

1849

Proudhon's Journalism

Mélanges — Vol I.

III.

LE PEUPLE

(1849)

TO BE DONE WITH M. CONSIDÉRANT

Omnia serviliter pro dominatione.
(Restoration of a text by Tacitus,
falsified by M. Considérant.¹)

There is now something superfluous on earth. This something is either the People's Bank or M. Considérant's shop. The coexistence of these two philanthropic establishments necessarily implies contradiction and scandal; therefore, for the sake of public reason and morality, one or the other must disappear. M. Considérant has understood this: I congratulate him and thank him for it. The phalanstery bored me, at least as much as the People's Bank offends M. Considérant. And since my honorable competitor has seen fit to start the battle, I will not fail to join in the fray. Besides, the public is eager to know whether socialism contains something or nothing.

M. Considérant's attack is divided into two parts: the first relates to an incident he raised during the six-week-long polemic between the *Démocratie pacifique* and the *Peuple*; the second is nothing but a stupid and malicious diatribe against my ideas and my person.

Let's clear up the incident first.

In the February 4th issue of *La Démocratie pacifique*, M. Considérant did me the honor of sending me the following letter, which he has just reproduced, at the beginning of his philippic, in yesterday's issue of the same newspaper.

¹ M. Considérant having chosen as the epigraph for his article these four Latin words: *Omnia invidiosè pro dominatione*: Everything through envy in order to attain power, which are an alteration of a passage from Tacitus, I am obliged, in my reply, to restore the true text: *Omnia serviliter pro dominatione*: Everything through servilism to attain power. The reader can judge for himself which of the two, M. Considérant or myself, the historian intended to speak of.

TO M. PROUDHON

Editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Le Peuple*.

Le Peuple has launched an accusation of *treason* and *apostasy* against us based on one and a half lines taken out of a two-column article contained in last Monday's *Démocratie pacifique*.

The *Démocratie* reported this incredible accusation to the editor of *Peuple*, inviting him to monitor the short articles that slip into his editorial staff.

The *Peuple* responded to the *Démocratie* by maintaining against it these accusations, as strange as they are strangely motivated, adding to them, quite directly even, a new and no less astonishing charge, that of complicity with M. Léon Faucher and his proclamation of Monday!

The article in question, which, contrary to the habit I felt I should adopt since becoming a representative, I had forgotten to sign, is my own work. Faced with the *Peuple's* accusation, I reclaim it, and I assert responsibility for all the terms it contains.

My reply to the new article in the *Peuple* is written, and I was going to give it to the typesetter this evening, when I was informed that M. Proudhon declared himself a stranger to the polemic between the two newspapers, and assured that he had not yet taken note of it.

We had already given too much evidence of our determination to avoid, as far as we are concerned, between the various organs of democracy and socialism, however different and opposed their ideas may be, all debates other than debates of doctrine, to be unwilling to add to our antecedents a new proof of moderation.

We will therefore *suspend our response*, so that M. Proudhon, editor-in-chief of the *Peuple*, may kindly inform us, through his newspaper, whether he maintains the accusations introduced without his knowledge against the *Démocratie* in the *Peuple*, and whether he associates himself with them.

V. CONSIDÉRANT

Representative of the people.

The facts reported in this letter are, as far as I am concerned, accurate. That is to say, for three weeks I remained completely uninvolved in the writing of *Le Peuple*; I had no knowledge of the controversy that arose between this newspaper and M. Considérant's newspaper; I was quite astonished when the latter came to me on the evening of February 3rd, after leaving the Assembly, to address personal questions to me regarding this controversy, and I finally told him that he only had to write to me about it, and that after examining the documents, I would see to giving him satisfaction, if there was cause for concern.

The following day, in fact, the letter that we have just read appeared in *La Démocratie pacifique*, to which, after reflection, I believed I should not make any reply.

M. Considérant is now vehemently protesting against the *disgraceful behavior* I have displayed towards him by not replying to his letter. According to him, I have *passed all limits*; and it is in order to *repress this feverish personality, this overexcitement of pride, this*

envious mania for accusing, denigrating and destroying everything that is not me; it is in order to mark, in terms that will no longer allow them to be confused, the abyss that separates peaceful, democratic and organizing socialism from destructive and savage socialism, that he, M. Considérant, driven to the limit, weary of opposing reason and courtesy to unreason and violence, has resigned himself to publishing his reply!

One must have had one's mind dulled for twenty years by the mephitic vapors of the phalanstery, to behave in such a foolish way as M. Considérant did in this circumstance.

M. Considérant's demands — I refer to his letter — far from being conciliatory, were entirely imperative, even threatening, expressed in the style of a schoolmaster speaking to a little boy! This is why I did not reply. Who, I ask any man of honor, would have obeyed such orders!

But the form was still of little importance; it is the substance that must be considered. M. Considérant says in his own words: *My reply to the new article in Le Peuple is written, and I was going to submit it to the editor this evening, when, etc.* And further down: *We will therefore suspend our reply, etc.*

It is clear that I was under threat, the threat of an article by M. Considérant. Well! I wanted to see it, this terrible article; I wanted to know what M. Considérant was really thinking. The first impulse is always the most truthful; and I trusted much less, to be informed of the true feelings of my honorable antagonist, a trivial exchange about the lively discussions in the current editorial staff of *Le Peuple*, than the article prepared at length, and kept in reserve by M. Considérant, against the editor-in-chief. As good today as later, I told myself. See how great minds think alike! — with M. Considérant.

And M. Considérant, who had the good humor to tell me in his letter: “My reply is written; I will give it to the composers, but I will suspend its publication.” M. Considérant, who admits the premeditation of his diatribe; M. Considérant, who declares that he intended to exert this new kind of blackmail against me, and now blames the publication of his pamphlet on the indignation caused by my unspeakable behavior! How clever! How honest and peaceful, above all!

Now that we know the bottom of the barrel, and as M. Considérant's kindness gives me the right to speak to him without flattery or disguise, I am quite at ease in responding to his questions.

The phrase from *La Démocratie pacifique* that prompted the editorial staff of *Le Peuple* to accuse him of *treason* and *apostasy* is as follows:

“Violent socialism alone paid the price for the deplorable and bloody battle of June.”

With these words, *La Démocratie pacifique* separated itself from that part of socialism not belonging to the phalanstery, of which *Le Peuple* are one of the representatives; it accused this socialism of having instigated the June Days; it rejected, for its part, any solidarity in these tragic events; it washed its hands, like Pilate, of the spilled blood. It was this split within *La Démocratie pacifique* that *Le Peuple* labeled apostasy and treason.

