

(No. 146. — April 14, 1849.)

Paris, April 13.

### **ELECTORAL MEETINGS**

A deplorable abuse is tending to establish itself in our parliamentary system: namely, in certain matters still unfamiliar to the public consciousness, the substitution of the jurisprudence of the Court of Cassation for the inalienable rights of citizens and the initiative of the National Assembly. The day before yesterday, the Honorable M. Ledru-Rollin, addressing questions to the Minister of the Interior, stated:

Electoral meetings have taken place in various important cities; the prefects have given orders for the police to intervene in these meetings, to monitor them and, under certain circumstances, to report on the professions of faith made there by the candidates and the discussions that took place. I could add today that the emotion in some cities has been such that some local authorities have felt compelled to resign in order to resist the orders given by the government.

This is a regrettable conflict; it is a question that, in the public interest, must be resolved; it cannot remain unresolved.

Now, for my part, I have never heard that electoral meetings were liable to be monitored by the police, etc.

And after a long discussion of the law of August 24, 1790, M. Odilon-Barrot, responding in turn to Messrs. Ledru-Rollin and Théodore Bac, concluded as follows:

The legal question — whether the police can exercise such high surveillance over electoral meetings, as over any other public gathering — if this legal question could be seriously raised, it would not be up to us to resolve it, because it is not for us to apply the law. The courts have been seized. The Court of Cassation has entered, and **THE COURT OF CASSATION IS THE REGULATOR IN THIS MATTER.**

This is precisely what M. Guizot replied to M. Odilon-Barrot on February 22nd: “Have your banquet,” he told him, “we will send the police commissioner after you; you will resist; we will bring you before the courts, and the Court of Cassation, the arbiter in this matter, will pronounce judgment.”

This would be barely tolerable under a monarchy, where everyone, rulers and ruled alike, believed in justice, enlightenment, and the absolute independence of the Court of Cassation. For, ultimately, where the law appears doubtful even to the legislator, as is currently the case with the 1790 law, which has been debated for fifteen months without any agreement being reached, it is not to the courts, charged with APPLYING the law, that one should refer the matter, but to the legislator. That is to say, the law must be rewritten and, until it is rewritten, the benefit of the doubt is granted to the citizen identified as an offender.

But in a Republic, with the principle of universal suffrage, when it comes to electoral meetings, to dare to say from the tribune that the police have the right to enter such meetings, in order to monitor them, and then, in order to pass this enormity, to appeal to the authority of the court of cassation, is to overturn all

republican ideas; it is to attack at the same time the right of the elector, the prerogative of the legislator, the majesty of the electorate, which is the sovereign; it is to deny the Republic.

What! The people, you say, are sovereign; it is through elections that they manifest their sovereignty; electoral meetings are the necessary preliminary to this manifestation; and now you place the police above the sovereign, as you place the Court of Cassation above the legislative power! The sovereign, from whom all constituted authority emanates, is subordinate, in the exercise of this inviolable sovereignty, to the police commissioner; then, as a consequence, the sovereign's agent, the representative charged with enacting the law, is subject, through the interpretation of that law, to the judicial authority, charged only with applying it! Can you conceive of a sovereign acting under the supervision of his own police force, and, like a freedman on the run, exposed to being seized by his own gendarmes! Can you imagine the legislator — for although the people's representative changes, the legislator himself remains immutable — perplexed about the meaning of the law he has made, consulting the very person who was supposed to receive its interpretation from him?

But it is not enough to be illogical: M. Barrot's theory is inapplicable, and the whole aim of this great statesman, in supporting the police farces of his friend Faucher with his word, was to frighten the fools!

Suppose — and I wager that this will happen — that a meeting of voters were bold enough to expel the police commissioner; suppose that a second meeting followed suit, that this one was imitated by a third, a fourth, a hundredth, a hundred thousandth! What, I ask you, will the police do, and what will the Court of Cassation say? Will you close the halls and oppose the meetings? Will you then abolish elections as well? Will you abolish universal suffrage? Will you put the voters on trial? The voters will answer you by appointing representatives who will dismiss your prefects, your attorneys general and their deputies, your Court of Cassation and your entire police force, who will, in turn, drive you — and this will be justice — from the government!

Will you finally say that there are electoral meetings and then there are electoral meetings, just as “*il y a fagots et fagots*,” that if the law of 1790, as interpreted by the Court of Cassation, *authorizes* you to have all electoral meetings monitored, it does not *oblige* you to exercise this surveillance where you deem it unnecessary; that police commissioners are made for democrats, but that they will refrain from disturbing the friends of the government in their innocent discussions! So it is arbitrary surveillance that you want to have over the voters! It is a class of citizens that you are placing under suspicion, it is a part of the sovereign that you are declaring an enemy of order and the public good! And you call this justice and liberty! And you dare to speak of your political probity! And you invoke universal suffrage!...

Come now, M. Barrot; come now, M. Faucher; your interpretation of the 1790 law, your appeal to the Court of Cassation and your feigned submission to the courts — all this, like your law on clubs, is nothing but a hypocritical and cowardly violation of the Constitution. One of two things must be true: either the police must attend all electoral meetings, in which case their presence will be nothing but an affront to the majesty of

the sovereign, who, you have no doubt, will soon take justice into his own hands; — or they will only show themselves at certain meetings that are not friendly to you and your policies; and, in that case, their supposed surveillance will be nothing but an odious vexation of the government, an incitement to civil war, which every republican is bound to resist, even by force. Does the Court of Cassation, which the establishment of the Republic seems to have stunned, as well as you, perhaps doubt that the right to resist can be exercised against a judicial decision, just as well as against an administrative order? Well then, let them try it and see! And if the Republicans, overwhelmed by numbers, were unable to enforce right and liberty, they know that there are returns to earthly matters: after protesting, they would take note!...

I conclude by formulating this aphorism of republican right:

In the event that, due to exceptional circumstances, the legislator had deemed it necessary, for a longer or shorter period of time, to subject the right of assembly to certain police formalities, such a law, being entirely exceptional, could never affect electoral assemblies.

For the electoral assembly is the very exercise of sovereignty, and no one other than the sovereign has the right to provide guards for the sovereign. It is up to the voters to organize the policing of their assemblies: any encroachment by authority, any contrary decision by the courts, is an attack on the sovereignty of the people and on universal suffrage.

Let the municipalities, instead of backing down in the face of arbitrary power, let all citizens, instead of giving in to the intimidation of a foolish power, resist! By learning resistance, they will learn liberty.

(No. 150. — April 18, 1849.)

### **M. GUIZOT'S COMEBACK**

M. Guizot, the inflexible doctrinaire, the austere publicist, takes his hat off to universal suffrage, like M. Cousin to Catholicism.

M. Guizot is putting forward his candidacy. The man who was deposed in February is preparing to return to France: this will be his second or third return from Ghent.

What is this Bridoisson of the *juste-milieu*, who so heavily undermined the monarchy of 1830, doing among us? Listen to his circular:

If M. Guizot deigns to return to France, it is certainly not for the sake of the Republic, I mean the honest and moderate Republic: M. Guizot does not love it any more than the democratic and social Republic.

It is not to consolidate the edifice whose foundations were laid by universal suffrage: despite the opposition of Barrot, Thiers and Duvergier de Hauranne, despite the praise given to universal suffrage by the entire reaction, after the elections of April and December, M. Guizot accepts, on this point, no modification to his policy; he rejects, both now and in the future, electoral reform.

There is no need to add that M. Guizot makes no mention, in his circular, of the question of labor, nor of the question of credit, nor of taxation, nor of foreign affairs, nor of freedom of assembly, nor of freedom of the press. All of this is an error, a lie, an abomination.

To the workers, articles 415 and 416 of the Penal Code;

Agriculture is burdened, industry is on its last legs and usury is at 12 percent;

One billion to the taxpayers, compensation for the days in February;

To Italy, to Hungary, to Poland, to the Romans, to the Sicilians, to all the peoples who demand liberty, the Holy Alliance and the treaties of 1815;

To liberty, the laws of September.

Behind, on the questions raised since February, the solutions of M. Guizot. It is not to respond to such nonsense that he decides to leave his solitude in Brompton; if the great man returns to France, it is, know this well, to RESTORE ORDER; his circular is a lament in twenty-eight couplets on *order*.

Orderly men, orderly policies, orderly government, orderly party: order recurs in every sentence of M. Guizot's circular. Of liberty, conciliation, progress there is no mention.

What is *order* then? After all, we are from a country where we like people to explain themselves.

According to M. Guizot, there are only three serious governments for France, three governments of order: the Consulate and the Empire, the Restoration, the Monarchy of 1830. — As for the Republic, — it is understood that it is only the honest Republic, there can be no question of the social one, — it is not a serious government, a government of order: Cavaignac himself is not, in M. Guizot's opinion, a man of order.

But, you will say, now that the three governments of order are present — on one side, the Consulate and the Empire; on the other, legitimacy; in the final analysis, the July Monarchy — which one to choose?

To this, M. Guizot replied, with profound gravity: THAT IS THE DIFFICULTY! This recalls his famous answer to another delicate question: *One can choose either opinion!* What a genius M. Guizot is!...

Do not imagine that M. Guizot is as embarrassed as he appears; and if you wish for me to question him, I will undertake to make him speak.

Answer me then, M. Guizot.

If the Consulate and the Empire were a serious government, a government of order, why, in 1815, did you call in foreigners! Why did you go to Ghent!

So, with your permission, M. Guizot, the Consulate and the Empire, whose principle led to despotism, as you showed in 1815 by rallying to Louis XVIII, was not a serious government, a government of order.

If the Restoration was a serious government, a government of order, why, in 1830, did you protest against the July Ordinances, banish Charles X and put Louis-Philippe in his place?

With your permission again, M. Guizot, the Restoration, whose principle implied the negation of liberty, as you showed by calling the people of Paris to arms, was not a serious government, a government of order.

If the monarchy of 1830 was a serious government, a government of order, why, in 1839, did you attack, denounce, and overthrow this government in the person of M. Molé, only to betray it later in the person of M. Thiers, who became prime minister, and of whom you were the ambassador!

With your permission, M. Guizot, the monarchy of 1830, resolving itself fatally into personal government, as you showed by organizing your famous coalition, was not a serious government, a government of order.

The crux of M. Guizot's circular, then, remains this: that the only serious government for France, the only government of order, is neither the Consulate nor the Empire, overthrown in 1815 by M. Guizot; nor the Restoration, overthrown in 1830 by M. Guizot; nor the July Monarchy, overthrown in 1839 by M. Guizot, for it was from the coalition of 1839 that the opposition of 1848 arose, which led to the February Revolution. The serious government, the government of order, is the government of M. Guizot. If these are not the exact words of the circular, this is certainly its meaning.

Now that we know the government of order, and the one who is its most serious personification, the question is how we are going to restore order, and abolish the government of disorder, namely the Republic.

M. Guizot, who in 1815 formed a coalition of foreign powers against the Emperor; who in 1830 formed a coalition of the bourgeoisie against Charles X; who in 1839 formed a coalition of all parties against Louis-Philippe, M. Guizot is going to tell us: it is to form a new coalition against the Republic.

