy, purifying itself, is preparing to follow its laws. Then there is only one cry left: that of independence.

Is there a tyrant who, separated from his murderous troops, would dare utter a single word opposed to this cry? No. We have proof of it. This proven, I declare tyranny master of our battlefields by *force majeure* and not by right. Between wolves and lambs, the reason of the former will always prevail, for the lambs will always be weak and the wolves always ferocious; but fortunately, there is no such natural distinction between men; and if some mistreat others, it is a reign that loses a day of its time every day, allowing us to hope that all men will be men, at the risk of having the same *right* to ferocity that wolves have among themselves, something that the weakest of these animals mocks, since it does not fear the teeth of its fellows.

But let us approach the subject of our discord without pomposity or subterfuge, and without any regard for either party as well.

I say both parties, because I see no point in discussing the different nuances that compose them, since in the chaos of their opposition everything ends up in these two main branches: exploiters and exploited.

Neither destiny nor the gods stigmatize our race; it is doomed to one camp or the other by one very tangible fact: it is fortune that decides the rank it must occupy in the assembly of its members.

Today, tyranny has lost so much of its prestige that it can no longer comfortably cover itself with deceptive words, and the dictionary of human classification now contains little more than rich and poor...

Now, all the fascinations so fatal to some will henceforth reveal their importance by being displayed before the eyes of those they seek to deceive, and each of us will be able to unequivocally classify ourselves under our respective banners while awaiting the moment of the true and final battle.

Man, and it does not take a great effort of intelligence to discover this, is composed in such a way that a slope as attractive as it is irresistible draws him towards that which will bring him the most joy, happiness and enjoyment, just as he will always seek with the same instinct to distance himself from anything that could displease him or cause him pain.

And certainly, who among us would be so foolish as to call this feeling anything other than holy egoism? Is it not natural to every being, to everything that lives in this world? As for me, I almost seem to perceive it in the leaps that a stone makes as it crosses an abyss; would one not say that its impulses come from this spirit of self-preservation and that in the length of its leaps ten formidable rocks could have broken it?

It is only to attract my reader's attention that I give them this exaggerated idea, so that their understanding may better focus on the strength of this instinct.

This egoism is so natural that the most devoted among us will always and ceaselessly seek to secure for himself the things that will at least protect him from misery... Well! I hardly know what excusable language this one could use to prove wrong the other who would seek to possess the same things by all possible means; when he instinctively feels that the social principle, far from guaranteeing him the



protection and friendship of his brothers, silently places him at odds with their hostilities.

Consider rather the progress made by cunning, deceit and wickedness; in our poor society, nothing can give you a more striking example than that of the disorder that reigns there. Yes, the instinct of self-preservation is a very natural thing, but under the influence of the false principle that guides us, it takes on an additional quality: it becomes criminal.

There is no point in striving to make it disappear; it dates back as far as the world and will live as long as the world; only under the principle of truth will it cease to denature man.

Property as it exists today is the fruit of a law upheld by clever people who want to live at the expense of those they dominate. Like all human laws, it is unjust and murderous, truly bringing happiness to no one, not even to those it protects.

I add, "to those it protects," for any man who lives below or beyond the position assigned to him by human reason cannot experience true happiness, so that in the society in which we live, satisfaction seems to flee before us as we seek to grasp it.

Understood as it is currently understood, property is the source of all evil! It provides some with the means to live at the expense of others, it imprints on those who possess it a spirit of domination and it inevitably leads those who desire it, first to indifference for their fellow men, then imperceptibly to the cruelty of seeing them suffer without feeling any keen pain. It distorts human intelligence by igniting in the heart of each individual the fire of egoism, whose dull and treacherous flames constantly devour them. It drives love and friendship from the heart and prevents our union by destroying human solidarity . . . . .

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Under its power, most children are born from a transaction, a trade called marriage, without there being love or sympathy between the subjects who give birth to them.

Should we be surprised then that in the society in which we live there are so many monsters with shameful passions, since it is not in love, but rather in evil that these children have taken their essence, and then can't this race alone provide ambiguities about the original quality of man?

However, it is not from this race alone that the wickedness, cruelty, revenge and laziness of man, of which so many of our fellow men are accused, come from!

Misfortune makes us wicked, the lack of everything makes us thieves or discourages us, and it is a false principle that denatures man to the point of not loving his brothers, of being more harmful than devoted to them.

To support this principle and perpetuate its crime, we pretend to guarantee public peace by increasing the number of police officers, building new prisons, doubling or tripling the wages of those who forge chains or rivet them to the feet of the exploited poor. Ah! If, instead of stupefying, misfortune gave intelligence, we would see something quite different, and this despite the proliferation of police officers! . . . . .

Humanity, at all costs, wants to regain its rights, even if it has to take the most shameful means to achieve this; so much the worse if truth can only reign over lies, despite the wounds it receives from them. Thus, instead of living happily and perpetuating our happiness by a natural principle, we will all become thieves and consequently all robbed! And if, however, we cannot manage to be equal, we will at least be similar in that respect.

What can be done about this evil? If, to achieve well-being, we are forced to take the path of vice, theft will inevitably become a progress... That is all.

How could you expect it to be otherwise? To keep pace with the progress being made in commerce and industry, the worker's intelligence must develop and, as it develops, this worker will better understand that those for whom he works are themselves the greatest thieves on earth, whom he must seek to imitate in order to live in turn at the expense of a few others who are *behind*.

It therefore becomes madness to ask men for rectitude regarding current property, *as long as solidarity between them does not exist through the principle that must perpetuate it*. And the best of us must now seek to possess, if only out of foresight, for ourselves or for our children.

M. de Laménais had asked for this rectitude in the name of fathers, sons, and all possible Holy Spirits, and the world could not have better changed than it has. Had he himself laid his hand on the earth, had he felt it tremble, had he seen the waves of the sea rise and the peaks of all the mountains stir, had he thought that peoples must rise in tumult and kings turn pale beneath their diadems — all this would be very fine and above all very noisy, but would prove nothing, absolutely

nothing, for the happiness of mankind, if, as he claims, there must always be poor people.

As much twenty-five thousand as one alone, if the latter is poor by some principle. And let the ladies of the mountains not bother to take up the cause of their inhabitants, for such suppositions are hardly reassuring!

So, Mr. de Laménais claims that we must destroy sin (he should have added selfishness), the germ of which is in every man. I would prefer that we begin by destroying the cause of this sin; this would be much more effective and less misleading, because otherwise we would appear to be trying to empty a *vase* into which an *eternal gutter* would fall. Isn't it obvious that if you don't make this gutter disappear, you will never be done with the water in your vessel. What's the point of starting with the effect before the cause?