In vain did *La Démocratie Pacifique*, in its issue of February 2, claim that there was no divisive intent in its words; that its statement had a completely different meaning; that it had only meant that *the faction of socialism that had joined the June insurrection was fundamentally misguided*. — M. Considérant himself has now refuted this trickery by his co-editors.

“It is our imperative duty,” he told me, “to mark, in terms that will never again allow them to be confused, the abyss that separates OUR peaceful, democratic and organizing socialism from YOUR destructive and savage socialism. You have launched furious attacks against property, attacks capable of inflaming weak minds and ardent souls; and you do not even have the excuse of a revolutionary conviction or any goal whatsoever. What pretexts remain for your revolutionary fury against property, and where do you now find the excuse and the morality for the intellectual insurrection *that you have so greatly contributed to igniting against it?* What sense did both this fury and this insurrection have, to lead to this declaration and the organization of what?”

Here, then, is a first point that remains open to debate, despite the denials and disavowals of *La Démocratie pacifique*. It is that M. Considérant and his friends, who for twenty years have railed against civilization; who historically divide humankind into two categories, the civilized and the harmonious; who use expressions like this every day: *You civilized people!* — who constantly attack the household, the family, even property itself, because they do not want EXISTING property, it is ANOTHER FORM of property that they advocate; — M. Considérant, I say, and his fellow sectarians repudiate all solidarity with the *savages* who, in June, without a thought for the household and the family, and while respecting property rights, rose up against a civilization that starves them. There is nothing in common, says *La Démocratie pacifique*, between my socialism and the socialism of the savages of June! No doubt these so-called savages hadn't done enough to merit the praise of *La Démocratie pacifique!* To please it, they would have had to establish a common household, common property, a common family — in short, transform Paris and France into phalansteries! It is because socialism has understood nothing of the democratic and social revolution, as understood by *La Démocratie pacifique*; because it has failed to recognize its true mission, that M. Considérant and his followers are separating themselves from it, splitting off! Their socialism is the *good socialism*, peaceful and organizing; our socialism is *violent, savage, disorganizing, incendiary*; and I, Citizen Proudhon, am its Herostratus!...

Well! This split, now proven and acknowledged, says *La Démocratie pacifique*, is it apostasy, as *Le Peuple* have claimed? Is it treason, or merely cowardice? This is what must be examined; for my response to M. Considérant's invectives will depend on my assessment of the conduct of *La Démocratie pacifique*.

I hasten to add: there were neither apostates nor traitors there; and had I been at the office of *Le Peuple* when the unfortunate words that served as a pretext for M. Considérant were written, I would have removed them, as lacking not precisely in

justice, but in accuracy. Those whom *Le Peuple* had to denounce, after the article of *La Démocratie pacifique*, were nothing but schemers or dupes.

As the saying goes, one is never betrayed except by one's own. How could *La Démocratie pacifique* betray or apostatize from socialism, when, through its mysteries, its allurements, its illuminism, its adoration of capital, its declared love of privilege, and its occult politics, it is as foreign and hostile to the socialist idea as it is to the democratic one?...

La Démocratie pacifique, the daily organ of the so-called socialist school, is, along with *La Phalange*, which serves as its complement, a kind of cesspool of all the follies, absurdities, and impurities of the human mind. This cesspool bears the name of the greatest mystifier of modern times, Fourier; its apparent object, social metamorphosis; its real aim, a speculation by schemers without principle, without theory, and whose means are all summed up in that word from Tacitus, distorted by M. Considérant: *servilism!*

Everyone has heard of the so-called *theory* of Fourier, the *science* discovered by Fourier, the *system* of Fourier. It is, I repeat, the greatest mystification of our time. Despite the enormous jumble that remains of this delusional man, there is neither science, nor theory, nor system of Fourier, and I challenge M. Considérant and his entire school to cite, from this much-vaunted science, three propositions that follow and are linked, three observations, three formulas. I challenge him to cite the beginning of this science, in which so many people take their word for it, and of which the first word has never been spoken to anyone. I challenge him to provide proof that there is anything in Fourier that deserves the name of theory, science or system; to provide a psychological or social fact of any importance that Fourier first observed, analyzed or explained; a single law that he demonstrated, a single principle with which he enriched human knowledge.

It is not only, as you can see, the agro-industrial theory, supposedly taught by Fourier and propagated at such great expense by M. Considérant, whose existence I question; it is the scientific value of all of Fourier's work, however one considers it, that I deny. Fourier, as an economist, metaphysician, reformer, inventor and, ultimately, as a scientist does not exist. I knew the man; I read all his books: I am still searching for the scientist, the intellectual. If M. Considérant has any news of this, I urge him to share it with his readers; for this mystification has gone on for far too long, and the public has been duped.

But have no fear that either M. Considérant or any of his cronies will answer the summons; have no fear that they'll ever tell you what the theory of Fourier or Fourier's organization of labor is. They'll refer you to their pamphlets; they'll offer you a subscription, or speak to you in slang; of science, nothing! M. Considérant, in whom I am pleased to recognize as much knowledge as he accuses me of ignorance, knows nothing of substance except what he learned at school and the *École Polytechnique*. From Fourier, his revered master, he inherited only gibberish and barbarisms. More than any of the followers or exploiters of Fourierism, M. Considérant has contributed

to spreading throughout the world this amusing opinion that a phalansterian doctrine exists. Now that he is slandering serious socialists, whose energetic competition threatens to engulf his scrap business, I challenge him, for the fifth time, to publish in his newspaper and offer up for discussion the first element of a social science based on Fourier!

Of course, I must be sure of my words when I tell the subscribers of *La Démocratie pacifique*: There is no theory of Fourier, no social science based on Fourier; consequently, no school stemming from this so-called reformer, no phalansterian socialism. There is only a coalition of charlatans of which you are all but miserable dupes! Well then! Let M. Considérant present his reasons; let a critique begin; let Fourier's lucubrations be sifted through. Never has a more solemn, more decisive occasion presented itself to bring the *master's* idea to a victorious conclusion, if indeed an idea was ever conceived in that ivory-haired mind. Fourier's socialism has sufficiently agitated the world: let it finally be known whether the idol of *La Démocratie pacifique* was the most marvelous of geniuses, or the most colossal of madmen.