This coalition must consist exclusively of *the three serious governments THAT HAVE EXISTED, I quote verbatim, AND THAT HAVE FALLEN in France for the past sixty years, leaving behind, alongside the Republic, three hopes, three prospects!* That is to say, the only men of order who can be part of this proposed coalition are the Bonapartists, the Legitimists, and the Orleanists — in short, all supporters of the governments betrayed and overthrown by M. Guizot. As for the honest Republicans, who also believed themselves to be men of order and who took the Republic seriously, M. Guizot does not admit them into his company. M. Guizot does not take them into account, any more than he does the Reds. Since he does not recognize the Republican principle as a principle of order, he does not form a coalition with them; he does not consider them worthy of defection. It is against the whole Republic, red and blue, that he is forming a coalition, except to turn against his coalition partners afterwards: *Ecce homo!*

Order was disturbed in 1814, M. Guizot tells us, under the strong and glorious government of the Emperor; it was disturbed in 1830, under the foolish government of Charles X; it was disturbed in 1839, under the conservative and despotic government of Louis-Philippe: that is why I conspired against these governments. Order has remained disturbed since February 24th, under the provisional government, the executive commission and Cavaignac's administration; it is more disturbed than ever since

December 10th, under the presidency of Louis Bonaparte; that is why, he adds, I am conspiring against the Republic.

When was the order not disturbed? This is where you need to read between the lines if you want to understand the circular.

Order has truly existed in France for the past sixty years only during the period from 1840 to 1848, under the firm, intelligent, and incorruptible hand of M. Guizot. And it is in order to bring back this era of morality, dignity and glory that the Judas of universal suffrage loudly calls upon the parties of order to commit the scandal of a new betrayal.

We will not say of M. Guizot that he has forgotten nothing, learned nothing; M. Guizot, historian and statesman, has never known anything — neither history, nor politics, nor men. M. Guizot imagines that the fall of a monarchy, among an intelligent and free people, burdened by immense needs and terrible questions, is an accident to be addressed; he imagines that a parliamentary intrigue, like the one he staged in 1839, is a means that will succeed with a people. We knew of M. Guizot's pride; we were far from imagining him to be so immoral and petty. The circular surprised everyone with its impudence; it found not a single fool to applaud it.

However absurd such a demonstration may be, it testifies to the disorder of minds and consciences; it reveals the feverish anxiety that reigns among the enemies of the Republic. As such, it deserves our attention. M. Guizot is the first who, without respect for the universal suffrage he invokes, dares to challenge the Republic. M. Guizot's blunt frankness makes the reactionary parties envious, parties eager to follow him, but hesitant to take him as their leader and to endorse him with the voters.

Well! It is to bring about this much-desired monarchical solution, it is in order to come to the aid of these timid committees of the rue de Paitiers and the rue Duphat, and to procure, as far as it is in our power, the success of the coalition, which we, the People's Republicans, agents of disorder according to the categories of M. Guizot, but who passionately wish the return of order, offer to the political friends of M. Guizot, to all these men of order whom the ex-carbonaro honors with his circulars, the alternative of two proposals, committing ourselves to sign with our blood the one which will agree with them most.

*First proposal.* — We will accept M. Guizot as our government of order; we will defend the laws and institutions with which his wisdom will have endowed France; we will be grateful for the little liberty, drowned in much order, that he will be pleased to grant us; we will make the sacrifice of our social, political, democratic utopias, but on the condition that the three parties which represent order, Bonapartists, Legitimists and Orleanists, will first make known their own acceptance, will abdicate, as we will, their governmental hopes and perspectives, and will entrust to the pacifying, ordering and regenerating genius of M. Guizot, the destinies of France and the world.

*Second proposal.* — Or if, accepting M. Guizot's program, the said parties were to take a stand against him personally, we declare as before that we are ready to lower our flag before the coalition, to submit to the government that it will establish; to recognize, whatever it may be, its formula of order, provided that beforehand, Bonapartists,

Legitimists and Orleanists have agreed both on the Constitution and on the choice of the prince.

Failing that, we signify, once and for all, to them so-called parties of order, illegitimate organs of governments which have lived and fallen, as their leader M. Guizot said, that, notwithstanding all contrary judgments and decrees, we consider them to be parties of disorder, anarchic factions, armed against liberty and order, and that the duty of every citizen is to fight to the bitter end.

We declare to them that until they have reconciled the antagonism of their systems, until they have united in a common principle and have discovered a form of government better than the democratic and progressive Republic, founded by the February Revolution and decreed by the National Constituent Assembly, we will remain inviolably attached to this form of government, as the most rational, the most liberal, the most conciliatory, the most fruitful that has been, at any time, and in any country, put into execution.

And we will remind these so-called parties of order that, just as they have shown themselves to be stubbornly conservative under their respective governments, they will find us equally intractable in the republican status quo.

If, in order to restore a doomed past, they dare to try the path of conspiracies and coups d'état, we would like to warn them again that, rather than stretching our hands into new chains, we are resolved to bury ourselves with them under the ruins of the fatherland, following the lessons of our fathers, and the examples of Numantia, Saragossa, Moscow, Missolonghi and Brescia.

(No. 152. — April 20, 1849.)

Paris, April 19.

## **THE REPUBLIC AND THE COALITION**

### **(FIRST ARTICLE)**

It is in vain that a patriotism devoid of virtue cries reaction, conspiracy and treason! Republics perish only through the incapacity and inertia of republicans. The first condition for the vitality and longevity of a revolution is to have a counter-revolution to confront it. It is strange that what was supposed to ensure the triumph of the February Republic seems, through the weakness and unintelligence of its defenders, to turn against it into a cause of decadence and death. Are we then truly nothing more than schoolboy republicans and apprentice revolutionaries?

What is the Republic? — The party of unity, legality and order. I will prove it in a moment.

What is this coalition denounced four days ago by M. Guizot, which threatens to engulf the Republic? — The party of division, of arbitrariness, of anarchy. I will demonstrate this below.

And that's what terrifies us!

What a magnificent situation it would be if we were equal to the occasion, if we knew how to take advantage of circumstances and our resources! Everything that can ensure the existence of a republic — strength of principle, power of organization, the energy of opposing forces — has been lavished upon us by the fortunes of France. We possess within ourselves and around us the means to conquer, to absorb adversaries twenty times stronger: and these adversaries, destined to provide our nascent Republic with its first nourishment, its first sustenance, if it depended on us, we would want to eliminate them!

There's commotion, declamation, and agitation; talk of taking to the streets and rushing to the barricades; all we hear is talk of battle and carnage, when we should be celebrating the progress and intensity of the reaction. On the eve of a third application of universal suffrage, there's despair for the Republic. Patriots, a little calm, I beg you; less violence, if possible, and, if I may say so, a little more resolve.

For ten months, since that terrible birth in June, the Republic, as if ashamed of its mother's blood, has been declining daily, if not in theory, then at least in reality and in its government. Only the party of anarchy, which should be fostering the Republic's growth and prosperity, is gaining ground and favor. Things have reached the point where the coalition is waiting for just one opportunity to stifle the Republic. Ah! What need does it have of an opportunity! The Republic will fall of its own accord if we do not know how to defend it better! The seed will perish under the very fertilizer that was meant to make it sprout. And since it is a law of society that where reason and right abandon themselves, force and cunning seize power, we will see France, without principle, without unity, without symbol, fall into dissolution. She will be, last among nations, awaiting salvation from a foreign initiative!

We cannot remain any longer in this disastrous lethargy: we must emerge from it as soon as possible, or resign ourselves to it!...

Let us therefore know ourselves; let us know the Republic and the coalition; what we must defend, what we have been given to devour. By this we will be able to assess our means of action; and, as in the days of February, the future of the Republic will once again be in our hands.

Then, with our hand on our heart and our eyes fixed on the book of the law, we will be able to say and prove to the world, with a nod of our head, whether we are republicans or not.

I say that the Republic is the party of *unity*, therefore of *legality* and *order*.

These three elements, in the Republic, are one: this is what essentially distinguishes the Republic from the monarchy. Whereas here unity, legality and order each result from their own principle; in the Republic, they all result from the same principle, of which they are merely the three facets or corollaries.

Thus, what produces unity in the monarchy is the preponderant, inviolable and hereditary royal authority. What produces legality is no longer the royal prerogative, without which the government would degenerate into pure despotism; it is another principle, the national will, manifested by laws predating the monarchy, or at least contemporaneous with it. This is why it has become an adage among theorists of this

form of government that the law results from the consent of the people and from promulgation with royal sanction: *lex fit consensu populi, et constitutione regis*. From this, we perceive the dualism inherent in monarchical government. Finally, what produces order in the monarchy is a third principle, objective and materialistic: the hierarchy or subordination of citizens, that is to say, the inequality of abilities and conditions among men. The order thus produced is sometimes called feudalism, sometimes aristocracy, middle-class government, balance of powers, etc.

The monarchical constitution therefore necessarily implies three different principles: royal power, national will, and the chance of conditions and fortunes; and it is from each of these three principles that it deduces the three elements without which no nation can exist: unity, legality and order.

And such is also the radical vice of the monarchy. As the principles on which the Constitution rests, royal authority, national authority and the authority of chance, are essentially antagonistic, it necessarily happens that these principles are in perpetual conflict; so that, in the monarchy, unity, legality, order – monstrous thing! – form an insoluble contradiction between them.

The republican Constitution, on the contrary, rests on a single, eminently intellectual, therefore philosophical and liberal Principle, *universal suffrage*, which engenders, by a simple analysis of itself, and as adequate terms, unity, legality, which is the same thing as liberty and order.

Without concerning myself with the best way to organize or demonstrate universal suffrage, I say first that, by the very fact that it is universal, it is in its nature to express unity. These are two terms that are generated in logic and in politics, as in the etymology of *UNI-versality*, *UNI-ty*.

For a similar reason, universal suffrage produces, engenders and creates legality. For to speak of *suffrage* is to speak of will; no longer a presumed, fortuitous or instinctive will, like that of which the monarchy itself is a manifestation – but a reflective will, a will that deliberates and judges. To speak of universal suffrage, therefore, is to speak of a national will, manifested not once, at the beginning of time, and for all eternity, as in the monarchy; but manifested freely and at every moment, according to the progress and needs of society.

I would add that universal suffrage produces order. Universal suffrage does not prejudge inequality, which is variable and, moreover, highly debatable: it does not concern itself with this inequality. It makes order dependent on a higher, intelligent and free principle, which is the participation of all in the formation of the law.

Universal suffrage, that is the republican principle. Who would dare deny it today?

Unity, legality, order, direct products of universal suffrage, that is the republican Constitution, the eternal Constitution of humankind, of which the monarchy is but a deviation. Who could harm it!

To this very simple deduction, I will add a few facts, by way of commentary.

On November 4, 1848, the Constitution was voted on, a more or less exact expression of universal suffrage, a more or less perfect organization of the republican principle.

This Constitution was rejected by a number of democratic representatives, who, judging it to be flawed, and exercising their right, protested or abstained.

But this Constitution stems from universal suffrage; it is its present and provisional expression, it enshrines it: to such an extent that, by a special provision, the legislature reserved for itself the power of revision. From then on, it was the duty of those who, by their abstention or their votes, had protested against the Constitution, to submit to it; thus, for the past five months, it has had no firmer, no more energetic defenders.