The gutter is the false principle, the water that drips from it is sin and the vessel that can do nothing less than receive it is the human heart.

Now, what must be done to deliver the human heart from this sin?

Certainly, I detest parables too much to be content with recommending baptism in order to be a child of a God or a Church; there are already so many of these baboons that there's no point in adding to them.

Without any hesitation, I'll tell you everything I think on the subject. Too bad if I don't express myself gracefully, for fine words would make my abominable frankness much less impertinent.

Listen to me, however, without being too alarmed.

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If there is anything powerful in this world, it is the reign of tyranny, that colossus with countless claws ceaselessly tearing at all the peoples whose palpitating breasts cry out for freedom.

Certainly, one could find nothing more deplorable than the evils that overflow onto the earth as a result of this murderous principle. The *laws* that should be for us only free conventions, which we could change as the future brings us new ideas, because often the next day we would not be able to be content with what made us happy yesterday, are for most of us heavy chains, keeping us riveted to

unhappiness, while the traitors who bind us to them roam at their leisure the fields of our prosperity!

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Labor, which should be for man only a subject of *distraction*, has become stupefying under this *unbearable* and *bloody* empire, because many are forced to devote themselves to it beyond their strength to feed their own tormentors!

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Women have little more than a superficial charm for us, which leaves us entirely as soon as they become nothing more than a subject of ambition, because men, driven by the desire to possess, often sacrifice mutual love while preserving secrets and eternal regrets.

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For most families, every child born into the world is a source of new fears; for who knows the misery and evils that are inevitably reserved for them?...

A young man leaves his father's roof because he can no longer, without suffering too much, shelter under it, or because, lacking bread for his father, he devotes himself to earning it elsewhere. Alas! Can we be certain that he will escape the whirlwind of alarms rumbling around him and that he will never fall into some crack in the abyss dug by the lightning of the wicked who govern us!

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A young girl says goodbye to her mother and sets off for the city, where she hopes to earn an honorable living; but the tears she sheds as she leaves the bush under which she has picked the first flowers of some sweet spring are perhaps the last that the purity of her soul will cause to flow. She is already in the service of a house where, subject to passive obedience, she soon no longer knows how to refuse the desires of an idle man for whom she is nothing more than an object of hideous lust. There her sorrows begin, for the poor child, having never known lies, believed the captious words of the perfidious man who wanted only her virtues...

She leaves this house, unable to understand the cause that drives her out. . . . Could she understand that to satisfy the culprit who robbed her of her honor, new

victims are needed? And the tears she sheds are nothing but tears of regret! From then on, each step she takes diminishes the distance from the place of horror where she must succumb under the weight of shame and contempt. . . . Besides, would she dare return to her world where, once, if not happy, she could at least reach out to a friend without the latter's eyes falling on the purple spots that now cover her skin as if to warn man of the danger that follows her? . . . No, no, she is still the shameful mistress of a surgical student, who, as a final insult to misfortune, will perhaps laugh as he one day tears open with his scalpel the black, gangrenous pustules that will cover the unfortunate woman's body. . . . .

Ah! What then are all these misfortunes, and can they be greater? Alas! All that could be said about them to those who are ignorant of them would be to their ears nothing more than a tiresome sound, which would only make their hearts tremble for a moment.

But the man who is ready to sacrifice his own peace, in order to better appreciate the immense calamities to which the exploited martyrs are subjected, quickly sees through the dark veil of iniquity held by the profane hand of lies that governs us, the horrible scene of which I wish to speak. Then an inner voice cries out to him: "For so many victims: Vengeance! Vengeance! . . . . ."

It is only the foolish, the stupid and the unkind who do not suffer at the thought of so many evils, and only a scoundrel who mocks them! . . . . .

What!... There is not a single spot of earth that is not soiled with the crime of servitude and oppression. Not a city that has not resounded, as many times as there are grains of sand in its walls, with the cries of misfortune and despair! And could the inner man, whose nature had not yet been changed by a false principle, reflect on such misfortunes without a secret power awakening within him, only to fall asleep again when he had found the salutary beverage for which the poor are thirsty? The poor are thirsty, and the only drink he asks for... is liberty! But absolute liberty, liberty without intermediaries, liberty without other laws than those that will germinate within him. Finally, this liberty that is *born* of independence and which could only be hostile to the one that spies on the worker to live by his sweat and his blood!!

Now, to enjoy this liberty, tyranny must be prevented and, as has already been said: The king is certainly only one tyrant in a kingdom.

A king is only the summit of a governmental pyramid, the base of which is calculated to maintain him.

As long as this base remains unbroken, it would be pointless to sacrifice yourself to tearing down its summit in order to acquire liberty. And if some fools or ambitious people were to say to you: "Tear down this King to recreate another governmental pyramid," even if the latter were to bear the name of a *republic*, laugh in their faces and say: "Long live the king!" Otherwise, you would be like someone who, to protect himself from the shade of a tree that causes it, cuts off its top. And you would soon see other branches multiplying in abundance around the wound you caused, much heavier and more vigorous than the summit, which had almost reached its height.

Consider rather the neighboring or distant republics. Apart from a few less customs, do they not have the same evils to deplore? With this in mind, in the United States, no citizen can say upon getting out of bed: Tonight, safe and sound, I'll go back to bed... Because all that's missing from this governmental pyramid is one of Queen Victoria's cousins, and alongside tyranny there can only grow a liberty that is rightly called license. Because, finally, to substitute a multitude of underhanded monarchists for a king or an emperor is murder following the permission of crime!...

No country enjoying true liberty is yet known to anyone.

Now, let no one say, then, that we must take this or that country as an example, because the mastery that reigns there is called a republic: perhaps, more than anywhere else, the number of those who languish with hunger is limited there. But that would only prove that many citizens would have sacrificed themselves to increase the number of exploiters who, in turn, dominate other exploited people.

To those who praise this to deplore, tell them to finish off the word and say libertinage... Can't we see that the slope that draws them is nothing more than a boast of wanting to be admired at their leisure by the imbeciles of the people, before whom they clown on stage like so many puppets, whose colorful clothes attract a crowd of curious onlookers who gobble up their ointment.

What!... Are not the sufferings of one person as deplorable as those of a thousand or more? If you were the patient, you who were going to contradict me, what would you honestly think of what I am saying....

Exactly what I think, I bet... especially if you understand (and it is true) that your suffering is caused by a reason that could make thousands of victims like you. Would it be fair to think that everything works in perfect order, when three-quarters of humanity suffers and dies oppressed by the other quarter . . . . .