Until M. Considérant sees fit to support, with positive arguments and conclusive facts, what he calls *good socialism*, and what I call the false, ridiculous socialism, jealous of *La Démocratie pacifique*, I will remind him, by his conduct over the past twenty years, and by Tacitus's words, "Omnia serviliter," that if he has incurred and drawn upon his *school* the mistrust of social democrats, he has no right to accuse me; he has only himself to blame. Truth has always been accompanied by frankness. Let M. Considérant recall the hesitations of his entire life, and if he does not discover in them the rejection that makes the party of which he is the leader so unpopular, he will at least see the excuse for the incompatibility of temperament that has suddenly declared itself between *La Démocratie pacifique* and *Le Peuple*.

After the July Revolution, when it seemed that the philosophy of the *Constitutional* would forever erase what remained of Catholicism in France, M. Considérant, in a speech at the Hôtel de Ville, speaking on behalf of his sect, dared to exclaim: *We are not Christians!* The remark was noted: it was a flattery to the libertinism of the time.

Since, religious ideas have gained ground; it has become clear that Christian prejudice resisted the inoculation of Fourierist dogma, that the morality of the Gospel was pushing back against that of the phalanstery. From then on, efforts were made to conceal the anti-Christian aspects of the harmonian world: compromises were made with heaven; attempts were made to prove that Fourier was the successor of Jesus Christ. Flattery of the clergy and the Jesuits.

This tactic has never changed: it constitutes the entire system.

Fourier's views on the relations between the sexes are diametrically opposed to marriage and the family. After appealing to the country's epicurean sensibilities, it was felt that public conscience recoiled from this depravity of free love, and while the

faithful continue to be initiated into the *Loves of the Saints*,² the most profound respect for the family and marriage is proclaimed to the uninitiated. Violent socialism is even accused, if necessary, of wanting the community of property in order to more quickly achieve the community of women. Such is the interest of order: let socialism perish rather than Fourierism! Such is the tactic of M. Considérant.

La Démocratie pacifique is founded. Why this name for a phalansterian publication? In order, M. Considérant naively states in his prospectus, to absorb, to annihilate the republican party, revolutionary democracy, which the high priest of the sect then regarded as the greatest obstacle to the advent of Fourierism. Now, M. Considérant is a republican, a democrat, even a revolutionary; at least, that's what he says. But beware, his republicanism is like his socialism: it won't survive the first turn of the wheel of fortune.

The story of M. Considérant's evolution would be long. I now come to what concerns me,

For the past eight months, pressed by events, and anticipating my own conclusions, I have launched into the world the idea of free credit and the Bank of the People.

I have demonstrated that the social problem lies entirely in circulation – something which *La Démocratie pacifique* has not yet considered; – that circulation being the capital and culminating fact of society, it must, if it were centralized and organized democratically, gradually modify and transform the current form of possession, in other words property, and change the basis of society.

La Démocratie pacifique began by waging war on these ideas. It still fights them, claiming them as its own, and to bolster the credibility of its pronouncements, it accuses me of having distorted them! Thus, the idea of free credit does not belong to me; this idea is Fourier's: only he understood free credit differently than I do! Strange thing! Free credit in Fourier does not derive from the non-productivity of capital; it is something entirely different from the free credit of the Bank of the People! Can you imagine two different ways of giving something for nothing! And how, if free credit according to me is something entirely different from that according to Fourier, am I a thief, a counterfeiter, a forger!...

Thus again, the idea of the Bank of the People is not my invention; it is due to Fourier, who developed it under the threefold formula of *continuous deposit, prior valuation and arbitrated compensation*, and from whom, maliciously and spitefully, I stole it. I may well say that the principle of my Bank is the generalization of the bill of exchange; that it is the very opposite of what Fourier's formulas presuppose – *continuous deposit*, etc.; – that it resembles the phalansterian trading posts as little as those of M. Garnier-Pagès. No matter, I am a cowardly thief, a vile plagiarist. M. Considérant, who, at this very moment, has not yet understood me, asserts this. Hypocritical homage paid to an idea that I am accused of having adopted, because

² Title of a manuscript by Fourier.

public opinion seems favorable to him, and because I would be dismissed if it were seen to be abandoned.

For nearly ten years, as I have been engaged in social economics, I have done and intended to do nothing other than analyze the principles that govern society. I have stated that, in my opinion, to arrive at social truth, one must proceed through a continuous, systematic negation, like civilization itself. I have shown that, since every negation presupposes an affirmation that is always easy to extract, a system of negations also presupposes a system of affirmations, and that thus the methodical demolition of society is adequate for the methodical reconstitution of the same society. Minds trained in the new philosophical methods have grasped this fruitful theory, and, even before I had described the positive system that results from the sum of the preceding negations, have intuited its entire structure.

M. Considérant, alerted by public opinion, could not help but acknowledge that I was indeed an unparalleled destroyer. In this regard, he lavished praise upon me, the full extent of which he could scarcely imagine, which would have been enough to turn heads ten times stronger than my own. But, seeing no further, he told me, in the form of friendly advice, that my role as destroyer, as Attila, as Herostratus, as EXECUTIONER, was over; that the reactionaries were mocking me, and that I had no choice but to clear out and make way for the true organizers, the true socialists, that is to say, for M. Considérant and his associates.

Ah, M. Considérant! *It is too late for retreat!* Your last hour has struck. You've spent twenty years without building anything, without doing anything; you've squandered countless millions paying for the follies of Clairvaux, Rambouillet and elsewhere; the nonsense of your propaganda, the drivel of your insipid newspaper. You've exhausted public opinion's complacency, tired curiosity and wearied even devotion. Your incompetence is evident even in your resentment. Accuse, slander, denounce Citizen Proudhon: one more attack can no longer move him — and coming from you, it inspires only pity. Do everything in your power to obstruct the Bank of the People: say that the non-productivity of capital is a violation of the right to work; that free credit must be paid for; that revolutions don't consist of destroying old abuses, but of creating new ones. Your words are like copper coated with lead, a cracked cymbal. You are dead, I tell you, dead to democracy and socialism; the Revolution killed you on February 24th. That which speaks, writes, jargons and rants, under the name of Victor Considérant, is nothing more than a shadow, the soul of a departed man returning among the living to ask for prayers. Go, poor soul, I will recite the *De Profundis* for you, and I will give fifteen sous to have a Mass said for you.

SPEECH DELIVERED BY PROUDHON

AT THE SESSION OF FEBRUARY 14 OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY,
ON THE REQUEST FOR PROSECUTION

Citizens' representatives, in the session of January 27th, I indicated, and M. Vezin reiterated yesterday, that in the course of the proceedings against me I would likely have to develop a thesis on the question of the president's responsibility; this matter has now been settled. The events that have unfolded over the past two weeks have left nothing to be desired for those who might still need further explanation, should anyone still find themselves in that situation.