Conspiracy was once committed against monarchical constitutions, but not against a republican constitution: conspiracy would be a crime. The reason for this difference is simple; monarchical constitutions were immutable; the republican constitution is perfectible, always subject to revision.

Another consequence of universal suffrage is that it is impossible to renounce or regress: this means that a republican constitution can only be revised in the direction of its republican development, which leads to the latter consequence that the Republic tends to become generalized across the globe, and that there is only one form of government for all of humanity.

Thus, universal suffrage, expressed by nine hundred representatives, was indeed able, for the first time, to decree that the Republic would have a president, a weakened image of the monarchy. Universal suffrage could no longer, either through the voice of the electors or through that of the representatives, make this president a monarch or confer upon him any of the monarchical prerogatives, because then universal suffrage would abjure itself, abdicate as a principle, which implies a contradiction.

Once established, the Republic therefore excludes any return, by legal means, to the monarchy: only *coups d'état* and violence could reverse the sovereignty of the people and restore the throne.

Another fact.

Beyond the democratic republican view opposed to the presidency, there is another, more radical and more comprehensive one, which asserts that, just as universal suffrage creates equality in the political sphere, it must also create it in the economic sphere. These individuals, therefore, reject with even greater vehemence than the others the legal order of the monarchy, an order which, as we have said, results from the inequality, whether necessary or contingent, of social conditions and wealth. They want the republican Constitution to guarantee liberty, security and property to all, and to guarantee them equality, that is to say, labor.

The Constitution of November 4th did not grant this claim, which did not prevent the so-called democratic-socialist republicans from accepting and submitting to it. They accept, I say, like true democrats, the Constitution and defend it. Why? Because this Constitution is the product of universal suffrage, and because, if, as they believe, social reform is in the mind and foresight of the general will, by virtue of the article that allows for constitutional revision, they hope to one day obtain satisfaction.

This explains the conduct of both the socialists and the democrats since the vote of November 4th. This is why all of them, without exception, have recognized the Constitution of the Republic as it stands, and are resolved, at the risk of their lives, to

defend it. As has been said, the political revolution implicitly contains the social revolution, a revolution that must be accomplished, unless the Constitution is violated, legally and peacefully.

Now, it is evident that all of them, those who want universal suffrage, but in the unity of the power and without the right to work, and those who want the unity of the power and universal suffrage, but without socialism, and finally those who want both universal suffrage, the unity of the power and the right to work; it is, I say, evident that all of them, presidential republicans, democrats and socialists, as soon as they take the Republic as their starting point, submit to the same constitution, accept in advance the future contingents of universal suffrage, and deduce from this principle unity, legality and order, belong to the same school; they follow the same line, they obey the same impulse, they profess the same dogma.

What does it matter, then, the diversity of programs! What does it matter if your name is Louis Blanc, Considérant, Pierre Leroux, Ledru-Rollin or Goudchaux, Billault, Grévy, Sandrin, Degoussé, etc.? What does it matter if you speak of proportional taxation or progressive taxation; of the separation of powers or their unity; of the right to assistance or the right to work! Questions of application, questions of timing!... Before the monarchist party, reds, blues and tricolors are all cut from the same cloth, are all of the same religion. The only difference is that of two travelers who, walking on the same road and following the same direction, one would prefer to go to the left of the road, the other to the right; the latter on horseback, the former in a cabriolet.

Republic, democracy, socialism — it's all one; they are synonymous terms. *Democratic and social republic* is a pleonasm, intended to express this inevitable synonymy. Anyone who rejects it is neither a socialist, nor a democrat, nor a republican; they are not at peace with themselves, they are a liar or an ignorant fool.

And just as it was right to say, from an economic point of view, that there were now only two parties in society, the party of labor and the party of capital, so too, from a political point of view, it will be said: There are now only two parties, the monarchist party and the republican party. It will always be the same motto, expressed in different language.

The enemies of the Republic, convinced like us of all these synonymies, convinced of the identity of principles which they reveal, change the formula and say: There are now only two parties, the party of order and the party of anarchy.

Fine, we accept the definition. The question then becomes: on which side does order lie, whether it lies with the monarchy or the republic, with capital or with labor? This is what I will examine in a second article.

Allow me, in the meantime, to summarize and say to the Republicans:

Monarchy is the form of government that brings unity, liberty and order out of three antagonistic principles: royal authority, the consent of the people and blind fortune.

The republic is the form of government that derives unity, liberty and order from a single principle, universal suffrage.

Under the monarchy, the constitution is subject to endless violations and divisions, permanent causes of revolutions and catastrophes.

With a republic, the constitution can never be violated: progress is achieved in a normal and peaceful way.

Three monarchies have fallen successively since the beginning of the century due to the inherent flaw in their constitution.

Under the empire, the principle of unity had become the principle of universal absorption. The national will had disappeared into the will of the emperor; henceforth, there was no more legality than that of imperial decrees, no more order than the order of imperial bayonets. The emperor fell because he was too much himself, because he was too much the emperor.

Under the Restoration, it was the exaggeration of the principle of order that brought about the catastrophe. Charles X wanted to revert to the old feudal system; he placed himself in opposition to the democratic and social tendencies of France. He attempted to subdue liberty, and he succumbed.

The July Monarchy finally perished because it violated the national will, the principle of all legality: the personal government that Louis-Philippe wanted to establish brought about quarrel and catastrophe.

Combine the causes of this triple revolution into a single formula, and you have the complete negation of the monarchy.

Synthesize into a single principle the three elements of order that the monarchy is powerless to produce, and you have the republic.

We are in a republic, and before us stands the monarchy, thrice defeated, thrice struck down by the republican principle. And we are supposed to be alarmed! The republic exists, and the republic is supposedly in danger!

O men of little faith! It is the weakness of your consciences that is your undoing. If you were convinced of the power of that single word, RIGHT; if you followed justice more than ambition; if you knew how to act instead of merely speaking, this coalition, which has the government, the Church, the army, wealth, and numbers on its side, would vanish before you like fog before the north wind. The coalition! It exists only for the progress and strengthening of the Republic.

(No. 153, – April 21.)

Paris, April 20.

## **THE REPUBLIC AND THE COALITION**

### **(SECOND ARTICLE.)**

A government of unity, legality and order;

A government that does not itself provide a pretext for any conspiracy;

A government capable of holding together, in a shared brotherhood of ideas and hopes, all those who accept its principle; which, from the first day of its existence, had

the singular power to subdue even those who, during the discussions, had most energetically protested against the form given to the Constitution, the *Republic* was established.

This Republic became a government in *fact* and by *right*, firstly by the successive and providential fall of three monarchies, the first despotic, the second hypocritical, the third corrupting; secondly, by the consent of the nation, manifested twice in general elections; finally, by the participation in the new work of seven million citizens summoned for the nomination of the president.

The progressive, democratic and social nature of this Republic is unambiguous.

Article 1 of the preamble to the constitution states:

"France has established itself as a Republic. By adopting this definitive form of government, it has set itself the goal of advancing more freely along the path of progress and civilization, of ensuring an increasingly equitable distribution of the burdens and benefits of society, of increasing the well-being of each individual through the gradual reduction of public expenditures and taxes, and of bringing all citizens, without further upheaval, through the successive action of institutions and laws, to an ever-higher degree of morality, enlightenment, and well-being."

And in Article 8 of the same preamble, it states:

"The Republic must protect the citizen in his person, his family, his religion, his property, his work, and make available to everyone the education indispensable to all men. It must, through fraternal assistance, ensure the existence of needy citizens, either by providing them with work within the limits of its resources, or by giving, in the absence of family, aid to those who are unable to work."

On one side, *progress*; on the other, in the absence of work, the *right to assistance*; above, as a sanction and principle, *universal suffrage*: that is the Constitution, that is the Republic!

PROGRESS is the negation of all retrograde thinking, of any return to privilege and monarchy.

The RIGHT TO ASSISTANCE, *in the absence of work*, is, to reverse the sentence, the same thing as the RIGHT TO WORK, *and in its absence, the right to assistance* — that is to say, precisely what socialism demands. The socialists would have been foolish to make such a fuss about the right to work when they were offered, *in the absence of work*, the right to assistance, if they hadn't understood that the guarantee of assistance, easily degenerating into a tax on the poor, is anti-democratic, anti-progressive, immoral, and a thousand times more costly to the Republic than the right to work.

Now, is there in all this a danger to religion, a danger to the family, a danger to property?

Not at all: Articles 1 and 8 of the preamble, as well as Article 13 of the Constitution, were voted by an immense majority, by those who wanted above all the maintenance of religion, family and property, and who, on this occasion, voted in favor of socialism.

But, it will be said, socialism, the latest and most complete form of the Republic, is a permanent threat to religion, to the family, to property.

What is meant by that?

In matters of religion, the majority of socialists are mystics, and conversely, a great many Catholics are socialists. Regarding family and property, all protest their respect for the family and acquired rights; all, I dare say, provide both the pretext and the example of this.

On religion, family and property, there are only controversies within socialism. The question has been asked – one could not help but ask it – whether, when all members of society have reached the level of morality, enlightenment, and well-being promised by the Constitution, religion, family and property will have retained their current form! On each of these points, some socialists answer *yes*, others *no*. There is nothing else, I repeat, in all of socialism.

It is in the presence of this Constitution and regarding its most distant, most problematic consequences, that a coalition has formed, with the avowed intention of destroying it.

On what is this coalition based? What is its origin? What are its claims, its grievances? What reform, what improvement, unknown to the Republic, does it propose? What principle does it reveal? What superior form of government? What unknown or unrecognized rights? For when one forms a league against a government, when one attacks a constitution, it is because the principle of the government is false and the constitution flawed, because it causes harm and prejudices certain rights.

What more could the coalition possibly want, *in order to bring all citizens, through the successive and constant action of institutions and laws, to an ever-higher degree of morality, enlightenment, and well-being?* How could it possibly intend, for example, to replace the right to assistance, a burdensome and demoralizing right, with the right to work, productive of morality and wealth! Let the coalition, before conspiring and destroying, deign to explain itself! Formerly, it demanded that socialism, accused of conspiring against society, produce its theories; now the socialists demand that it produce its own before laying hands on the Constitution.

You ask the coalition about its origin

It answers you: Empire, restoration, July monarchy. This coalition was formed from the remnants of three governments, WHICH HAVE LIVED and *which have fallen*, as the leader of the coalition himself says.

Its principle! In politics, it is, on the one hand, the royal prerogative, formerly called the *veto*; on the other, the property qualification of two hundred francs; in political economy, the preeminence of capital. Privilege, more privilege and always privilege: that is the principle of reaction.

Its form of government! In this respect, the coalition offers us three *perspectives*: the perspective of imperial despotism, the perspective of the Jesuitical restoration, the perspective of the corruption of July.

The progress that it wants to achieve? It is to consolidate and forever enshrine the inequality of social benefits by means of the inequality of political rights.

The rights that it wants to have recognized, the abuses that it wants to eradicate! After having eliminated the right to work, it wants to abolish the right to assistance.

This is the program of the coalition.

This is the order that it wants to establish, the legality that it wants to restore to us!