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I agree with you that it takes a long time to arrive at this philosophy... that one must review in one's memory so many other ways of seeing things, which depend on us or on which we depend, and that often one begins by being a moderate republican, then, more deplorable, an extreme republican, or rather, furiously austere, and that ultimately, when age or any other reason has calmed your compassionate ardor, you beat yourself on the forehead for not having been able to grasp anything useful to humanity.

However, beware... Don't throw the handle after the tool just yet. And I am convinced of one thing, that you have at least discovered the clouds that darken the sky of your social horizon...

Now, although it is true that one must have experienced hunger to understand its horrors, descend nonetheless to the horizon of the one who lacks everything, and you will find other clouds there whose darkness will be much more thick.

And you will then see that your mind will no longer dwell on noise, tumult or moderation. That it is from authority that the plague of the human race comes to us, and that the order of nature allows no other subjection than that which it carries in its immutable principle.

But could one believe that in order to prevent tyranny, one must begin at its summit? Precisely the opposite is true. Our fathers, though with the best will in the world, instead of showing us the social truth, only showed us the scaffold by inevitably slitting each other's throats, down to the last man.

Cutting off the head of a king and allowing the principle that requires this man to exist, which requires so many other petty kings to fatten themselves at the

expense of the proletariat, is absolutely nothing more than a sword stroke in fast-flowing water to block its current!! It is therefore not worth going to expose one's head to the scaffold for such a small thing or at least risking the torments of an eternal prison.

I've said it before and I'll say it again:

Laugh in the faces of the simpletons or schemers who, for such nonsense, would cry to you: To arms!

You will see in some only a mass of robust flesh whose brutality cannot be contained by their small dose of wit. In others, only a bunch of young people whose ardent nature drives them to rush to the aid of humanity, but whose veil of inexperience hides the cause of its suffering.

Moreover, these two kinds of revolutionaries soon become alike once the Cavaignacs' cannons have swept through their streets.

There are others more culpable and you don't have to study them much to discover in them this unbridled ambition, which has as its goal the position of a king, a minister, or a deputy, while they are often cut out only to be rural policemen! But do you want to see them cry with frustration? Laugh in their faces.

I said, or meant to say, that to achieve true liberty, one had to wait for the governmental pyramid to disintegrate of its own accord! I maintain this.

Any attempt beyond this hypothesis would only prove the bizarreness of brutal force and ignorance.

Revolutions are always as bloody as they are tumultuous, and the terror they inspire is not without reason... Why?... Because until now, their victories have been crowned only with the cypresses of a dull vengeance, and the dreadful cries that escape the throats of the conquerors only serve to excite this poor multitude who always fear that the trouble will escape them, knowing only too well that they have nothing more to lose from this confused noise.

Far from encouraging this liberticidal and bloodthirsty intoxication, I will always strive for silence, so as not to have to deplore the atrocities of a barbaric revolution and to water with our tears the places stained with the blood of those who could have become our friends!

Let us suppose that a government is dislocated, then we must show courage and resolve to prevent its reconstitution in any other form or color whatsoever.



For, to exist, a power must be homicidal, murder being the daily fruit of its instinct for self-preservation.

For independence, for its daughter liberty, let us sacrifice ourselves! To arms, to arms!! But for men, for rebels, silence... For, far from freeing the world from the clutches that grip it, we would only enslave it further. And the sword of an emperor or a king is still better than the cutlasses of a fierce and unreasoning people constantly stirred up by their own miseries.

Now, let us wait... What! Would anyone claim that it was the exploited, the barricade-makers who overthrew the July Monarchy?... It wasn't even our poor republicans.

If Monsieur Guisot were here and would be willing to take the trouble to be frank for a moment, he would reveal the cause of this dislocation... he who every day saw the state's treasures and the repertoire of its diplomatic ruses diminish. Certainly, there was enough of it for a few other ambitious people to consider looking at themselves in the polished wood of the throne, and if I took my hat off to many of our great orators, it would in any case only be to salute superior men... Unfortunately, not all superior men understand the social question, and Monsieur de Lamartine is indeed one of them, despite his sublime Girondins and all his banquets.

I agree, however, that men like him gathered other men, who overthrew Louis-Philippe... Louis-Philippe, that's right, but that's all... And what happened to the oafs of the gang? What did they gain from this game? They became... more unhappy than the day before! And gained a few more rivets on their chains... and that's all as well!!!....

Stay away, I tell you. It is only men with immoderate desires for glory, fortune, and wealth who can make kings tremble. There will always be enough of them to give you the opportunity to show your worth.

Don't you see that as long as there is a hierarchical power, even if it means breaking their necks, they will spy on each other, and so on from the last to the first? This is what causes kings to fall, especially in France, where it is well known that their throne was once accessible to the one called the Little Corporal.

Let these ambitious people have their way. There's nothing to say to them... and they're very big on revolutions.

But you, if you are sincerely republicans, that is to say, if, by placing your hand on your heart, you can guarantee me that it beats for humanity, I, in turn, will guarantee you that you will be far from turbulent and that your head will never fall for any ambitious faction whatsoever.

The poor demand liberty... Isn't that right? Do you believe that they can be seriously free, unless they have the right to earn their living independently of anyone? No... Liberty is the daughter of independence. Now, without independence, there is no liberty! Would we allow ourselves to be deceived once again, to the point of believing that a girl can come into the world without her mother!! In that case, for the greater public tranquility, beware of the guillotine! Impossible to avoid it... because the liberty we would possess would be nothing but a monstrosity that would give us the instinct for an evil that all the religions and all the priests in the world could not prevent.

But if, on the contrary, the liberty of all men stems from perfect independence, then each of us has a place on earth, like that of a bird in a blooming lilac bush.

In order to believe in and understand such happiness, we must no longer consider man from the perspective of current liberty, and even less from that which the turbulent claim...

All these liberties are nothing but licenses, which, to be contained, require priests, policemen, judges and executioners, etc., etc. . . . . .

And if all these gentlemen work, if only to stupefy and chain the one who lends his assistance to such a work, we must feed them, for they are not all at fault! . . . . .

Pardon to the reader if I insist, but please tell me in good faith if a man is free when he is forced to work for another before working for himself?... Yes, free to be a thief or at least a rebel! In that case, I thank you; for there's no point in increasing the prison staff; there are already enough of them!

Man is wicked, they say... Well, what surprises me is that he isn't more so with such waste!

Really, one can only laugh at a republican who wants to change one government at all costs to reestablish another! What does this madman want? He would be better called: troublemaker. Trouble, disorder, fifty savages for one

barbarian. One hundred deputies for one prince. In short, a thousand sores for one ulcer. Is it really worth all the fuss about so many horrors!!