So I am not here to discuss the constitutional question. For those who want the Republic, the president's responsibility is beyond question. For those who, on the contrary, do not want the Republic, or who want something other than the Republic, this question is also beyond doubt, because it is precisely because they are convinced of the president's responsibility that they are now demanding presidential inviolability and the president's right to be re-elected.

Thus, everyone now agrees on this point.

I have come to oppose the committee's conclusions. The matter being reduced to a purely personal issue, my observations will be very brief. I do not wish to abuse the Assembly's time for my own benefit. I oppose the committee's conclusions and the authorization requested, not on the basis of my inviolability as a representative; I have never considered this inviolability to be anything but provisional; moreover, as far as I am concerned, you must be convinced that I have never truly relied on it.

I oppose the request for authorization because I find it, in my opinion, unfair and made with an obviously hostile intention; because I also find it unconstitutional; and finally, because I find it illegal.

The report, or rather the indictment that was placed on the desk, ostensibly accuses me of attacking the Constitution, attacking the rights that the President of the Republic derives from universal suffrage, inciting hatred of the government, and inciting hatred and contempt among citizens.

I dare say that these grievances are pure fictions of the Attorney General. There is a contradiction between this accusation and the articles that are incriminated: I defy anyone to find in these articles anything of what I have just said and of what is imputed to me.

An attack on the Constitution! Well, gentlemen, for the past three months, those who read *Le Peuple* — and there are many of my colleagues who do — know that I have done nothing but defend the Constitution; I defend it simultaneously out of republicanism, patriotism and opposition. I voted against the Constitution because it

was my right as a representative; but, my right exhausted, I believed I should set an example of submission to this Constitution for as long as it remains in force.

I attended the promulgation ceremony; the newspapers noted it, and I ask you to believe that this action, on my part, was reasoned.

My political conduct within this chamber, outside of it; my publications as a journalist, demonstrate that I have never, to this point, attacked the Constitution. In the articles I am criticized for, what have I done other than defend the Constitution against what I believe to be the aberrations of the executive branch, against the encroachments of the executive branch?

If attacking the claims of the President of the Republic constitutes an attack on the Constitution, then certainly I am guilty; but, again, everyone here, I believe, is aware of these articles. I ask if anyone believes that I am being prosecuted for an attack on the Constitution.

Citizens, I beg you to believe that I am not pleading my own case; but I need to prove that, in the accusation brought against me, there is no crime, at least not as it has been defined; and it seems to me that the National Assembly must, before authorizing prosecution, determine whether or not a crime has been committed. I am willing to be punished, but not for something that is not my own. It is said that I have attacked the government. Well then! I ask you, is the National Assembly, yes or no, part of the government? The executive branch alone is not the government.

For the past three months, the National Assembly has been, in relation to me – or rather, in the spirit of what I have published – in the same position as the executive branch, as well as the Constitution itself. I have consistently defended the National Assembly; and on the very day the articles in question were submitted to the jury, when authorization to prosecute me was requested, what was I still doing? I was asserting for the National Assembly precedence over the President of the Republic. Once again, unless you believe that the legislative power is not part of the government, that it must be separate from it, it is quite certain that, without going any further, I cannot be guilty of attacking the government.

The government is the Constitution, it is the National Assembly, it is our entire constitutional system. Well! Once again, have I attacked the republican form of government? Have I attacked the Constitution of the Republic? Not in the least, I repeat. – Yes, I have attacked the executive branch! We shall see shortly how I attacked it. But I must also point out that this cannot be grounds for accusation. The National Assembly did precisely the same thing as I did on February 9th. On February 3rd, on the proposal of M. Louis Perréc, you rejected a simple motion, which rejection necessarily implied the idea that the executive branch was suspect in the Assembly.

Now, if you reflected on what this vote entailed, you must have thought the next day that a declaration made by the National Assembly, implying distrust of its government – distrust of a government where there is no longer a monarchy, no inviolable sovereignty, but where everything is accountable, where everything can be

targeted and is indeed targeted by the vote of no confidence – if you paid attention to that, you must have understood that you were making a call to insurrection. (Laughter and denials from the right.)

Ah! You will see.

Citizens, the conclusion I have reached may well surprise you; but it is nonetheless true. Under a constitutional monarchy, when the monarch is inviolable, an elected assembly can declare that the ministry is suspect, that it lacks confidence, that it inspires mistrust. But when, under the Constitution, the President of the Republic is part of the government, an integral and responsible part of the government, the stability of the system remains unshaken. To say that this government lacks the people's confidence is to accuse the entire government, to say to the whole people: We are governed by people who are conspiring. Then the Constitution will no longer have any representative in the executive branch; there is nothing that can prevent the people from ridding themselves of the government. (Loud interruption from the right.)

Citizens' representatives, please consider carefully that you live in a republic, that our political world has been, so to speak, turned upside down since the adoption of the Constitution; that many things that were true before the adoption of the Constitution are no longer true today, that you live in entirely different conditions. Certainly, if what I have just said could once again draw your attention – a deeper, more thoughtful attention – to the political actions emanating from this assembly, in its relations with the executive branch, I would be pleased for my part...

I am not seeking insurrections. I could have, the day after February 3rd, told the people of Paris: The executive power has just been declared overthrown by the National Assembly. (Come now!)

I attacked, I repeat, the executive branch; I did so, I admit, in the style of a journalist; but my attack was nothing more and nothing less than a declaration of distrust made by the National Assembly itself. This grievance, too, must be set aside.

It is said that I have infringed upon the rights and authority of the President of the Republic.

There is an appearance of reason for this. Yes, I have challenged the personal tendencies and pretensions of the President of the Republic, the pretensions that one believes can be derived from certain circumstances of his election; but, as for his Constitutional rights, I was the first to recognize them.

There is a passage in the articles in question that gave rise to this accusation. This passage reads: "The President of the Republic has raised the question of dissolving the National Assembly; the National Assembly will in turn raise the question of the President of the Republic's resignation."

I did not hear, in these two articles prior to January 29th, note well, that the President of the Republic had any thought of forcibly dismissing the National Assembly; I meant to speak of a certain moral constraint that they wanted to use against him; and by analogy, I said:

"The National Assembly, as powerful as, or even more powerful than, the President of the Republic, can say to the President of the Republic: 'If you do not agree with me, it is up to you to withdraw.'"

The same thing has been repeated here.

The conflict was brought before this rostrum by the President of the Council and by M. Dupont (de Bussac), who declared, to the applause of the Assembly, that the President of the Republic was inferior to the Assembly. The words *resignation* and *removal* that I used, employing a clearly marked analogy, are not an attack; I reiterate this once again, because I want nothing to remain of this third grievance either.