This is what makes it sing in every tone imaginable that society has been gravely, profoundly affected by the February Revolution; that order exists nowhere, that religion is lost, that the family is threatened and, what matters even more than religion and family, that property itself is in danger!...

If we now turn from the manifesto of the coalition to its actions, we can better understand its objective. The history of its intrigues is clear: it is obvious to all.

In the first days of the Revolution, the reactionaries remained silent. Their newspapers were limited to recording the facts. They worshipped Providence, whose ways were inscrutable; they accepted the *fait accompli*; they turned a deaf ear; they would have bowed their heads if, among the people of February, there had been a Figaro for these Basils.

Election day arrived, the first attempt at universal suffrage. They timidly put forward their candidacies, humbly admitting that, while they may not have been republicans for long, their republicanism, though newly acquired, was nonetheless being tested; that all they asked for was an honest and respected republic, such as they had dreamed of establishing, leaving the July Monarchy as a historical monument. — Since everyone wanted an honest and moderate republic, they joined the others and arrived in force at the National Assembly.

There, after purging the provisional government of its personnel and transforming it to their liking, they began to discredit it through its decrees, then launched a full-scale attack on socialism, which soon became the nation's bogeyman. Socialism! It was the ruin of religion, the communal ownership of property and women, barbarism! The majority of the country has not yet recovered from it.

Socialism, as we have said, is the ultimate goal, the complete expression of the Republic. By attacking socialism, the coalition was attacking the Republic from behind; it was already diminishing its very essence, restricting its scope. Now, any principle that allows itself to be mutilated must perish, and I dare say that this would already be the case for the Republic, if socialism, which alone in our time could give it meaning, had not surrounded it as with a rampart of its propaganda and its energy.

Thus, the coalition sought to divide the Republic and pit the republicans against each other. This tactic was all too successful. The men who comprised the provisional government and the executive commission, divided into presidentialists, *montagnards* and socialists, as if they belonged to different parties, regarded one another with suspicion, remained reserved, unable to recognize the commonality of their principles, and consequently lacking compass and direction.

The right to work had been guaranteed by the provisional government: one consequence of this guarantee was the creation of the national workshops.

Everyone knows today that, while the declaration of the right to work was primarily due to socialist influence, the organization of the national workshops was the exclusive work of the less progressive wing of the government. The coalition succeeded in brutally dissolving these workshops without compensation: 100,000 men,

who had relied on a positive right, and whose right was now being denied, found themselves thrown onto the streets, without bread or work. A clash was inevitable; it was what the reactionaries were waiting for. Socialism, the far-left republican movement, was crushed by republican soldiers. All of France was invited to this Thyestesian feast!...

Only one man in the Republic seemed to have a true understanding of the situation: yet he was an opponent of socialism, General Cavaignac.

“If the Republic,” he told me some time after the June Days, “were to suffer such a bloodletting again, it would not matter which side was victorious. It would be the end of the Republic.”

General Cavaignac was right: no more republicans, no more Republic. Why did this man, on whom such great hopes had been placed, then lend an ear to reactionary flattery? He gained a reputation for Machiavellian cruelty that he did not deserve: such, at least, is my opinion, even after the explanations of November 26, and although I have little to praise him for.

With socialism defeated, the victory had to be exploited. The coalition set about concentrating power for its own benefit. The executive commission was dissolved, a state of siege was declared, General Cavaignac was proclaimed president of the council, and staunch democrats like Flocon and Ledru-Rollin were excluded from the ministry. Just as one faction of the Republic had been *suppressed*, another was now being eliminated.

Once the government was placed under the exclusive influence of the so-called moderates, the reaction faced no further obstacles. Under the pretext of revising the acts of the provisional government, the Republic was dismantled piece by piece. The laws on the press and clubs, the withdrawal of the decree on working hours, testified to the spirit that animated the government. And since every dispute boils down to money, while the reaction was thwarting all the financial and budgetary reform projects, it decreed, on the one hand, that the guarantee for the loan negotiated in the final days of the monarchy – a loan that had not been repaid – would be returned to the subscribers; on the other hand, that a new loan would be contracted at a rate of 75 francs: 30 or 40 million thrown to the wolves! This was the compensation for the 45-centime tax.

The discussion of the Constitution soon began. The ground was fiercely contested: the coalition made every effort to secure the creation of two chambers; it had to settle for the election of a president. On the overall vote, M. Odilon Barrot, currently Prime Minister, abstained.

M. Barrot is bound to the Republic neither by his vote, for he did not vote; nor by his oath, for the political oath is abolished. But M. Barrot's word is more reliable than his oath.

The day finally arrived for the election of the president. General Cavaignac, the man of order until then, the man who had served his country well, the man of the honest and moderate Republic, who, in order to prove his desire to reconcile all opinions, had received inspiration from Thiers and Molé – General Cavaignac

suddenly saw his candidacy abandoned; he was found to be frivolous, insufficient, mediocre; he was not a man of government, a man of order!

They wanted a big name, a great reputation, exceptional ability, someone above all who had no connection whatsoever to regicide. So they went looking for Louis Bonaparte!... A family took possession of the Republic. But, Republicans, rest assured: the coalition hasn't had its last word. After mystifying the Republic, it is now making a mockery of it.

Since that day, the coalition, in control of power, has boldly developed its policy. Disarmament of the national guards, violation of the right of assembly, dismissal of republican officials, appointment of royalist prefects, consolidation of military commands in the hands of a single man; suspension of laws, perpetual attacks on the Constitution, rehabilitation of the treaties of 1815, alliance with kings, abandonment of nationalities, counter-revolutionary intervention, have been its daily diversions.

Austria, the bulwark of despotism, attacked simultaneously from the north and south by two nations rising up for their liberty, weakened by the revolutionary movement stirring Germany, would inevitably have succumbed had France been willing to extend a fraternal hand to patriotic, but not yet belligerent, Italy. Instead, the government of Louis Bonaparte intervened against Rome, Florence, Genoa and Sicily, in concert with the Pope, the Emperor, and the Kings of Piedmont and Naples! 1,200,000 francs were demanded from the bourgeoisie to pay the costs of this *Sonderbund* against philosophy and liberty.

Meanwhile, the war against socialism continued, now encompassing the entire Republican party under that label. *Le Moniteur* became the leading voice of the slanderous and reactionary press. Civil war, social war, was being fomented; it was being provoked, efforts made to make it inevitable. On January 29th, a raid against the National Assembly was planned; everything was in place for the battle: over the corpses of the socialists, defeated once more, the emperor would be proclaimed savior of the family and property. The attitude of the National Guard and the People thwarted the plot.

The Mountain, accused of conspiracy, loudly demanded for an investigation: it was met with an insulting refusal. Then, the attacks on the right of assembly and the press intensified: the political scaffold was rebuilt; preparations were made for new September Massacres; socialists were publicly singled out for bullets and daggers, and when, pushed to the limit, they responded to their adversaries with hatred for hatred, threat for threat, they were brought to trial, fined and imprisoned for inciting civil war. To ensure that no one escaped, a terrifying system of denunciation was organized: within, espionage; without, a coalition of all the continent's police forces. From the Mediterranean to the Ocean, there was no longer a corner of land where socialism could believe itself safe. For it, there was no longer any refuge, no more exile: it had to bury itself or die.

A spectacle unique in history! Here is a Republic whose enemy is its own government; whose defenders are its exiles! And this Republic, judged, imprisoned, deported, shot, betrayed, slandered, still lives! Its enemies cannot see its end! They are

condemned to serve as its magistrates, representatives, ministers, ambassadors, as well as its policemen and executioners! — What, wretches, you dare not tear up this scrap of paper called the Constitution! What prevents you? Consider that each of your actions is perjury, I say not only to the Constitution, but to your party! Every day you delay is a loss of your success! Is it not enough to debase, as you do, the flag of the Republic; and must you betray, by your hesitations and delays, the flag, the glorious flag of the coalition?

Let us not doubt it, friends! The Republic is in peril, and in grave peril; but it is in its very nature that it cannot perish by force; it cannot, therefore, be saved, let me tell you again, by force. The Republic, elevated above the material order, requires, for its life as for its death, other agents. The corruption of its principle alone could kill it: the integrity of that principle will save it. It is the guilty conscience of the reactionaries that has produced all the harm from which the Republic suffers; the energy of the republican conscience alone is capable of erasing the shame of the Republic.

(No. 157. — April 25, 1849.)

Paris, April 24.

#### ANTI-SOCIALIST PROPAGANDA

I ask the honorable citizens who have subscribed to anti-socialist propaganda to please, before responding to the second appeal for funds addressed to them by the committee of the Rue de Poitiers, listen according to their interests and take into serious consideration the very disinterested observations that I am about to submit to them.

*In everything, said the fox in La Fontaine, one must consider the end.*

In any undertaking, and especially in a limited partnership, before investing money, one must determine whether the venture is legitimate; whether the proposed goal is not fanciful; whether it is real, useful, ethical and feasible; and whether the resources are sufficient. We have seen, in our time, companies formed to exploit mines that existed only in the inventors' imaginations. Instead of exploring the land, they began by issuing shares; they obtained concessions, built machinery, excavated the earth, spent one or two million francs, and then, after extracting copious amounts of shale, sand, sandstone, clay, limestone, and porphyry, they suddenly discovered that the mine did not exist. Then, one began to accuse the founders of the company, whose only fault was having acted rashly or having been taken for fools.

Is it really so serious, you credulous sponsors of the Poitiers intrigue, that you are undertaking, by subscription, a crusade against socialism? You have already paid 212,000 francs, spent as soon as received. 212,000 francs! What has been the use of this sum? Where has it gone?... Believe me, General Baraguay-d'Hilliers, you would be better off leading a brigade against the Austrians than manipulating your shareholders' funds like a cashier! Ah! You don't know what you're getting yourself into in this cursed mess! I'll be waiting for you one day at the criminal police!...

Truly, we live in an age of great events and small ideas. The nineteenth century is the revolutionary century par excellence, the last term in an endless chain, whose culminating points in the past were Christianity, the Reformation, the French Revolution of 1789.

We had the religious revolution, the philosophical revolution, the political revolution: now we have the social revolution.

This revolution, universal in Europe and already beginning to emerge in America, takes on a different character depending on the particular circumstances of each country. Here, the struggle is for nationality; there, for liberty; elsewhere, for unity; further still, for labor. In Italy, Hungary and Poland, the movement is more specifically in the direction of national independence; in Germany, the revolution is more political in nature; in Switzerland, the people seek unity; in our country, they demand work! In Rome, in the so-called Papal States, the revolution consists of the separation of the two powers, the temporal or secular, and the spiritual or ecclesiastical. But, whatever this

variety of form and character, the Revolution is everywhere identical, homogeneous and consistent with itself; everywhere it presents itself as a dualism which, though differing in expression, remains nonetheless always the same in its core idea.

Just as in Italy, Hungary, and Poland there are really only two parties, the party of the nation and the party of foreigners: so too there are only two parties in Germany, the party of democracy and the party of despotism; only two parties in Switzerland, the party of unity and the party of division; only two parties in France, the party of labor and the party of capital; only two parties in Rome, the party of God and the party of humanity.