No, no, I will never be so republican as to trade the ugly for the appalling. And I will not even bother to see in the street whether the barricades are deserted or animated, as long as we are not prepared to discuss at least these four points:

1° Land, being rightly considered the principal part of our primary heritage, is inalienable in any form and traffic whatsoever;

2° All uncultivated land returns to the public domain to be distributed as an immovable instrument of labor;

3° Only the products of labor are considered tradable and individual property;

4° All domestic service is considered degrading, and anyone who serves a master will no longer be a citizen.

From this, it is easy to conclude that every citizen is faced with some sort of labor, and that our great landowners of today will only be able to protest the skill with which they have been raised from the ranks of cannibals, drinking and eating the sweat, blood and labor of their fellow men.

But what! Reestablish a Chamber of Deputies... a mess where poor imbeciles can do no less than be mocked, defied, scorned and ridiculed, like so many scullions who would like to live at the table of their bourgeois!

Oh heavens, the ignorant!... Them, to govern France! They are tyrants who might not have the prudence to imprison all those who complained, in order to spare themselves from their servants!...

Truly, the simplicity of these Republicans is inexcusable, in every way. They are liberal and moderate; they harass, overthrow and insult the clergy, but they never cease to be inexorably severe toward current property.

They therefore imagine that man comes into the world with a mind cut out for slavery. Ah! That's when one could say: Forgive them, Father, they don't know what they're doing! . . . . .

. . . . .

I reflect, in passing, that anyone is capable of believing that I'm going to reduce the number of revolutionaries!! The stupid, the narrow-minded are not stingy with such suppositions...

But let them calm down... I won't reduce anything at all, because my voice is too weak compared to the progress that is being made, and if I were to reduce something, it would, in any case, only be the number of those who call themselves republicans and who, more often than not, are nothing more than a bunch of irregulars who would slit the throats of the reds and the whites, as they say, because they are of a different color.

So much the better, then we'll know each other, and if the war between us is a war to the death, we'll at least have the advantage of knowing why. While today, one hardly dares approach in broad daylight certain individuals who shout at you insolently: Long live the republic!... Well, whoever says long live any government whatsoever, says long live a clique existing at the expense of those it governs. Whoever says: Long live absolutism, says long live lies. Whoever says: Long live a governmental republic! says long live hypocrisy! But whoever says: Down with all governments!! says down with murder! Long live independence! Long live the truth!!...

Let the liberals, the radicals, the bourgeois republicans choose. And if they want to continue exploiting the miserable worker, let them say: Long live absolutism! I advise them to do so, for there is no country where the master is more sure of his serfs than in Russia!...

How many of them would rise up in anger if they heard me; for I assure you that I am hitting the nail on the head with regard to the differences that separate us!

The boldest or most hypocritical might perhaps dare to reply that they have never thought of continuing the exploitation of man by man. So why do they mourn their immense properties? For if they no longer rely on this ignoble traffic, what do they hope to do with their domains, being the only ones to work them!

The only true property is the fruit of labor; therefore, I am far from claiming that man should not be allowed the ability to do with it as he sees fit.

But is the land, which should be the primary instrument of labor for all those who desire it, in that it is the principal part of the great domain of our first inheritance, the fruit of the labor of a few? Assuredly not, the most skilled man could not produce enough to feed a single small grain of wheat! *Can children make their mothers?*

. . . . .

The earth is the mother of all. Everyone has a right to it, just as they have a right to the sun's rays that warm us, and should have no more control over it than they do over the air, a portion of which they inhale to enliven their blood.

Now, if the earth is today subject to the laws of trade like an ordinary commodity, any product, it is a crime against humanity that affects most of us, which has become the source of all our ills and places man below the wild beast, which, although fierce in spirit, nevertheless appropriates only what conforms to the needs of its nature!

There are therefore two very distinct camps among us: that of the *rulers* and that of the *ruled*; just as there are only two principles: that of lies and that of truth...

Any intermediary between these two principles becomes an unresolved confusion. And if, out of a sense of disorder, anything can smile, it is indeed a governmental republic! Let it be accepted if one loves disorder, agitation, nonsense and the disorder of morals.

If, on the contrary, far from these contemptible assumptions, out of love for one's fellow man, out of pity for the one who goes barefoot and covered in rags to shiver at the gates where he shamefully waits for a poor piece of bread that other martyrs have earned, your spirit lifts the corner of the veil behind which true happiness is hidden, you will cry with me: Long live independence! and for that: Down with all governments!

Opportunities to move without risking what barricade-makers always risk do not arise often, it is true, but enough to do so appropriately.

At twenty, I had already seen authority drag itself along impotently and grumbling twice, and those very people who instinctively fought against it extended a hand that was both generous and protective. Fatal error, where have you led us!

Down with governments! our liberals will say!!... Gods! What will become of us? Whatever they want, by Jove! They will never have been more free; and all I can assure you of this is that if anyone is surprised, it won't be the worker: I'll bet my life on him.

So it is well understood: at the first dislocation of a power, let's be ready. Let's do like the raccoon in the fable, who waited for the monkey to pull the chestnuts

out of the fire. And if, more unfortunate than him, we can't eat them this time, we'll at least have the advantage of not having burned our fingers.

No more governments! the exploiters will cry; my God! It's disorder, anarchy, and immorality! Let's save ourselves from this country.

Ah! This fantasy will never seize them soon enough for them to escape an almost inevitable vengeance.

I demand the immorality! Because the son would no longer rejoice to see his old father heading towards the grave, to replace him as heir and owner of numerous possessions.

I demand the immorality! Because every old man, whose experience should guarantee respect, would be like a true pastor for the young, who would read at least in that deep eye of old age, so often despised today, the frankness with which he would give them wise advice.

I demand the immorality! Because without governments, there would be no more priests, and the latter would never be Christian enough or ridiculous enough to play the part of a free mass. Because, like so many other rogues, they would understand that the hour of deliverance had finally arrived, and that, without running great risk, they could no longer initiate themselves into family secrets except with the frankness of a highwayman.

I demand the immorality! Because there would no longer be a family where the authority of too good a fare leads each of its members to excesses of all kinds; where the wife, by dint of looking at herself in the mirror to please her husband, always ends up finding herself too beautiful for him; where the young man, having no occupation to calm his overly hasty strength, throws himself headlong into immoderate pleasures, by which he dies gangrenous and rotten; where the young girl who wants to do violence to herself languishes, truly unhappy; where, finally, every lie is a truth and every vice a virtue.

I demand the immorality! Because the land, being our primary instrument of labor, should no longer be alienated; that everyone, on the contrary, would work it according to their strength and tastes, without needing to feed before themselves and their families as many idlers as are needed to force man into slavery!