I now turn to the fourth charge. It is alleged that I incited citizens to hatred against one another. I would have liked the public prosecutor, in his indictment... (A wave of disapproval, hilarity from some benches.)

A VOICE ON THE RIGHT. There is no longer a public prosecutor; we are not in 93.

CITIZEN PROUDHON. I wish that, in the request for authorization, the passage on which all these grievances are based had been cited, because having reread my work, I could not find it. In both articles, there is mention of monarchists, Jesuits and obscurantists, but in opposition to republicans and patriots.

That's all there is to it. Well! If I have incited civil war by classifying citizens into two parties, one the friend, the other the enemy of the Republic, I know many people whom the ministry admits, whom the majority supports and who have done worse than me.

ON THE FAR LEFT. Very good! Very good!

CITIZEN PROUDHON. You haven't forgotten that agenda item from the day before yesterday, concerning the speeches attributed to Marshal Bugeaud. Marshal Bugeaud, I must give him his due, is, like myself, perfectly well known for his opinions. (Noise and laughter from some of the benches.)

Well! When Marshal Bugeaud, following Léon Faucher, comes to speak of the eternal enemies of society, whom does he designate by these words: "The eternal enemies of society?" Undoubtedly, the republicans, the patriots and the opposition to the monarchists, of whom he is certainly one of the supporters.

ON THE FAR LEFT! That's it! Very good! Very good!

CITIZEN PROUDHON. Citizens, in all this, it is the law of force and numbers that makes our conviction.

Today, those we call socialists are, like the Albigenians and Waldensians of old, targeted for persecution. When we speak against these people, there is no incitement to hatred among the citizens; but when republicans and socialists speak of capitalists and reactionaries, then there is incitement to mutual hatred among the citizens. (Applause from the far left.)

All these grievances, I dare say, are merely pretexts to justify the repression of an insult that no one dared to denounce.

Everyone knows perfectly well that the two articles in question were written by me against the President of the Republic, that is to say, against his policies. Well then! Since everyone knows this, why then has no one dared to say it? Why hasn't the President of the Republic, who is the only one attacked in my articles, complained? Why hasn't he given someone a mandate, on his behalf, to complain?

I admit that these articles were written against the President of the Republic, the title itself proves it; I said that it was premeditated on my part, I did not want to commit any other crime; I did it intentionally, I said so everywhere; however, I am being prosecuted for what I did not want to do.

The real grievance, I repeat, gentlemen, is the insult to Citizen Louis Bonaparte. Everyone here admits it. Well! This offense, which the Attorney General refused to discuss, this offense that I immediately identified as the true one, this true offense has been acknowledged by the honorable rapporteur, M. Martin (du Nord)...

A MEMBER. From Strasbourg. (Laughter.)

CITIZEN PROUDHON. M. Martin (of Strasbourg); I beg your pardon. I make a great distinction between the two, rest assured.

Citizen Martin (of Strasbourg), after stating that I was quite wrong to believe I was being prosecuted for offenses requiring a complaint from the offended party, adds: "The offenses for which authorization is requested are: attacks on the Constitution; attacks against the rights and authority that the president derives from universal suffrage; and incitement to contempt and hatred among citizens." And, at the end of his report, he says: "On the one hand, impunity for attacks against the Assembly cannot justify attacks against the president, neither in law, nor morally, nor even politically."

Thus, the true thought, the one that resides in everyone's conscience, the one that preoccupied the mind of the honorable rapporteur, this thought, through all the reasons given in the report, has finally emerged. It is that, in reality, I am being prosecuted as the aggressor against the President of the Republic, and not as the man who attacks the Constitution, the National Assembly, who incites civil war among citizens.

I could also cite, in support of what I am saying here, the reasons given in some offices to support the request for authorization to prosecute. It was not concealed that they could not tolerate the newspaper articles in which the person of the President of the Republic was attacked with such vehemence. This has been stated.

I recall all these circumstances so that it may be perfectly clear once again — and I insist on this point — that I am not being prosecuted for a crime of a certain nature, but for another, which my accusers refuse to admit. And it is not without reason that I make this distinction, that I insist on drawing this line of reasoning. I do not know if the Attorney General has considered the consequences of his request, the consequences of the prosecution as it has been initiated; but here are those consequences:

If I am guilty of attacks on the Constitution, etc., I am liable to the penalties stipulated in Art. 1 of the decree of August 11, 1848.

The grievances for which I am denounced, gentlemen, I repeat, are punishable, according to Article 1 of the decree of last August, by imprisonment from three months to five years and a fine of 3,000 to 6,000 francs, while the attack made publicly... (Sounds on the right.)

CITIZEN BRIVES. Wait until they've blown our noses over there. (Noise.)

THE CITIZEN PRESIDENT. I ask Mr Deville to refrain from such interruptions.

CITIZEN DEVILLE. It's not M. Deville. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT CITIZEN. I apologize, it is Citizen Brives.

CITIZEN DEVILLE. I cannot accept a reproach that does not apply to me.

THE PRESIDENT. I invite all members of this assembly, whatever side they may belong to, to refrain from disturbing the previous speaker's speech with any noise whatsoever. (Laughter.)

CITIZEN PROUDHON. Attacking any holder of public authority is punishable by imprisonment from eight days to ten months, and a fine of 50 to 3,000 francs.

Gentlemen, there is a difference of two-fifths to the whole.

Well! I, who believe myself guilty only of an attack against the President of the Republic, against a holder of public authority, believe that the prosecution should have been carried out under the law and the article that I have just cited; that, consequently, the request for authorization should have been brought before you under this same law and this same article.

However, since we have been in the Republic, since the head of the executive power has ceased to be irresponsible and inviolable, the head of the executive power falls into the category of all agents and officials of the public authority, that is to say that the same procedure which must be followed by them, when they have been attacked and defamed in their functions, must be followed by the President of the Republic himself.

It was therefore incumbent upon Citizen Louis Bonaparte, President of the Republic, to file a complaint, as stipulated in Article 5 of the 1819 law, which has not yet been repealed by the decree of August 14th; it was incumbent upon Citizen Louis Bonaparte to file a complaint and request authorization to prosecute from the Assembly. He did not do so. I ask, based on what I have just said, whether there is fairness, justice, and constitutionality in the request for authorization to prosecute.

I am being prosecuted, in fact, for a crime that is not mine; I am being prosecuted, ostensibly, for a crime of which I am not guilty; I am being prosecuted, in reality, for a crime that is not admitted, that is not named.