It is against this gigantic Revolution that our conservative pygmies are banding together, with, at their head, the Elysée-Bourbon clique on one side and the committee of the rue de Poitiers on the other.

The clique has taken control of the outside world: the committee is responsible for bringing the inside to heel.

The revolutionary movement, prepared by twenty centuries of philosophy and progress, matured by economic analysis, becomes more irresistible every day through the corruption of the upper classes and popular misery.

In the north, it is Great Britain, exhausted by routines and stopgap measures, whose government is reduced to despairing of itself and the future.

In the center, we saw Poland, Switzerland, Prussia, Austria and Hungary shake almost simultaneously; the socialist uprising is moving about in the capitals, Breslau, Krakow, Berlin, Vienna, Frankfurt.

In the south, it is Italy, from the Alps to Etna, that rises up against the old order of things. After Milan, comes Rome; after Rome, Turin; after Turin, Brescia; after Brescia, Genoa; after Genoa, Livorno; for a time, Venice, Bergamo, Florence, Naples, seem to fall silent; in compensation, Catania, Palermo, Syracuse raise the cry for freedom.

All of Europe is ablaze: 200 million people, stirred up by oppression and enraged by poverty, relentlessly fan the flames. And it is to extinguish this eternal flame of revolution that the government at the Élysée Palace requests a credit of 1,200,000 francs and sends 14,000 men to Civitavecchia. Inevitably, a change of policy will occur, and the 14,000 *pompieri* of Civitavecchia will form the vanguard of the Italian revolution.

Within the country, the revolution is progressing at an equally rapid pace. Departments, cities, and villages are coming one after another to make their *pronunciamento*: Lyon, Rouen, Limoges, Saint-Étienne, Marseille, Bordeaux itself, and even the most resistant cities, Bourges, Besançon, Dijon, Macun, Toulouse, Narbonne, etc. If the proletarian is lacking, the bourgeois takes their place, so rapid is the social distress, so much and so quickly are the conversions to socialism multiplying!

The committee of the Rue de Poitiers therefore opened a fundraising campaign. It received 212,000 francs. That's the same amount they would raise for a bundle of *chenovottes* for the Mourillon fire!...

If only these honest subscribers had the chance to at least keep the conservative and healthy part of the country on the right track! But no; everyone, even within the

Conservative party, is afflicted with social fury, so much so that it is impossible today to distinguish socialists from anti-socialists.

First, consider the press: the press, an organ of opinion, an expression of society.

*Le Siècle*, having become thoroughly republican — we know what that means, republican! — increasingly presents itself as a *producer*. Producer of what? Ask *Le Siècle*, and either I am greatly mistaken or *Le Siècle* will answer you with some grand utopia, no more and no less than what Considérant or Pierre Leroux would produce. The socialists, says *Le Siècle*, have some GOOD IDEAS; these are the ideas that constitute their strength: they must be taken from them. Very well: take the ideas of the socialists, they will forgive you afterward for shooting them. *Strike, but listen!* said Themistocles to Eurybiades.

*Le National* speaks like *Le Siècle*. It too calls for reforms; it reserves only prudence and time. It is quite ready, on this condition, to merge with the socialists, who would do well, if they were to believe me, to accept. Merger is conquest. In the heart, it is the blood that gives color to the chyle, it is not the chyle that colors the blood.

*L'Ère nouvelle*: "There is no doubt," it said, "that we are at a time of transformation and crisis." Saint-Simon, Fourier, Cabet do not express themselves any differently.

*L'Union*: "Society must henceforth be organized on justice, liberty and right." — What then are the socialists complaining about, if not injustice, oppression and the lack of right and guarantee!

*L'Ordre social* demands continuous, positive social improvements. — More producers! Trust these young people, timid recruits of socialism: they will lead you astray!

*La Presse* is proposing to its readers — guess what? — reciprocal credit, yes, the reciprocal credit, free credit, so ridiculed by M. Thiers. "Banks don't give credit," cries *La Presse*. "On the contrary, they receive it. Proprietors and cultivators, lend to one another; mutually accept each other's bills, and you will have solved the great problem of organizing credit." In truth, I believe *La Presse* would subscribe to the Bank of the People if it weren't afraid of compromising itself with the authorities on the Rue de Poitiers.

As for the *Constitutionnel*, while waiting for it to embrace socialism, it is content to exploit it. Serialized stories by Eugène Sue continue to be published by this politically correct paper as an antidote to its slanders.

Outside of the press, opinions are even more explicit; it's a competition to see who can outbid their neighbor; it's like a sale by auctioneer.

To each master, all the honor. Under the patronage of Louis Bonaparte, a socialist of the day before, a vast association was organized for the construction of *workers' cities*, a kind of phalanstery, to which the *Démocratie pacifique* was quick to subscribe.

Elsewhere, and under the most commendable auspices, an association of patronage and *mutuality* is being founded for the benefit of the working classes of both sexes. The Archbishop of Paris gives his support to this society. "*Antisocial and anti-Christian systems*," says the prelate, "*have cast disfavor on all ideas of ORGANIZATION aimed at the improvement of the working classes. This is no reason to remain idle!*" — Bravo, Your Grace!

Organize, unite, educate, preach against socialism and strive to reconcile organization, association and reason with faith!

A party of Catholics, moved by socialist criticisms of usurious credit and returning to older principles, are definitively abandoning the theory of usury. To them, and to the Archbishop of Paris, we say: Strive to reconcile free credit with obedience to the Church and the rejection of capital with the adoration of Providence.

M. Blanqui, a member of the Institute, concludes his report on the situation of the working classes in 1848, by requesting: 1. *Legislation on dwellings*, which is nothing more than State intervention in property; – 2. *The prohibition of child labor in factories*, – Louis Blanc could not have said it better; – 3. *The organization of primary education*, rejected by M. Thiers and by the Jesuits; – 4. ASSOCIATION.

Please reconcile comfortable housing, equal education, the prohibition of child labor and association, with low wages, with capitalist exploitation, with interest, with rent!

The Electoral Committee of the Friends of the Constitution calls for both progress and, as a condition for progress, *workers' institutions*. It's roughly equivalent to saying ministry of progress and organization of labor!... There is something good in socialist ideas.

On all sides, even the most ardent enemies of socialism, in their professions of faith and proclamations, are resigned to acknowledging their allegiance to the *Republic!* Witness General Lamoricière and Marshal Bugeaud. Do these brave men even know what a Republic is? Let universal suffrage take its course, let the democratic Republic come to pass, and then you can tell me what's happening with property.

Then, as utopia gains ground and the fever of new ideas spreads, the old society begins to disintegrate. The Malthusian economy falls into tatters.

In France, it was the fervent bankocracy who proposed extortion and bankruptcy to the provisional government as a remedy for the situation. And, in fact, it was wrong to make a crime of the bankocracy. The history of political economy proves that a nation long since exhausted by capital has no other recourse, according to the old economic system, than to bankrupt capital. Messrs. Ledru-Rollin and Goudchaux, by rejecting this method, acted in a socialist manner. On July 31, 1849, I proposed asking capitalists and rentiers for a *voluntary remission*, compensated, moreover, by mutual aid and low prices: I am a thief. M. Fould proposes bankruptcy, M. Delamarre extortion: they are honest men. Therein lies the difference between socialism and political economy.

In England, it's a different story. A statesman, indulging in the speculations of an industrialist, suddenly begins to reform, reduce, and abolish tariffs; he exposes national capital. Today, public outcry demands the reinstatement of tariffs and calls once again for protection. England and our economists needed nothing less than this harsh experience to understand that, under a cash system, goods are not exchanged for goods, and that free trade is a deception. This does not prevent M. Léon Faucher, a free-trade advocate and anti-socialist, from being considered a conservative.

I'll stop here; because if I wanted to cite everything, I wouldn't finish.

It is in the face of such numerous and explicit facts that the Committee of the Rue de Poitiers undertakes its propaganda. What, then, does it claim to prove to the country with its propaganda?

That trade is flourishing?

That agriculture is prosperous?

That the worker is rich, happy and free?

That people no longer die from poverty, suicide or prostitution?

That progress is a chimera and association a utopia?

That instead of sending children to school, they should be sent to factories and mines?

That the dwellings of the poor are warm, dry and healthy, their food substantial their wages sufficient?

That a national bank, offering discounting, limited partnerships and mortgage loans at half a percent, would be a calamity?

That it is better, for the liberty and order of the country, to spend 400 million on maintaining an army of unproductive men than to advance these millions to workers' societies that would put them to use and then repay them.

That we gain more by paying six billion each year to the corporation of parasites than by leaving it to the producers and doubling production?

That's why the Committee of the Rue de Poitiers is organizing propaganda! That's why it received from its shareholders — poor people! — an initial sum of 212,000 francs! That's why it's subsidizing filthy prose, where literary scoundrels, such as Jules Janin and Granier de Cassagnac, insult public reason and the misery of the people on a daily basis!

But, esteemed subscribers, do you know what your 212,000 francs can produce? Allow me to tell you; for it seems to me that you have not known how to calculate in your life.

212,000 francs at a 5-centime subsidy per issue, whether of *L'Événement* or any other honest newspaper, yields a total of 4,240,000 copies which, distributed to the 40,000 subscribers of *Le Peuple*, the most vulnerable to the socialist contagion, barely suffices to maintain the health service for 106 days. Therefore, just to deliver the antidote to your doctrines to the subscribers of *Le Peuple* each morning — assuming said subscribers, currently too corrupted to use the remedy, would deign to read your diatribes — you would need an annual subsidy of 730,000 francs.

And what is *Le Peuple* in the socialist ocean?

Spread some propaganda, gentlemen conservatives!...

212,000 francs! Put that with the rulings of the Court of Cassation, the Changarnier agendas and the Meyerbeer opera.

(No. 159. — April 27.)

Paris, April 26.

### LEGAL RESISTANCE

Eight days ago, *Le Constitutionnel* considered us bankrupts. Today its theme changes: it simply treats us as Herostratus.

This paper, which for thirty years has not ceased to corrupt public reason; which works every day, with such deplorable success, to make our nation lose all principle, all morality, all notion of justice and truth, now finds itself horrified, bewildered, at the spectacle of its works.

*Le Constitutionnel* has sown the wind. It reaps the whirlwind; and it accuses those it itself makes victims of the overthrow of society. It wonders anxiously what has become of this society it molded with its ignoble hands, and which it is quite surprised to find so ugly. Socialism enumerates before it the passions, the errors, and the crimes of the doctrinaire world; it gathers all the venom of false liberalism that has poured into the world: depraved sentiments, disorganizing thoughts and fatal routines; it makes a hideous picture of all this; it shows it to *Le Constitutionnel*; and *Le Constitutionnel* cries out at this image: "It's not me; it's socialism!" Like the vengeful fury, socialism holds up the mirror to the old outcast, who, with blasphemy on its lips and penitence in its heart, calls out in loud cries for death... on the heads of the socialists!

Who would have thought it, that the *Constitutionnel* would be indignant at the idea of legal resistance, as if the word and the concept were new to it! — "Quite seriously," it said, "what is M. Proudhon? Is he a malevolent spirit whose sincere aim is to plunge civilization into chaos? Is he a dialectic enthusiast who, to perform feats of argumentation, amuses himself by systematizing the absurd and organizing the impossible? Is he a false brother of the demagogic Republic who, by pushing the principles of his party to their extreme, wants to highlight their odiousness and inspire righteous horror in all men! Truly, one hesitates to take a position!"