Because we would no longer see prisons where those who, deprived of everything, have robbed those who possess it groan.

Because, finally, having no more unfortunates than the disinherited of nature, no one would seek to fight the laws of a clique, of a government, and because of this, none of us would die as we do today, writhing in pain under the locks of evil cannibals, or would be forced into exile on some distant coast where one must perish in tears, because one loves one's fellow man.

I demand the immorality! Because, having no more governments, there would be no need for informers, judges or executioners; because the ignoble cart would rot on its wheels and the instrument of torture would no longer work. Because each individual would have a free field for their intelligence, and they would be able, within the realm of human faculties, to choose the one their mind or temperament required, and more often than not, this individual would become a superior man, around whom all men striving for progress and perfection would eagerly gather.

Because we would no longer have to support jailers or captives. We would no longer have seminaries or convents, and consequently fewer madmen to bind and less shame to endure for those who live there in a continual state of filthy debauchery.

Because there would be no more useless labor, such as, for example, the extraction of an ore that today is melted down and reduced to pig iron to be perfected into a machine of destruction! The monstrous labyrinth of our time, where the father forges and prepares the irons that will chain or kill his own children.

Because man, instead of exhausting himself building purses, prisons, chapels, or forts, would work to fill his granaries in order to prevent famines, and would have more time than he needed to occupy himself with the sciences indispensable to his reason.

Because each person's fortune would no longer hang, as it does today, by a shaky thread, whose capricious comings and goings can encounter at any moment an obstacle which, if broken, reduces the person who possessed it to despair and the most bitter misery.

Because the earth would be better distributed to the human population, and it would cease to lose the balance of its earthy or nutritive molecules, the inevitable cause of the deterioration of plants and animals, since it would no longer be forced to produce, as it does today, on a given surface area, ten times more than it should, and this to feed idlers whose real share is uncultivated.

Because our disputes would be judged by impartial friends, to whose wisdom we would submit better than to the deceit of a tribunal; which would mean that the plague of spies and judges would no longer have any reason to exist, and that ultimately everyone would be required to be a human being, so as not to risk the contempt of society, something incomparably harder to bear than all the burdens of a penal colony.

Because we would no longer see each student sacrifice twenty mistresses during studies that offer the superior mind only a field whose aridity tends to misjudge the laws of nature.

Because we would no longer see ardent girls, without position among us, forced to prostitute themselves to satisfy the basic needs of their lives or those of their families.

Because love and friendship would be victorious everywhere, and every impulse of our souls would be as pure as that of the mother who kisses the child sleeping on her knees.

All this is very fine, but impossible, some charitable souls will conscientiously claim.

I will reply to these, that, without distrusting it, they do not know what man could be and that they always identify their minds too much with the point of view of what is happening at the present time, that is to say, they reason only about the stricken, exploited man. And then, unfortunately, in this cursed principle, almost everyone strikes as they are struck. The king, his ministers, those the prefects, and so on, down to the street sweeper, the Marshal of France, his divisional or brigadier general, the latter his lieutenant, and so on down to the last barracks-dweller. The cardinal, his great bishop, and so on down to the most insignificant verger. The great lender, his direct banker, and so on, down to the least of his thieves. The great exploiter, his second exploiters, and so on, until the products that left the worker's hand for the price of... are delivered to those who consume them for a value fivefold. Finally, the first foreman, his inferior clerks, and so on, down to the last of his useless factors.

Then, all these people indirectly deal the same blow to the one who actually works, all while suffering from being exploited themselves.

Oh, worker! When will you understand that instead of asking for work, you must first ask for and acquire your independence? Then we will see if, having



stopped being beaten, you are still wicked. No, no, you will no longer be, for patience, at the present time, is unfortunately all too evident proof of this. Then all covetousness will cease before the breasts of independence, which are not those of a maiden, but those of a mother to which everyone has a right.

Governments tremble, rejoice; they totter, be ready; they fall, spring forth. But may never, on their ruins, stained with the blood of your fathers, any bold person dare cry: Long live power! or break its head. For power is authority, and authority is tyranny. With the latter... no freedom, unless it is a monster born of two different subjects, which every man must hunt down as he would a beast suspected of rabies.

Down with governments, down with tyranny, long live independence! Long live love and friendship!

So, let the land you can cultivate be your own, and let your masters seek out other policemen elsewhere to make them pay the rents; for there are none left in your country: Long live this freedom!

No more governments, no more taxes. No more cutthroats, no more bloodshed. No more greed, no more hatred, the future is yours. And it is then that you will love yourself in your brother.

Establish yourselves in revolutionary communes; let even the smallest places always cry: Down with governments! Let each of you participate in the discussions in your locality, in order to discuss its interests.

Since your well-being will depend on the same cause, you will never be guided by anything other than the same reason, the same spirit. It is then that intelligence will truly prevail, and that far from having stuck a red or green border on his buttonhole, which he has often only earned today for having known how to kill his brother, the superior man will be constantly honored and cherished by the society to which he will have been useful. The genius that will be recognized in him will be his mark of distinction.

Don't worry about the lazy: there won't be any, because the man who works freely for himself needs work as recreation and couldn't do without it without suffering.

It seems strange, doesn't it? There are so many lazy people today, and they live wonderfully.

For most of them, I don't know what to say, except that since you have tolerated them until now, you must feed them well: habit is second nature.

Besides, they will disappear like the old soldiers of the empire.

The principle that must, by its own strength, bring together the interests of all its members, will favor both the industrialist and the farmer. Consequently, your moral or material necessities will themselves establish a balance between agricultural products and those of industry. And being dependent only on your needs, this balance can never be so far exceeded that the products of each of you do not always flow with the same regularity.

Then, nothing being able to prevent or constrain the free exchange of these products, and since they are the only ones that can fill the void of your necessities, each will trade them as he pleases. Then, the beautiful, the solid and the convenient, being still susceptible to incontestable perfectibility, an eternal competition will establish their prices, while having as its stimulus that progressive perfection whose limit is found in the fictions of eternity, not to say elusive.

Communal bazaars will be established in each locality, and the products lacking there would too quickly give advantages to those who could fill the gap, so that each commune or hamlet would not immediately have its essentials within its reach.

The fruits of the producers' labor will fall directly and without any further price increase above their real value, at the disposal of the consumer, except only for the costs incurred by the clerks of the bazaar, to whom these products will be entrusted.

However, no one will be required to store their products at the municipal exhibition, so that they will still remain free to negotiate directly with other producers or consumers, if they deem it appropriate.

In this way, no one will be able, as today, to play the merchant and be, in essence, nothing more than a knight of industry, whose thefts are authorized by government laws, since the consumer will be in direct contact with the producer, whose claims will inevitably be taxed by competition.