I will have to answer before the jury for things I did not do, and the jury will condemn me (Ha! ha!) for what I did not do, because of what I did not have to justify. Then, as a consequence of this violation of the Constitution and the law, I will be punished with a very considerable penalty, a penalty that applies to the crime of which

I am accused, and which is not mine, whereas in reality I should only be punished for the crime that is not confessed to; I repeat it, and I will always repeat it.

I cannot accept this situation, and I ask that the National Assembly consider it. I am not, once again, shirking responsibility: when I signed one of the articles and came to declare from this rostrum that I accepted responsibility for the other, which I had not signed, I made it quite clear that I assumed responsibility for my actions and that I did not wish to shield myself from the inviolability of a representative, in which, I repeat, I have never believed for myself. (Movement.)

But I cannot allow the Constitution to be attacked in my person, or for there to be an appearance of not understanding the legality that derives from it.

I have a few more observations to make before I finish, on the very legality of the prosecution, insofar as it would look at the actual crime that we want to repress and which I am talking about.

It is now understood that the prosecution is directed at the aggressor of citizen Louis Bonaparte, President of the Republic; it is understood that this is the crime that they want to punish and will punish, in my person, under the name of attack on the Constitution, the government and the National Assembly.

Well! I now suppose that the complaint was made as it should have been, according to the republican procedure which is none other than the law of 1819, applied to the highest public officials; I finally suppose that M. Attorney General dared to say: Yes, it is for attacking the President of the Republic that we are prosecuting the representative of the people Proudhon, it would still remain to be seen whether the facts of which I am accused, as constituting an attack, are of those which can now be prosecuted, when it concerns the President of the Republic.

There is a new question here, a question of legality that arises from the constitutional question, which I will examine shortly. The constitutional question is this: the President of the Republic is no longer merely a civil servant like any other; he is superior to them in authority, but inferior to them in the length of his term and even in the inviolability we possess, which he lacks. It follows that the President of the Republic, having become simply one of the agents, one of the custodians of authority, when challenged in his official capacity for the actions of his government, can only bring an action against an inviolable representative of the people in the manner prescribed and specified for all civil servants. That is the constitutional question.

Here now is the legal consequence, a consequence which, once again, the Attorney General has failed to grasp: the attack against the President of the Republic is absolutely of the same nature as the attack against the government ministers. Therefore, if I have the right, in discussing the actions of the ministry, in comparing a number of these actions, to draw conclusions that suggest their policy is reactionary, I have the right to draw these conclusions and to express them.

This was done under the monarchy, everyone witnessed it; it was done against M. Guizot, it was done against M. Thiers, and it is being done against the current ministry.

You can read any newspaper you come across; if it's not a pro-government one, you'll see that the current cabinet is accused of reaction, counter-revolution and treason.

However, the ministry does not pursue the matter; the ministry believes that since all these attacks are based on authentic acts, on acts which, each in particular, are within the rights of ministers, it is also within the rights of writers to incriminate them.

Now, since the head of the executive branch is no longer inviolable and irresponsible, he finds himself in the same position as the ministers. All of his policy actions can be discussed, examined and challenged, just as they are for each individual minister; therefore, no one can tell me: You have drawn exaggerated conclusions from certain acts of presidential policy, and you will be required to provide proof, as stated in the commission's report.

Here, I have no proof to furnish; I am not required to provide any, nor do we have the right to demand it. I am not accusing the President of the Republic of acts of bribery, embezzlement, or acts which, in themselves, are illegal and immoral. I have done nothing of the sort: I have attributed to the President of the Republic, I have traced back to him the responsibility for all the actions of the ministry; I have drawn from a comparison of these actions the conclusion that, in my opinion, M. Bonaparte was not in favor of our republican institutions.

I stand by both the discussion as I have held it, and the inference as I have drawn it; it is within my rights, not only as a representative of the people, but as a journalist.

Well! Today, it would follow from the request for authorization that, with regard to the President of the Republic, one would not have the right to distinguish between the assessment of political acts and the logical consequence that can be drawn from them, and defamation, the imputation of acts that are culpable in themselves and slanderous. Now, this, I say, is a consequence of our new constitutional law that it is important to emphasize, and that cannot be left to the judgment of a jury: that, for the President of the Republic as for the ministry, political acts can be not only discussed, but incriminated, and give rise to entirely disgraceful inferences, even the most terrible inferences against the head of the executive branch.

If you will allow me, I will make this clearer to you by recalling some of the acts for which I have reproached Louis Bonaparte.

Gentlemen, I will tell you in all sincerity, the Republican party, and the majority of this assembly will say yes in their conscience, the Republican party has viewed with concern and mistrust the accession of Louis Bonaparte to the presidency.

The reasons for this mistrust are all well known to you; they are not honorable enough for me to reiterate them publicly; but nonetheless, they are present in everyone's minds. From these events arises the suspicion of a whim, a monomania or whatever you prefer to call it, on the part of the Empire, which certainly will not be defended, but which is quietly admitted and which everyone knows. I have the right to recall these events; they are the first link in the chain of reasoning I have used to arrive

at the inferences, at the conclusion, that Louis Bonaparte, in my opinion, does not serve the interests of the Republic.

Do you want us to move from examining these backgrounds to the president's first political acts? Everyone knows them.

I do not find it wrong that the members of the cabinet accepted ministries under the republican regime from the hands of M. Louis Bonaparte; but what I find surprising, and this has been said by others besides myself, is that he chose precisely men who, in all honesty of conscience, had believed they should vote against the Constitution.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. And who are they then?

CITIZEN PROUDHON. M. Odilon-Barrot.

CITIZEN ODILON-BARROT. Against the Constitution! Where did you get that idea! (Interruption and laughter.)

CITIZEN PROUDHON. You didn't vote against the Constitution? (No! no!)

A VOICE. You are the ones who voted against the Constitution. (Noise.)

CITIZEN PRESIDENT. All the ministers voted for the Constitution.

CITIZEN PROUDHON. The President points out to me that all the ministers voted for the Constitution: really, that's just postponing the issue. The Prime Minister knows as well as I do what difference there is between the current republican Constitution and the balanced representative system of the old charter; he knows very well that what makes this enormous, total difference is the duality, or even the trinity and balance of powers. M. Odilon-Barrot argued here for the necessity of two chambers. (Well!)

A VOICE. That's one opinion.

CITIZEN PROUDHON. The duality of chambers is a whole new constitution, (No! no!) It's a wholly monarchical constitution. (No! no! Yes! yes!) I know something about it, and so do you.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. And the United States!