*Le Constitutionnel* exhausts all suppositions, except one, which is nevertheless the true one: that M. Proudhon wanted to build the world on doctrinaire politics, and that he swore a war to the death against *Le Constitutionnel*, its patrons and its saints. When we say war to the death, it is metaphorically, of course: we must dot the i's and cross the t's with *Le Constitutionnel*.

Since *Le Constitutionnel* is asking questions, it will allow us to ask it some as well. We will question it about its actions and words; we will deduce its principles, those of the *Le Constitutionnel*; and then we will tell it what ours are.

Is it true, yes or no, that the Convention, which summarized in itself all the politics of the eighteenth century; the Convention, glorified by M. Thiers, M. Lamartine and so many others, established as a principle *the right and the duty of insurrection?*

Don't avoid the question and, above all, don't accuse anyone: is that true?

Is it true, yes or no, that, subsequent to the Convention, the charter of 1830, inspired by the spirit of 92, still warm from the July insurrection, reproduced in its article 66 the right of insurrection?

Is it true, yes or no, that the 1848 Constitution, faithful to the same tradition, confirmed this right? That everything in this Constitution is designed for the case of high treason on the part of the government? That a procedure has been laid out, a tribunal established? That every article reeks of conspiracy and resistance, as if the right to insurrection, as if the practice of conspiracy, grew with the political development of societies?

Is it true, on the other hand, since we are essentially keen not to be considered inventors, that, just as the Constitution has foreseen the conspiracies of the power and the means of resisting them, the law has foreseen the conspiracies on the part of the citizens and laid out rules for repression and prosecution? — That Barbès, Blanqui, Raspail and others, have recently been judged according to these laws?

Is it true that any citizen aware of an attack on state security is obligated to report it, apprehend the accused in *flagrante delicto*, and bring them before the magistrates?

Is it true, finally, that the murder committed on a recalcitrant accused, as well as the murder committed on a prisoner attempting to escape, is excusable? That it is under the pretext of this twofold principle that the insurgents of Saint-Merry and Transnonain were put to the sword, and the unfortunate socialists were shot after June?

Yes or no, is this true? Did we invent or discover this organization of civil war at the heart of the state, within the city?

That's the doctrine. Let's look at the history.

Is it true, yes or no, that in February 1848, M. Odilon Barrot, after six months of electoral rioting, called for resistance?

Is it true, yes or no, that in 1839, another electoral coalition was formed against Louis-Philippe, by Messrs. Thiers, Guizot and Barrot, in the name of the Charter? Now, what is an electoral coalition? A conspiracy.

Is it true, yes or no, that the revolution of 1830 was the denouement of the *comedy*, read the fifteen-year conspiracy?

Before 1830, Louis-Philippe conspired; M. Guizot conspired; M. Thiers conspired; M. Odilon Barrot, whom you find everywhere there is a conspiracy, conspired?

Is it true that in 1815, when the hour of our disasters had struck, the same M. Guizot, the same M. Barrot, representatives of the constitutional party, in league with the elder branch and foreigners, were still conspiring?

Is it true that on 18 Brumaire Bonaparte conspired with Sieyès, the father and patron of constitutional theories, I should say conspiratorial theories!

Is it true that August 10th was nothing but a conspiracy?

An insurrection on July 14th?

The Tennis Court Oath: a conspiracy?

Is it true that prior to the Estates-General, Masonic societies, the cradle of the constitutionalism of 1790 and the liberalism of 1815, were conspiring? That the

philosophers and encyclopedists, fathers of the Doctrinaires, did nothing but conspire?...

Ah! you say, in February, the right of assembly was disregarded; in 1839, the spirit of the Constitution was distorted; in 1830, the Charter was violated; in 1815, liberty was betrayed by the author of the Additional Act; on 18 Brumaire, order was annihilated; on 10 August, the monarchy perjured itself against the Constitution; on 14 July, at the Tennis Court, the nation was forced to rise up against despotism. At all these times, the Revolution – what it pleases you to call insurrection – was justified by necessity, by success and by the subsequent consent of the people. That is why these revolutions were just, moral and glorious.

Thus, it is the event itself that establishes justice, morality and the legitimacy of the conspiracy; for, ultimately, the accomplished fact, the irrevocable fact, cannot fail to be declared necessary; the loser pays the fine; the smiles are for the winner; the Revolution, once consummated, invariably becomes just and holy. Only a fool would try to argue with a victorious revolution.

So what will you answer to those who will ask you in a moment, resuming the series of questions:

Is it true, yes or no, that M. Guizot, from his solitude in Brompton, is conspiring!

That the legitimists conspire?

That the Bonapartists conspire?

That the Orleanists conspire?

Is it true that the government of Louis Bonaparte, made up of heterogeneous elements, unsure whether it is for the empire, for legitimacy or for the cadet branch, is conspiring provisionally, pending a decision later on the choice of conspiracy?

Let us conspire, patriots! We have legality on our side; we shall succeed!

Once again, what will you have to say in reply? – That it is not true that the government is conspiring! Louis-Philippe said the same thing on February 22nd; Charles X on July 9th; Napoleon during the Hundred Days; and Louis XVI on August 10th!

We must consider things from a higher perspective; we must seek the cause of these periodic insurrections, which occur against all governments, which all end up defeating governments, putting reason, justice and order on their side.

How, indeed, can one fail to recognize that these tumultuous movements, condemned and justified alternately, sometimes under the name of conspiracies, sometimes under the title of revolutions, slowly brought about by an underground struggle, are nothing other than the final outburst of a reaction and a conspiracy, perfectly suited to one another, which begin and end on the same day! Reactions and conspiracies are sisters. For fifteen years, reaction prevails; for fifteen years, conspiracy is repressed. But the torrent always builds: suddenly, the balance is broken, the center of gravity shifts, the roles change: what was legality the day before is regarded as an act of terrorism the next; what was treated as conspiracy becomes legality and order. The consequence is that in this abominable system, which the February Revolution was supposed to put an end to, the nation is in permanent

conspiracy against the State, just as, in the economic order, which is the counterpart of the constitutional system, half of society exploits the other.

Why then, once again, should we, a democratic minority facing an obviously reactionary majority – why, empowered by the text of the Constitution, should we not conspire to defend it? Why should we not organize our efforts? Why should we not make this organized resistance, the principle of which is the very soul of all our constitutions, an institution, a law, a code? Is there perhaps a privilege of conspiracy, just as there is for labor and capital? Will what was permitted, honorable, glorious, to Messrs. Barrot, Guizot, Thiers, etc., be a crime in Pierre Leroux or Victor Considérant? Must we wait until the government, laying a brutal hand on the tablets of the law, has completed its attack? Should we, instead of organizing moral resistance, a thousand times more powerful than armed insurrection, which, moreover, can only compromise those citizens who take the initiative, throw hordes of people into the public square, abandoning them without counsel, under the influence of a few political daredevils who will know how to extricate themselves from this predicament, to a Saint-Merry or Transnonain massacre? Should we, when we can finally find this long-sought balance through legal resistance, endlessly relive social warfare and the September Massacres?

No, no: such cannot be the destiny of the Republic. That is not what you want – at least we will not insult you by believing that it is – nor is it what we want.

We must therefore go back to the cause of this antagonism, and this cause, as we have told you many times, lies entirely in your policy.

Yes, it is your false constitutionalism that is rubbing off on the Republic of 1848, as it had rubbed off on that of 93; it is these fictitious distinctions, which you systematically maintain in society, that have engendered all your conspiracies and all our misfortunes; it is you who have organized the war between the nation and the government; you who have made this conflict periodic and inevitable, by creating class interests everywhere, in place of general interests; by constantly opposing the policy of conservation to the policy of progress, as if conservation and progress were not synonymous; by making liberty a perpetual enemy of order, as if absolute order were not identical to absolute liberty; by constantly separating what can only be one; by making everywhere laws of exception, restriction and privilege, instead of egalitarian and universal laws.

Now cry out about disorganization, dissolution, and chaos; rail against socialism; demand the abolition of the Republic and the suppression of the proletariat. Until you have frankly embarked on the democratic path, which is preeminently that of conciliation and order, we will remain on guard, eyes upon you, rifles ready, and we will answer your insults like those sixteenth-century insurgents to some lawmaker caught in his own trap: Hypocrites! We are only following your precepts and your examples, *Palimini legem quam ipsi fecistis*.

And now, here is what we have to say to our fellow citizens, we whom they will soon have to judge as conspirators, precisely because we are enemies of conspiracies; we whom official society pursues and persecutes, because we do not conspire with it, because instead of conspiring, we speak the truth aloud, against all odds.

Your society is nothing but a collection of conspirators; for sixty years you have lived on conspiracies.

Now, conspiracies are like everything else: they must all be tolerated or none legitimized. As for us, our choice is made: we demand that there be no more conspiracies. — The means! you ask. — The means is simple, we will tell you: it is, first, to attach ourselves definitively and inviolably to the Constitution; secondly, to desire only those consequences of order and the general interest.

In principle, all constitutions are equal: their supposed imperfection proves only our ignorance or ill will. Take the Decalogue: from this embryonic constitution, without any additional articles, you can deduce all the laws and ordinances required by three thousand years of historical development and the entire civilization of the nineteenth century. There is not a moment in the history of any society when it can be said that the Constitution was, in itself, insufficient; not an insurrection that the vice of the political state could legitimize.

What produces conspiracies and revolutions is, once again, the antagonism of ideas and interests, an antagonism that modern philosophy has analyzed; which was in the preparatory condition of societies, but which progress tends to erase more and more, and for which a coterie of privileged and intriguers is stirring in vain.

Now, while definitive adherence to a Constitution is clear, easy, and intelligible to all, the second point to observe is no less important: it consists of making only absolute laws, that is to say, laws of universal application and interest; it is, in short, to apply, in politics, Kant's maxim: "Act in all things in such a way that your conduct can serve as a general rule."

What, for example, compelled Louis Bonaparte's government to undertake this impolitic and immoral expedition to Civitavecchia, the consequences of which no one could foresee? Was it the Constitution? Not in the least. The Constitution did not prescribe intervention in the affairs of Rome, nor did it mandate the restoration of peace between Pius IX and the democrats of the Holy City. Was it the general interest of our country? Even less so; it is clear from the explanations given in the assembly by the Prime Minister that the interest that motivated the Civitavecchia expedition was a purely capitalist and monarchical one, an interest disagreeable to a segment of the population, a reactionary interest and, consequently, an interest that incites conspiracy.

In short, Louis Bonaparte did for Rome precisely what Louis-Philippe had done for the Spanish marriages; the latter pursued dynastic politics, the former pursued partisan politics. Now, the greatest mistake a government can make, the greatest damage it can inflict on a Constitution, the most disastrous example it can set, is to use power to serve partisan interests — interests which it likes, I know, to call general, but which are nonetheless, in this particular case, elements of disorder.