There will always be men of superior talent. And for this reason, individuality cannot be confused, without suffering subjection, with collective liberty. Moreover, individual liberty says it all; for collective liberty can only be created under the will of several individuals.

Those who deem it appropriate will therefore come together in common life, duties and labors. And those who could be overshadowed by the slightest subjugation will remain individually independent.

The true principle is therefore far from requiring an inviolable community. However, for the harmony of certain endeavors, it is obvious that many producers will establish themselves in society, given the advantage they will find in joining forces. But once again, communism will never be a fundamental principle, due to the diversity of our minds, our needs, and our desires.

Thus, apart from the professions of judge, priest, policeman, thief and executioner, our new society will offer each of its members the means to live in perfect comfort, no longer tiring of vain glories or sordid greed.

In every community, institutions will be established for young people, where they can educate themselves, until the time when, like ripe fruit, they will detach themselves from paternal authority to pursue at will the type of occupation that best suits their tastes and least encumbers their minds.

Never will scholars have been more sought after, for none of us, being overwhelmed by arduous and relentless work, will want, for their own satisfaction, to initiate themselves into the knowledge of men whom nature has endowed with a particular intelligence. And the meditative man will be able to freely occupy his mind with thoughts on subjects that offer him interest.

Science will therefore be an instrument of work: occupied by those who feel capable of exploiting one of the fields of its domain, And each man having as occupation the one he prefers, will put into his work as much art, skill and intelligence as a fine writer will himself put into depicting any story: a subject who is in his true circle, works with taste and happiness, without ever seeking to be hostile to anyone.

Thus all our days would pass in prosperity and joy, without envy or fear darkening their serenity. The earth would be everyone's homeland, each one able to contemplate its riches.

All men would love one another and would enjoy, in particular, a happiness through the purity of which they could glimpse that of their posterity; and, when history reminded them of the infirmity of ours, each would believe it only as if it were a bogeyman; finally, the names of those who exploit us would be known to our nephews only to increase the repertoire of certain comparisons! . . . . .

. . . . .

O independence! protector of humanity, inexhaustible source of happiness and satisfaction, insinuate yourself into the heart of man, disabuse his mind of the artifices that deceive and excite him, open his eyes, goddess! so that he may see your radiant halo, whose pure light tires the monster as broad daylight tires the owl! Mother of all pure liberties, let your name be sung, let your name be blessed! Long live independence! War on authority!

## NOTES

### Félix P..... and Insubmission

It's an enormous pleasure to be able to finally present a complete translation of *Philosophie de l'insoumission ou Pardon à Caïn*. Back in 2012 I completed a translation of the portions of the work published by Max Nettlau in *La Revue Anarchiste* no. 7 (July 1922), which amount to about one quarter of the complete text. It was exciting stuff and I wanted to see more. But the work is scarce and the holdings are not easily accessible. It was not until last week — May 8, 2025 — that research on another early anarchist text led me to make a new search and the discovery that the book had been digitized since I last looked by the University of Warsaw. It was a sort of “drop everything” moment and now, less than a week later, I can share the work in English translation.

It is a work, I think, that speaks for itself. The arguments made are not closely tied to the analysis of the events of the time. The kinds of stories told about the trials of those ruled by governmental states and capitalist economies are of the sort that wouldn't seem out of place in a range of eras. So, if it was the case that the author remained unknown, perhaps it wouldn't detract too much from our use of the text, but, let's face it, there aren't all that many anarchists that we can identify from the 1850s, so whatever we can learn is obviously of interest.

The identity of Félix P..... is an interesting kind of mystery, of the sort that one might only expect to solve by some kind of *happy accident*. And this was indeed the case when Nettlau proposed Félix Pignal as the author of *Philosophie de l'insoumission*. This is the explanation that he provided with the *Revue Anarchiste* selection:

These extracts show that their author was certainly imbued with anarchist ideas, which he presented in an independent manner. He is not presented here for any reason other than at that time, in the 1850s, anarchists were extremely rare, and he was perhaps the least known of them. We have always gathered with interest these first glimmers of the libertarian spirit: we know the Belleguarrigues, Cœurderoys and Déjacques, and here is one more of that sort, who signs his name (page iv) Félix P..... and whose work contains almost no personal indications, and nothing which would put us on the track of the author who calls himself the *parain* of Félix Dupanloup, to whom the pamphlet is dedicated. The place of publication, “New York,” tells us nothing; but to see if it was New York or Geneva, it would be necessary at least to compare the brochure with a quantity of similar publications

from that era, produced in these two cities and elsewhere, which I could not do. I found the brochure in Paris in January 1914 and I have not been able to find any other trace of it or its author, lacking the means to search more fully, which I had reckoned on doing in the autumn of that sad year in the British Museum.

The search was impossible from then on, but in January 1916, browsing through old notes I found something that I had myself noted in February 1904, based on what I was told by the widow of Pierre Vésinier, who had spent the 1850s in Geneva and knew all the exiles of December, particularly those of the region around Cluny, where he came from. In 1899 one of these old men showed him an old booklet he had written, which he had just come across by chance in Geneva. It was an anarchist brochure, since to Vésinier it recalled the ideas of Déjacque, whom he had known well. That same man went to America, where he had known Déjacque (but since I was told that this was in 1856 or 57, that detail can have nothing to do with the booklet)... In any case, the name of that man, who in 1899 was a proprietor in the vicinity of Cluny, was — Félix Pignal. Thus, P and five letters as there is a P and five periods on page IV of the booklet. The double coincidence, that of the five letters, and that of the anarchist booklet by that author from the vicinity of Cluny, followed by the fact that the testimony of 1904 and the booklet found by me in 1914, are two facts independent of one another, and all that makes it more than probable, in my opinion, that this new addition to the recovered incunabula of anarchy was truly written by Félix Pignal.

June 21, 1922.

M. Nettelau.

We have lots of tools available to us that were not available to Nettelau, but details about Félix Pignal's life are still limited. Not long after the coup d'état of December 2, 1851 he is mentioned in the *Courrier de Saône-et-Loire* (December 24) in the context of “the most ardent anarchic opinions.”

— By decree dated the 16th of this month, the general commanding the 3rd military subdivision and the state of siege of the department ordered the closure of the cabarets run by the following individuals:

Messrs. Revillon, in Cormatin; Mathieu, in Cluny; Sire, in Saint-Sorlin; and Piguet, in Salornay-sur-Guye.

The prefect also ordered the urgent closure, pending the final decision of the competent military authority, of the cabarets run in Cluny by Messrs. Renon, Randier and Pignal. These various establishments served as gathering places for men professing the most ardent anarchic opinions, and could become hotbeds of intrigue and unrest.