CITIZEN PRESIDENT. It's a matter of judgment and opinion. One can be a perfectly republican and still want two assemblies. (Exclamations from the left.)

TO THE RIGHT. Yes! Yes!

A FEW VOICES ON THE FAR LEFT. These are the monarchists who say: Yes!

THE CITIZEN PRESIDENT. It is, I repeat, a matter of opinion: we cannot call those here who wanted two chambers monarchists. (No! No! — Exclamations from the left.) The entire Assembly, unanimously, cried: Long live the Republic! The Assembly, unanimously, wanted the Republic; all its members are republicans: they swore it. (Hear, hear!)

CITIZEN PROUDHON. Gentlemen, if it were only a matter of intentions, I wouldn't argue here; I readily grant that you all have the best intentions in the world to be republicans; but it is a matter of ideas: it is through ideas that some are republicans

and others are not. I do no offense to anyone by saying this. Well then! I believe that M. Odilon-Barrot, despite his claims, is not a republican, since he wants two chambers. (Various prolonged interruptions.)

The whole question of the Republic lies in this, which was perfectly expressed in the amendment of our honorable colleague, M. Grévy.

"A National Assembly, all-powerful, governing through delegated ministers," whether these ministers have a president or not, it matters little! But the preponderance of the Assembly, the sovereign authority of the Assembly... (Noise.) that, in my opinion, is what constitutes democratic government.

Well, citizens, we must find a dividing line between a purely democratic constitution and one that is monarchical or tends towards monarchy.

You claim that the duality of national representation does not imply the destruction of the republican government. Based on this reasoning, I am entitled to tell you: But the president's re-election does not imply the destruction of the republican government either; nor does his inviolability imply the destruction of the Republic; nor does the hereditary nature of the presidency imply the destruction of the Republic. (Murmurs.)

By proceeding in this way, step by step, the Republic still exists. (Approving laughter from some benches on the left.)

The Republic, I repeat, exists only in the preponderant and absolute authority of the National Assembly.

I apologize to the Assembly for this digression. Its purpose was to explain how, in my opinion, the formation of the current ministry was a political act that worried republican opinion. I may be mistaken, but I don't think so. That I may disagree with the majority of this assembly today is possible: the majority seems to have supported the ministry since February 3rd; but ultimately, in my opinion, I am convinced that the formation of this ministry, at first, was worrying for the Republic.

If I then examine other political acts of the President of the Republic, I am even more justified in being suspicious.

Indeed, we've spoken often enough that I won't go over it again regarding the concentration of military command in the hands of Citizen General Changarnier; and the Râteau proposal, which will be brought up again shortly. (Murmurs.)

Now, what then was the Râteau proposal? The honorable M. Grévy told you, it was a notification from the President of the Republic to the National Assembly to dissolve itself.

Among the minor modifications that many republicans believe they can make to the Constitution, there is one that is the subject of all this debate, not the current debate, but the discussion relating to the Râteau proposal; this modification, very minor in appearance, is that the President of the Republic, head of the executive power, is the equal of the Assembly,

As for me, this is an anti-republican, anti-democratic opinion, and when I saw this claim of equality between the two powers raised and supported from this platform by citizen Odilon-Barrot, I said to myself: The President of the Republic is not a republican.

SEVERAL MEMBERS ON THE LEFT. Very good!

CITIZEN PROUDHON. I do not wish to go any further in discussing the actions of the government, because I am eager to be done with any personal attacks; I am not seeking an opportunity for a personal battle with the President of the Republic... (Various exclamations.)

I mean that in a political sense. (Yes! Yes! — We understand!) Whether I have to defend myself before a jury for attacking the Constitution or for attacking the President of the Republic, it makes little difference to me. In the case that concerns the request for authorization to prosecute, I have a better chance of being acquitted, because, once again, the offenses I'm accused of are precisely those that don't exist.

But what I would have wanted above all, for the sake of respect for the Constitution and the dignity of the Assembly, if I may say so, is that there be no subterfuge in this request for authorization to prosecute; that the request for authorization be as honest as the allegation of offenses; that the man who might have cause to complain, and I deny that he has the right to complain, it is, I say, that this man, recognizing the truth of our new institutions, should resign himself to making the complaint to which he is obliged by the law of 1819. (Various noises.)

I repeat that in the request made to you, as regards the subject matter, as regards the form and as regards the legal consequences, there is disloyalty, unconstitutionality and, finally, a violation of the rights of the press.

Citizens, I await the Assembly's decision without the slightest anxiety. I am one of those, know this well, who can be killed or refuted, but not punished. (Oh! oh! — Various movements.)

VOICES ON THE FAR LEFT. Very good! Very good!

CITIZEN PROUDHON. It is up to the Assembly to see whether it wants to take seriously the request of the Attorney General, a request which is not true in its allegations, a request which is concealed as to its purpose, or whether it wants to take into account the observations that I have just made.

SEVERAL MEMBERS ON THE EXTREME LEFT. Very good! Very good!

No. 91. — February 17.)

ERRATUM

Paris, February 16.

To the Proofreader of LE PEUPLE.

Citizen,

You must collate your proofs and not transpose the sentences.

In your quotation from the *Moniteur*, of the speech I delivered to the National Assembly on February 14th, you have me saying:

“Under a constitutional monarchy, when the monarch is inviolable, an elected assembly can declare that the ministry is suspect, that it lacks confidence, that it inspires even greater mistrust. But when, under the Constitution, the President of the Republic is part of the government, an integral and responsible part of the government, *the stability of the system is not shaken*. To say that this government does not have the confidence of the people is to accuse the entire government, to say to the whole people: We are governed by people who are conspiring. Then the Constitution will no longer have a representative in the executive branch; there is nothing that can prevent the people from ridding themselves of the government.”

This passage, as I have just transcribed it in yesterday's issue of *Le Peuple*, is almost unintelligible.

However, the Monitor, which you have a copy of, states verbatim, as you can verify for yourself:

“Under a constitutional monarchy, when the monarch is inviolable, an elected assembly can declare that the ministry is suspect, that it lacks confidence, that it inspires mistrust. *The stability of the system is not shaken*. But when, under the Constitution (of a republican constitution), the president of the Republic is part of the government, an integral and responsible part of the government, to say that this government does not have the confidence of the people is to say to the entire people: We are governed by people who are conspiring! Then, since the Constitution no longer has a representative in the executive branch, there is nothing that can prevent the people from ridding themselves of the government.”