It would be easy for me to make similar observations on the law of surety, on the law regarding the clubs, on all the acts of reactionary policy. It would be seen that these laws were never inspired by the general interest; that they do not derive from an absolute principle; that they do not have equal and universal application; they are laws

of exception, of hardship and constraint for the least well-off class of the people, a class that the government, through another folly, considers dangerous, and whom, for this reason, it strives to deprive, as far as it can, of discussion and reading; a class, finally, that it provokes, *ipso facto*, to insurrection and revolt.

In short:

We were given a Constitution in 1848. As for us, we stand by it; it suffices. Let whoever wishes to revise it. Provided it is in the direction of liberty and progress, as marked by the Constitution itself, we do not oppose it; it will at least serve to demonstrate the progress of public opinion and of the democracy. What matters to us is that it be respected, that it be observed. With this Constitution, frankly applied, we do not fear presidential power, just as we are confident of realizing the right to work. True revision will occur naturally; time and circumstances will take care of giving its articles their true meaning, and the powers it has created their true limits.

Let everyone therefore swear by this Constitution; let all proposed improvements relate to matters of exclusively general interest; let all reforms have as their sole aim the repeal of exceptional laws and privileges, and finally of a party and caste policy.

Under these conditions, we are ready to renounce our theories of legal resistance, tax refusal, disobedience to authority, insurrection, and conspiracy: we become the most conservative of men.

Otherwise, no.

Paris, May 1st.

## REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

### TO THE VOTERS OF THE SEINE

"Man stirs and God guides him," said Bossuet with profound pity.

This irony of the great theologian is as true, as deserved today as it was in the time of the great migration of peoples.

We know nothing because we refuse to see or understand the events that are our own doing, events that, so to speak, pass through our hands every day. The world is given to us to govern, and we abandon our initiative in a cowardly manner. It is God — always God! — an unknown power, yet one whom our destiny is to know, who is the arbiter of our fate! How much longer will we allow ourselves to be governed by his fatal rule? How long will we, whom forty thousand years of education should have taught to walk independently, in our own reason and strength, continue to follow the confines of this old and capricious Providence? All in God's care, all for the love of God, all lost! Look at it just once, this divine path: how obscure, convoluted, full of perils and catastrophes it is! What twists and turns, what precipices!

The social revolution was in itself the simplest thing, the most just, the easiest to execute, the most universally useful.

It could, it should, be accomplished promptly and peacefully.

If, by the magnitude of its consequences, it encompassed all spheres of knowledge and human activity, it could, in terms of immediate realization, be reduced to the solution of two problems of political economy, the statement of which was made to reassure all minds: *Cheap capital, Ease of circulation of products.*

The emancipation of the working classes, the physical, moral and intellectual improvement of the lot of all, flowed infallibly from these premises. For the rest, one only had to rely on the free development of individual activity, made greater by cheapness and ease of movement, which soon became, through the identity of interests, synonymous with collective activity itself.

This, in a few lines, is what the Social Revolution was supposed to be for the present generation.

Instead of this peaceful, regular, fruitful realization, what turmoil, good God! What twists and turns! Instead of this attractive prospect, what a dark future! How true it is that Providence constantly delights in confounding human reason! The history of Revolutions is nothing but the history of the deviations that the instinct of the masses and the passion of parties inflict upon the logic of humanity.

Listen and judge.

The social revolution had been foreseen, announced for twenty years by writers of some genius. It had already materialized in fact, with the emergence of various schools, stammering, in mystical language, the sacred words of equality, fraternity and emancipation. The government was warned; but, too sure of itself, it had passed the

warning on to the opposition. The revolution was there, knocking at the door, and no one came to answer it. And when, on February 25th, following a movement that some are trying, but in vain, to make exclusively political, Louis Blanc had the decree issued guaranteeing employment, the country was taken by surprise as if by a whirlwind; republicans and conservatives were struck down! Was this, I ask you, foresight? Was it even common sense? What were these great politicians doing, who, for eighteen years, saw nothing, foresaw nothing, and who, today, know only how to prevent?! They were agitated, and God was leading them.

So here is the Revolution! How will we conduct this Revolution that we do not understand, that we did not expect? It is here that we must admire the all-powerful hand that, from above, directs us.

The provisional government first sent commissioners to the departments. In fact, the government was right. It was necessary to raise public opinion to the level of the new principles, and one could believe, without meaning any disrespect to the monarchy's personnel, that they were ill-prepared for such a great task. They lived from day to day, following the precepts of the Gospel, and worried little about the future. But what happened? The provisional government, as ill-informed on the social question as the fallen government, gave no instructions to its envoys; the commissioners were mostly young men full of patriotism, but who, knowing nothing of the mission entrusted to them, based their actions on memories of the first Revolution. This misunderstanding was enough to ruin everything. The departments became agitated: the commissioners were told that they had apparently gotten the date wrong! That people wanted the Republic, but not that of 1793, which was perfectly true. It was, indeed, something quite different. The commissioners withdrew: the country, eyes raised, awaits the Revolution. When will it finally come?

The government at the Hôtel de Ville, preoccupied with politics and unsure what to do with two socialists whom the popular will had brought into its fold, decided to send them to the Luxembourg Palace. They thought they would destroy socialism by isolating it; they only succeeded in highlighting its importance. From the moderates' point of view, this was a colossal mistake. Indeed, what the government commissioners had failed to express, the Luxembourg proclaimed to all of France: half fear, half joy, the Revolution was hailed.

What a spectacle the Luxembourg would have been, with its delegates from the workers' guilds seated in the seats of the peerage, if only socialism, at that moment, had been able to formulate its dogma and produce its symbol! In fifteen days, the Revolution would have been over. Instead, they resumed their agitation, their digressions, their utopian thinking, their arbitration and, let's be frank, their arbitrary actions. So much so, that Providence had to intervene once again. The Revolution, cornered in the impasse of April 16th, was destined to perish under universal impatience and the energetic condemnation of the National Guard. But things turned out quite differently. By divine permission, April 16th was to the February Revolution what July 1st had been to that of 1789; its effect was to put the entire nation on high alert. Socialism, imprisoned in the Luxembourg, remained a sect; It was esoteric

socialism, latent socialism. On April 16th, it became free; it belonged to everyone. The Luxembourg opened, the Revolution took hold.

By its tradition and its aim, the Revolution was both political and social. The provisional government had expressed this identity by proclaiming both the right to work and the abolition of the treaties of 1815. On May 15th, a demonstration took place in support of Poland. The conclusion was clear: the timing was poor. After the failure of Risquons-Tout and the defeat at Kehl, public opinion should have been allowed to recover. What difference would it have made, I ask you, if the masses, retaining their influence, had postponed their petition until after the Hungarian War, the events in Lombardy and Sicily! May 15th doomed the revolutionary question abroad; it nearly doomed it at home.

A confused crowd brings a petition to the bar of the Assembly: a memory of 1793. The leaders of the movement seize the rostrum and propose a decree: a memory of Prairial. The riot disperses, and its instigators are thrown into prison: a memory of Thermidor. The day of May 15th was, from beginning to end, nothing but a pastiche of the great days of the Convention, for which astute observers would have condemned Huber to three months in prison, Blanqui to fifteen days, and Barbès to a parliamentary censure. The Revolution was killed with a pinprick.

But who can fathom the ways of Providence! The men of the resistance were as blind as the masses: from a dozen fools, a company of martyrs is made: the affair grows to the height of the dungeon of Vincennes; the reaction saves the Revolution.

The provisional government, composed in large part of lawyers as industrious as they were industrialists, had organized so-called national workshops that cost the Treasury 100,000 francs a day and produced absolutely nothing. This waste, treacherously blamed on socialism, would have dishonored it forever, if, in abolishing the national workshops, care had been taken to provide — a simple matter — for the workers' labor and subsistence. The reaction, by this act of profound philanthropy, showing itself to be more socialist than socialism itself, everything was said: the demonstration was complete. But the providential drama could not end so soon. What would history be if it were not interspersed with civil wars, invasions, famines and plagues! What would the preachers have to say! One hundred thousand men are fatally thrown onto the streets: they revolt and they are crushed. All of France, on one side or the other, takes part in the struggle. It turns out that instead of destroying socialism, we have only further engaged in the question: the Revolution is passing.

Thus, the more you resist the Revolution, the more it grows; the more you try, through persecution, massacre and emigration, to lighten your burden, the heavier it becomes. What could have been accomplished a year ago with a few million already costs several billion, and nothing has been done. Socialism, mystified, slandered and attacked, is today ten times more intense than it was in February. The men to whom the destinies of France have been entrusted will not cease to fan the flames until the flame consumes them: God, no doubt, as the Bible says, having resolved to destroy them, *quia volebat Deus occidere eos!*

Allow us to cite ourselves here.

On July 31st, a proposal was presented to the National Assembly aimed at addressing the current financial needs through a three-year levy on all forms of income. In principle, we argued, income tax is abnormal and can therefore only be temporary. We do not intend to resolve the social question through it; the true solution lies in free credit, that is, the complete abolition of interest on capital and annuities, combined with the progressive equalization of wages. What we are asking of the Assembly is, through a temporary exception to the principle of proportional taxation, to obtain a sacrifice that will allow us to safeguard our interests and await a resolution.

If the Assembly had adopted this proposal, business could have been restored at once; since men generally prefer the present good to the best for the future, the theory of free credit would have been relegated for a time, along with social liquidation, to the realm of hypotheses.

But the Assembly was gripped by anti-socialist fervor; one member cried out that income tax was plunder; to escape this dreadful stagnation, which has only worsened since, they preferred to rely *on confidence!* On Providence! A reasoned agenda item informed the author of the proposal that his perfidious designs would not be pursued! Quite the opposite was happening. Socialism had just been enriched by a formidable idea; all of Europe now knows what free credit is; the Revolution is beginning to see clearly. May it break forever with divinely inspired directives!

Here we are at the election of December 10th.

The Conservative Party's course of action was clear. It simply had to maintain the June establishment. Order was restored, business seemed to be picking up; the proletarians cheerfully departed for Algeria; the Republic, with men like Messrs. Dufaure, Vivien, Thouret, Bastide and Sénart, could appear sufficiently honest. The months of September, October and November were the best we had experienced since February. Since the question, as we wrote at the time, was now only between labor and capital, it was inevitable that, sooner or later, the bourgeoisie and workers would reach an agreement. The Mountain crumbled into the calm of the moderate Republic: socialism died out in a compromise.

But it was written in the stars that the Revolution would run its course. Through the lens of the social question, the great minds of the conservative party introduced the royalist question, and on top of that, the Jesuitical question. As if there were fears that socialist democracy might wither for lack of sustenance, all they talked about was restoring the altar and the throne, the Pope and the Emperor. Louis Bonaparte was appointed president; Robespierre mounted his horse: the Revolution marched on.

Five and a half million votes and the name of Napoleon: what a blow for socialism! What strength, what guarantees of order, if only they had known how to seize them! In three months, with a little goodwill, even the memories of February and June could have been erased. Republicans, democrats, socialists, all were indistinguishable. A caress for the people, like amnesty; encouragement and kind words for the workers' associations, for lack of real power; a circumspect but not reactionary foreign policy, above all an inviolable fidelity to the Constitution, and, of the democratic and social

Republic, only vain utopias remained, vanishing before reality. For a whole month the country waited: everyone remained silent.