On April 7, 1852, the same paper lists him among those convicted in connection with insurrection and sentenced to penal deportation — and, in his case, already on the run.

### **Results of the decisions taken by the Saône-et-Loire Joint Commission.**

Without taking into account the partial results we have already published, we are today reporting the results of the judgments rendered by the Saône-et-Loire Department Joint Commission against the individuals involved in the insurrection last December:

#### *Sentenced to deportation to Cayenne*

Stanislas Dismier, from Saint-Gengoux; Jean Gonnot and Félix Pignal, from Cluny; Guérin senior, from Mâcon; Antoine Cas and Adam Constant, from Chagny; Jean Gabon, from Martigoy; Riboulet, from Château-Renaud.

In flight: Dismier, Pignal, Colon, Guérin senior, and Adam Constant.

So far, no details have surfaced regarding Pignal's path from France to New York, where his book was published in 1854. And the New York newspapers have yet to give any definitive news either, except for this very intriguing announcement from June 1854:

#### **OPENING OF THE CAFE DE L'UNIVERS**

Citizen PIGNAL has the honor to inform his friends and the public in general that he has just opened a café and a French boarding house at no. 35, Lispenard Street, between Church and Broadway, where they will find furnished rooms, private cabinets and dinners at any time, at a moderate price.

Was this Félix Pignal? It certainly isn't outside the realm of possibility that someone who had been running anarchistic cabarets in France might open a cafe in New York. But Nettlau recalls being told that Pignal went to New York in 1856 or 57.

The next clear bit of information I have places a Félix Pignal as a proprietor in Cluny, France in 1876. But a number of the subsequent mentions refer to Pignal as a "former secretary to Eugène Sue," who was in exile or semi-exile at Annecy-le-Vieux, France from 1851 until his death in 1857. Now, one thing that has struck me in my research is that there seem to have been quite a number of "former secretaries to Eugène Sue, including, by some accounts, Pierre Vesinier, but not a great deal of solid documentation of when they might have fulfilled these duties. But the name Pignal — or sometimes Pignal-Dargent — appears in a number of later published accounts, including this one, which appeared in 1903:

#### **EUGÈNE SUE AT ANNECY**

The municipality of Annecy intends to dedicate its name to the memory of Eugène Sue, who came to take refuge in this city, then part of the States of the King of Sardinia, at the time of the proscriptions of December 2. The name of the popular novelist, whose body now rests in the Annecy cemetery, will soon be given to one of the streets of this city.

This commemoration has prompted the confidences of Eugène Sue's secretary, M. Pignal Dargent, former mayor of Cluny, who recalls, in a letter addressed to the Alps, interesting details about the life of the great writer during the first years of his exile on the shores of Lake Annecy, in 1855:

In Annecy, there was a Lyonnais named Charançon; he was an outlaw like us, and a zinc worker by trade. One day, Eugène Sue, who knew he was in trouble, asked me to go and order him a bathtub; in the meantime, he would fit a fireplace to maintain the heat of the bath; but I didn't have to talk to him about the price. Charançon complied; and, once the bathtub was ready, I went to get it myself, and, without saying a word, I placed 300 francs on his workbench. At this sight, the worker took the sum to give me back a large part; but I made a negative gesture; he looked at me, understood me, and, speechless, a tear fell from his eyes. This is how Sue knew how to help...

A priest he knew said to me one day: "Your boss's house is the house of David, that is to say, the house of bread." Bah! for the comparison; but what this priest meant was true. Personalities of every rank, position, and country were received at the house: dukes, marquises, barons, beggarly painters, poets seeking a preface or advice—diplomats and politicians were also noticed there; I even believe, without being able to confirm it, that the great Cavour, that keystone of Victor Emmanuel's government, came to visit him at the time when the princes of Sardinia had come to Faucigny, to visit the ruins of the castle of that name; but I often saw Rattazi, a Piedmontese minister, Zoppi, the intendant of Bonneville there. As for women, I saw for a long time the Princess of Solms, née Buonaparte, the Countess of la B... as well as a Lady Rollande, from Saône-et-Loire, who is still with us.

The latter was made of words and flesh that could withstand anything; She could talk for a whole day without saying the same thing and yet on the same subject. With that, she was the apostle of the emancipation of women: and, one evening, having grabbed Eugène Sue as he passed by, she held him for a long time under the spell of her amusing ramblings. ,

The next day, at cigar time, she came to find him in the smoking room where Vallier and I were also; but the master was in one of those moments when he was inclined to say biting and satirical things that leave, in the minds of those who receive them, a discomfort coming more from their temperament than from reason...

La Rollande began: "Where did we leave off last night?" she would have said, addressing Eugène Sue. The latter, seeming to remember, replied, striking his forehead: "We were not yet halfway to the snowy peak of Semnoz, and I was already cold down my back!" La Rollande bit her lip, stood up, and left. What man is without fault? Sue would not let a silly sentence finish without interrupting it with sarcasm or mockery. He would rather let de Solms speak, who, however, very often used expressions from his noble imperial repertoire, enough to ripen an entire field of tomatoes at once. But no man was more generous than he.

A Félix Pignal who seems to be our author was indeed the mayor of Cluny as early as 1879. (In 1878 he seems to have been employed by an English life



insurance company.) From 1879, Pignal seems to have been embroiled, in his role as mayor, in conflicts over local educational institutions.

At the meeting of the 19th, the President communicated to the General Council a letter from M. Pignal, Mayor of Cluny, stating that there exists in this town a building which would be exceptionally suitable for the proper installation of a secondary school for girls. M. Pignal intends to urge the Minister of Public Education to examine this building, and he requests that in the meantime, a delegation from the General Council come and visit it. This communication was referred to the Committee on Public Education.

In 1880, we find the following notice:

By order dated January 1, 1881, the Minister of Public Education and Fine Arts appointed M. Pignal, a former teacher at Cluny, as an academic officer.

Presumably this the same M. Pignal. Had he also been a teacher?

By February 11, all of his endeavors had been interrupted, as his radical past came back to haunt him.

M. F. Pignal, district councilor and mayor of Cluny, against whom some of his fellow citizens, whom he calls his “political enemies,” have noted a six-day prison sentence previously handed down against him, has just resigned his mandate. M. Pignal hopes to obtain a pardon through legal channels. Why did he not request and obtain this pardon sooner! He would have thus spared himself a profound humiliation. The *Union Republicaine* urges Mr. Pignal's political enemies to hasten to enjoy their triumph, because it claims that this triumph will be short-lived. The same newspaper declares that the incident reported against the mayor of Cluny would be “a peccadillo of a young man laughing one evening in a café with some friends.” Very well. But the penal code describes this kind of “peccadillo” in terms that the *Union Republicaine* should have reproduced to fully edify the reader. There is a gap here to be filled or an omission to be repaired.