This is understandable, though rather poorly expressed. I would have needed the eloquent words of M. Jules Favre, combined with the rigorous precision of M. Grévy, to develop this central idea, one of the most fruitful in our Constitution. But, to each their own, and I am no orator...

Formerly, the perpetuity of power or, if you prefer, the permanence of political life in the nation, was expressed by hereditary royalty and the inviolability of the prince, two things which, in the eyes of the publicist, are one and the same.

The king was thus the visible, sacred representative of the Constitution. The constitutional axis was placed in the executive power, in the inviolable and immovable head of the executive power — in short, in the king. Everything converged, everything

gravitated toward the monarch, as toward the heart of the system. Parliaments, Estates-General, National Assemblies, Chambers of Peers and Deputies — some subordinate, others temporary, all inferior in some way to the majesty of the prince, receiving from him their existence, authority and sanction — were merely secondary institutions, offshoots of royal power. These great bodies could become corrupt, commit malfeasance, fail in their mandate, arouse the anger of the citizens against them, and incur national condemnation: as long as the king remained standing, the Constitution, which he symbolized in his person, was, like him, beyond reach; popular movement could lead to reform, but never to revolution. *The stability of the system was not shaken.*

Thus, according to the principle of the Charter of 1830, Louis-Philippe, the embodiment of that Charter, being inviolable, the opposition to M. Guizot, accused of treason by M. Barrot and his friends, could only, and should only, according to the terms of the Charter, lead to reform. It was to a principle superior to the Charter of 1830 that Louis-Philippe was overthrown from the throne and shared the fate of his ministers. M. Barrot, by raising the question of distrust against M. Guizot, but not extending it to Louis-Philippe, remained within the bounds of legality; he was faithful to the Charter; he was, in fact, protesting against the revolution that was about to take place, just as he still protests today against that revolution, now accomplished.

Now, we have changed systems. As I said from the podium, the political world has turned around, society has shifted course. Constitutional perpetuity, which was once placed in the king, head of the executive branch, has passed into the legislative branch, into the Assembly.

Article 32 of the Constitution states: THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IS PERMANENT. — By transferring the perpetual nature of action from the executive to the legislative branch, the government has, so to speak, become intellectualized. It is no longer the body that dominates, but the intellect. The Constitution of December 4th, in its entirety, but especially in defining the relationship it established between the two branches of government, is in perfect harmony with this principle, the pivot and keystone of the new system.

It follows from this that the stability of the Constitution and the Republic depends not on respect for the president, temporary head and responsible for the executive power, but on the inviolability, the PERMANENCE of the Assembly; — that if the president of the Republic becomes a traitor or a prevaricator, he is *removed from office and impeached* (art. 68), without the Constitution, the Republic, or society being shaken in the least; — that if, consequently, the National Assembly, without going so far as impeachment, expresses a vote of no confidence towards the president and the ministers, the president and the ministers must change their conduct or resign.

Thus, there is an absolute contradiction between the two systems. Under the monarchy, were the king and the chamber in disagreement? It was the king who expressed his distrust and, by dissolving parliament, appealed to the nation. Under the Constitution of 1848, on the contrary, things are no longer the same. Is the assembly

dissatisfied with the government? The president, if the fault does not lie with him, satisfies the assembly by changing his ministers; if the blame lies with him, he must, under penalty of rebellion, resign, as the possibility of a conflict between him and the Assembly cannot be constitutionally permitted.

Such is the current right; such is the law. In a Republic, the Assembly is sovereign, and any censure it expresses regarding government policy is final and necessarily leads to the fall of the ministry. If the president persists, despite the Assembly's wishes, and supports his ministers, he is by that very fact in a state of rebellion and usurpation, and the Assembly must decree it. If, through culpable complacency or complicity, the Assembly allows such an abuse of power by the president to pass without a word, then it itself betrays its duties, and any people who could tolerate this would be a cowardly people, unworthy of liberty.

I was therefore right to say that M. Louis Perréc's reasoned agenda implied, should the President of the Republic not immediately dismiss his ministers, a call to insurrection. Indeed, the Assembly is sovereign; the President of the Republic is merely the executor of its will; from the moment he, at the disposal of the public force, an army of 80,000 men, resists the Assembly's orders, he is a rebel, he is usurping power, he is becoming a traitor and a tyrant.

It is fortunate that, on February 4th, no one — neither the President of the Republic, nor the Assembly, nor the people — had the foresight to grasp the situation. Civil war was inevitable.

What I have just said about the permanence of the Assembly, substituted for the hereditary nature of the throne and the inviolability of the prince, as an expression of the perpetuity and indestructible character of social life, which constitutes, in essence, the whole difference between the monarchical regime and the republican regime, is at the same time the most direct proof of the necessity of a single assembly.

Let's recall the principle once again.

The National Assembly, according to the Constitution and common sense, must be, like society itself, PERMANENT. The Assembly is like life, the soul of the body politic. Suspension, for it, is abdication, death.

Suppose there were two chambers, as M. Barrot would like, which of the two would embody this continuity? Which would have the right to express, with regard to the executive branch, a vote of satisfaction or distrust, as happened on February 8th? Which could impeach the ministers and declare the President of the Republic a traitor to the Republic?

There is no need to multiply the questions: the absurdity of a double representation, together with the subordination of the executive power, is blatant.

God, says the School, is one, or he is not: *Aut Deus unus, aut nullus*.

The same applies to royalty: one king or no king: *Aut rex unus, aut nullus*.

The same must be said of the National Assembly: representation must be one, otherwise it is nothing: *Aut Ecclesia una, aut nulla.*

The duality of chambers – which is perfectly understandable under a monarchy where the representative embodies governmental unity – implies a contradiction in a republic. In this respect, the example of the United States and the Constitution of Year V proves no more against the certainty and necessity of the principle than Greek polytheism proves against the dogma of the unity of God. I have not visited America; I am unfamiliar with the facts that can explain the anomaly observed in this quasi-republican federation of decidedly undemocratic states; all I know is that, in law, representative dualism is already a sign of feudalism, mercantile or aristocratic, a first step toward monarchy; – and that, in fact, the political and social constitution of the United States falls far short of the idea that people have held of the republic throughout history.

Let the republicans know what to expect, and let the royalists who govern us beware of the misinterpretations that bad habit might lead them to commit:

The permanence, unity, and sovereignty of the National Assembly form the essence of republican government.

The day the permanence of the National Assembly is obstructed, the day its unity is called into question, the day the President of the Republic raises conflict against it, on that day the Republic will be in peril, insurrection will become the first of rights and the most sacred of duties.

END OF VOLUME ONE