The triumph of Pignal's enemies was indeed short-lived. On March 31, the *Courrier de Saône-et-Loire* announced:

A decree from the President of the Republic, dated March 26th, issued following a ruling by the Dijon court, pronounces the rehabilitation of M. Félix Pignal, former mayor of Cluny.

On April 24, the same paper noted:

By decree of the President of the Republic dated April 20, the following were appointed: Mayor of Cluny, M. Félix Pignal; deputies Messrs. Garguet and Litaud.

There are more details of local political life, then a number of commemorative references to Eugène Sue. And no doubt more will emerge with more research. None of the clear details seem to bear very directly on *Philosophie de l'insoumission*, which we might be tempted to treat as “a peccadillo of a young man.”

With time and research, more of the picture will undoubtedly emerge. There are potentially interesting sources that remain, at least for now, as inaccessible as the full text of *Philosophie de l'insoumission* was for so long, archives not yet consulted, etc. For now, however, we at least have one more example of the forms that rather full-blown anarchistic thought could take in the years before *anarchism* was a widely-used term — and it's a rather delightful example at that.

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One final note: I have chosen, from among a range of possibilities, none of which seemed ideal to me, to translate the title of the work as *Philosophy of Insubmission*, making use of an obscure English term, which, if Google's Ngram Viewer is to be trusted, seems to have had its brief heyday in a period roughly corresponding to the best-documented eras of the life of Félix Pignal. For my first translation, I chose Philosophy of Defiance, after contemplating a range of options including insubordination, disobedience, recalcitrance, rebelliousness, etc.

State, disposition of one who does not agree to submit to the authority on which he depends, who refuses to recognize it. Synonym: insubordination.

LEGISLATIVE. MILITARY. Correctional offense which consists for a young soldier called up or for any other soldier at home recalled to active duty, to whom a travel order has been duly notified, in not having arrived at his destination within a certain period after the day fixed by this order, except in the case of force majeure” (Cap. 1936).

To my knowledge, the English term *insubmission* — which the OED treats as a coinage in English, rather than a borrowing from French — has not had the specific sense of failure to report or enlist (except in some cases where it is a question of referring to French law), but it turns out that one of the uses of the term that appears most often in searches does indeed occur in the context of a discussion of military service — and that the text itself, Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, is one that occupies a place on the margins of the anarchist literature similar to that of Félix P....'s text.

Here is the relevant passage:

But it is not only by theoretical reflections that any man may see that the sacrifices demanded of him by the state have no foundation whatever; even by reflecting practically, that is, by weighing all those hard conditions in which a man is placed by the state, no one can fail to see that for him personally the fulfillment of the demands of the state and his submission to military service is in the majority of cases more disadvantageous than a refusal to do military service.

If the majority of men prefer submission to insubmission, this is not due to any sober weighing of the advantages and disadvantages, but because the men are attracted to submission by means of the hypnotization to which they are subjected in the matter. In submitting, men only surrender themselves to those demands which are made upon them, without reflection, and without making any effort of the will; for in submission there is a need of independent reflection and of effort, of which not every man is capable. But if, excluding the moral significance of submission and insubmission, we should consider nothing but the advantages, insubmission would in general always be more advantageous to us than submission.

No matter who I may be, whether I belong to the well-to-do, oppressing classes, or to the oppressed laboring classes, the disadvantages of insubmission are less than the disadvantages of submission, and the advantages of insubmission are greater than the advantages of submission.

If I belong to the minority of oppressors, the disadvantages of insubmission to the demands of the government will consist in this, that I, refusing to comply with the demands of the government, shall be tried and at best shall be discharged or, as they do with the Mennonites, shall be compelled to serve out my time at some unmilitary work; in the worst case I shall be condemned to deportation or imprisonment for two or three years (I speak from examples that have happened in Russia), or, perhaps, to a longer term of incarceration, or to death, though the probability of such a penalty is very small.

Such are the disadvantages of insubmission; but the disadvantages of submission will consist in this: at best I shall not be sent out to kill men, and I myself shall not be subjected to any great probability of crippling or death, but shall only be enlisted as a military slave — I shall be dressed up in a fool's garments; I shall be at the mercy of every man above me in rank, from a corporal to a field-marshal; I shall be compelled to contort my body according to their desire, and, after being kept from one to five years, I shall be left for ten years in a condition of readiness to appear at any moment for the purpose of going through all these things again. In the worst case I shall, in addition to all those previous conditions of slavery, be sent to war, where I shall be compelled to kill men of other nations, who have done me no harm, where I may be crippled and killed, and where I may get into a place, as happened at Sevastopol and as happens in every war, where men are sent to certain death; and, what is most agonizing, I may be sent out against my own countrymen, when I shall be compelled to kill my brothers for dynastic or other reasons, which are entirely alien to me. Such are the comparative disadvantages.

The comparative advantages of submission and of insubmission are these:

For him who has not refused, the advantages will consist in this, that, having submitted to all the humiliations and having executed all the cruelties demanded of him, he may, if he is not killed, receive red, golden, tin-foil decorations over his fool's garments, and he may at best command hundreds of thousands of just such bestialized men as himself, and be called a field-marshal, and receive a lot of money.

But the advantages of him who refuses will consist in this, that he will retain his human dignity, will earn the respect of good men, and, above all else, will know without fail that he is doing God's work, and so an incontestable good to men.

Such are the advantages and the disadvantages on both sides for a man from the wealthy classes, for an oppressor; for a man of the poor, working classes the advantages and disadvantages will be the same, but with an important addition of disadvantages. The disadvantages for a man of the laboring classes, who has not refused to do military service, will also consist in this, that, by entering upon military service, he by his participation and seeming consent confirms the very oppression under which he is suffering.

But it is not the reflections as to how much the state which men are called upon to support by their participation in the military service is necessary and useful to men, much less the reflections as to the advantages or disadvantages accruing to each man from his submission or insubmission to the demands of the government, that decide the question as to the necessity of the existence or the abolition of the state. What irrevocably and without appeal decides this question is the religious consciousness or conscience of every individual man, before whom, in connection with the universal military service, involuntarily rises the question as to the existence or non-existence of the state.

The word is still, perhaps, not the most attractive in form, but there seems to be some utility, particularly in the absence of any alternative that seems more fitting in context, to underline the fact that it is, in some sense, already an obscure element in the historical anarchist lexicon.

— Shawn P. Wilbur, translator.