It was now or never to undertake something outside of the providential routine: once again the genius of revolutionary agitations prevailed.

Bonaparte assembled a ministry composed of all the men most suspect to the Republic: contrary to the Constitution, he concentrated all military commands in the hands of a single man; scarcely installed in the presidential chair, he revealed his imperial ambitions. His policies were those of the Holy Alliance; his philosophy, that of the Pope. In his impatience, he sent *lettres de cachet* to the National Assembly and, for added security, ordered the prohibition of political meetings. The Râteau proposal, the law on clubs, the conspiracy of January 29: the people, the representatives, the Constitution — nothing was respected.

Then the Revolution seized the powerful weapon of legality, which had been handed over to it: based on the Constitution, it called upon the National Guard and the people; and the people and the National Guard answered: Here we are! It signaled to the new president that he was only a temporary and responsible magistrate, that his power was entirely dependent on that of the Assembly; that if he ceased to respect the law, the citizens would cease to obey. The word of *accusation* resounded in the Mountain, resistance rumbled in the clubs. Bonaparte was forced to yield: the Revolution triumphed.

From that moment on, the reaction, increasingly blind, no longer concerned itself with the affairs of the country; it concerned itself only with itself. But the more blind and impassioned it became, the more energy and intelligence the Revolution displayed. The former was entirely devoted to God; the latter became increasingly human.

Using a semblance of legality, based on a compliant interpretation by the Supreme Court, Louis Bonaparte's police force insulted the majesty of the sovereign people by having election meetings guarded by commissioners. The reactionary forces offered a battle: the people, if they tried to resist, would be defeated; if they yielded, they admitted defeat. This was the reasoning of the reactionaries.

Ultimately, what does the government care about the commissioner's presence, since the meeting is open to everyone? And what does it matter to the people that the commissioner wears his insignia, since they can attend as curious onlookers? It's a squabble, then; but a squabble by which reaction tempts the Revolution. What will the Revolution's response be?

To the materialism of provocation, the people oppose the spiritualism of resistance. The people will not fight, and we implore them with all our might never to fight. The use of force is a divine right; but every assembly of voters becomes a jury where the sovereign's voice rises against tyranny full of curses and vengeance. — No: we will not obey! Magistrates, withdraw: we hold you responsible for all the consequences of your abuse of power. We will leave our place rather than suffer you; we will create a schism within society. We will not obey!

And revolt, like a fluid, courses through souls: every citizen the police commissioner encounters presents him with an enemy and an accuser. While the government, supported by its bayonets, triumphs in the streets, it is killed in the conscience of the voters. We will not obey! Let this cry rise from one end of the Republic to the other; let its echoes resound in the prosecutors' offices, the courts, the prefectures, as happened one day during the census; let all complete the act of resistance, repeating this deadly word to the government: We will not obey! And you will soon see what a government discredited by a revolt that nothing can suppress is; a government from which the people have withdrawn; a government that has no support but the sword, and that finds in the heart of every citizen a hotbed of conspiracy.

The government had hoped to push back the Revolution, and yet it is the government that is forced to retreat. Try, then, to suppress, by cannon fire, this voice of the people who cry out: I will not obey! *Non serviam!*

Let us conclude this long, but informative review: it is a question of the elections.

What do these men, voters, offer you who, for a year now, through their senseless resistance, their scheming, their stupid resentments, and their resistance to the prod, have constantly aggravated the country's situation, and have managed to turn a crisis that should have been over in a few weeks into chronic unrest? These men, who call themselves, with such wanton complacency, the *party of order*, while they label socialist democracy and the entire republican party the *party of disorder!*

What they are proposing to you, voters, I will tell you: is to organize in perpetuity, in our country, the REVOLUTIONARY STATE.

Follow their reasoning: you will decide for yourselves.

First they tell you, and in this they are only repeating our own words, that there are now only two parties in France and throughout Europe, which are called, depending on the diversity of viewpoints:

The party of capital and the party of labor;  
The party of the monarchy and the party of democracy;  
The party of the foreigner and the party of nationality;  
The party of God and the party of Humanity.

The reaction, on this major point, is in agreement with the Revolution.

But when socialism thus enumerates the great interests which naturally divide every society, it adds that this social division must entirely disappear and give way to a definitive fusion through the intervention of the relations between capital and labor, between authority and liberty, between public right and the right of peoples, between reason and faith.

What socialism wants, therefore, is the end of antagonism; it is, as we say, universal reconciliation.

Our enemies, on the contrary, after borrowing this entirely scientific classification from us, which rises up against them and accuses them, only work to make it irrevocable by transferring it more and more from metaphysics, where it must remain, into society, where it must be destroyed.

That's why they tell you, frankly, let us say now reactionary or revolutionary!

We are the representatives of monarchy, capital and divine right. Just look at our names, look at our list of candidates! We want capitalist exploitation, the holy alliance of kings and the maintenance of the temporal power of the popes. And it is to ensure the triumph of this great cause, to overthrow socialism and the Republic, that we have been resisting the Revolution for a year: this is why we preferred a relapsed conspirator to a man of order as President of the Republic; it is why we sent our squadron to Civitavecchia; it is to give Austria more strength against Hungarian nationalism and German democracy that we smoothed over its difficulties in the Peninsula.

The men we are fighting against, on the contrary – the republicans, the democrats, the socialists – are the representatives of liberty, labor, philosophy and human rights. They believe only in reason: they scorn God and the Church. These are the ones who call for a holy alliance of peoples, the subordination of the spiritual to the temporal, and the solidarity of workers. And it is as a consequence of these detestable principles that they make vows for Hungary and Poland, and that they curse our Holy Father.

Thus, the so-called party of order divides society. It wants war, it rejects all reconciliation, it provokes the Revolution even more fiercely.

The so-called party of order is turning *white*.

Who could be surprised that the party accused of disorder should turn *red*? The Revolution, under attack, asserts itself in its most ardent expression: it is its right. Action and reaction, such is the fatal law of antagonism. If our adversaries choose to champion an exclusive idea, the content of which is now exhausted, is it our fault if we accept the role of opposition they assign us? And if, from this antagonism, which we cannot avoid, the revolutionary drama emerges more inexorable and more terrible, will we, in the eyes of posterity, be responsible for the catastrophes?

It is up to you, the voters, to think about it.

Do you want to give the fire of revolutions a new impetus? Give yourselves over to the unknown; follow the dictates of this party, which claims allegiance to God, the Emperor, the Pope and the strongbox. Vote, vote *en masse* with the coalition; vote with the whites. Be a reactionary; we will make a revolution. Even if, in the next elections, we are only one against six, in a year the majority will shift, and we will be your masters. One against six! That would already prove that the democratic and social Republic has six million adherents in France. Dare, with the reactionary party, to ostracize us from society! Dare to create in France an Ireland of six million men! But don't forget to recommend to our elected officials that they double the war budget and vote each year, for the armament of order, not 400 million, but 800; not a levy of 80,000, but of 160,000 men, the entire male population aged 21 to 28.

800 million and 800,900 men! You need no less than that to protect yourself from socialism for twelve months. That is M. Thiers' figure.

Shout with the sons of the crusaders: *God wills it! God wills it!*

The sons of Jacques will answer you: *Long live the democratic and social Republic!*

(No. 169. — 7 mai.)

Paris, May 6.

### GOD IS EVIL

My friends beg me, in the interest of our common ideas, and to remove any pretext for slander, to make my opinion known on the divinity and Providence, and, at the same time, to explain certain passages from the *System of Contradictions*, which the reactionary tartuffes have for a year constantly exploited against socialism with simple and credulous souls.

I surrender to their solicitations. I will even say that if I have for so long let the *Constitutionnel* and its consorts make of me a Vanini even more ferocious than the original, attacking at once God and the Devil, — the family and property, — I had my reasons for that. First I wanted to lead certain schools, up to then considered enemies, to confess themselves their perfect resemblance; in short, I wanted it to be demonstrated to the eyes of all that doctrinaire and Jesuit, it is all one. Also, as a metaphysician by profession, I was not unhappy to take advantage of the circumstances in order to judge, by a decisive test, where our century really stands with regard to religion. It is not given to everyone to engage in such experiments in social psychology, and to examine, as I have for six months, public reason. Few men are in a position for that; and besides, it is too costly. Thus I was curious to know if, among a people such as our own, who, for two centuries, have banished religious disputes from among them; who have posited in principle the absolute liberty of conscience, that is to say the most determined skepticism; who, through the mouthpiece of the present head of the ministry, M. Odilon-Barrot, have put God and religion beyond the law; who pay a salary to all the faiths existing in their territory, while waiting for them to fade away; among a people where one no longer swears except by *honor* and *conscience*; where education, justice, power, literature and art, everything, finally, is religious indifference, if not atheism, the minds of the citizens were on a level with the institutions.

There is, I said to myself, a man who exactly fulfills his civic duties; who, above all things, respects the family of his fellow man; who keeps himself pure for the good of others; who makes a rule of never disguising his thoughts, even at the risk of his respect; who has sworn himself to the improvement of his fellows... Well! What could it matter to the people to know if this man is or is not an ATHEIST? How could that modify their opinion? Especially if one considers that the word *atheist* is as poorly defined, as obscure, as the word *God*, of which it is the negation.

For a mind enamored with philosophical and social trifles, the question deserved to be examined deeply.

Now, I have seen that — thank God! if you'll excuse the expression — the bulk of the people in France have been stirred very little by the transcendent interests of the supreme being, and that there remains hardly anyone but the *Constitutionnel* and the

Jesuits, M. Thiers and M. de Montalembert, to take up the cause of the divinity. Here, in order to conceal nothing, is all that I gathered from my researches.

1. Four petitions have arrived at the National Assembly, holding thirty to forty signatures, demanding my expulsion from the Assembly for cause of atheism. As if I did not have the right to be atheist!... If the National Assembly ever occupies itself with these petitions, my honorable colleagues will laugh about it like the gods.

2. I have received two anonymous letters in which I have been warned, with plenty of biblical citations in support, that if I continue, as I have, to blaspheme, the heavens will strike me. — Very well! I say, If the heavens intervene, I am a goner!

3. Finally, here is the *Constitutionnel*, issue of May 3, which tells me to *beware*, that *if I push Providence too far, she will chastise me*, delivering me up to the delirium of my pride. — Indeed, merely to be occupied with her, that is good reason to go mad.

That is all that I have been able to gather of the indignation of the devout; the rest, the immense majority of the French people, jeer at the Providence of *Constitutionnel* and of the good God of the Jesuits, like an ass with a fistful of nettles.

However, it is time that the comedy finishes; and, since my friends wish it and our colleagues in socialism desire it, I will address to them my profession of faith. God and the people pardon me! What I am going to say is a serious thing; but such is the sacrilegious hypocrisy of my adversaries, that I am almost ashamed of my action, as if I had just taken the holy water.

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MAN IS FREE.

That is my first proposition. Liberty is thought; I only translate the *Cogito, ergo sum* of Descartes. I am free, therefore I am. All the propositions that will follow, follow from that one, with the rigor of a geometric demonstration.

By virtue of his liberty, man adheres to or resists the *divine order*, which is nothing but the order of *nature* delivered to itself.

By his adhesion to the divine order, as by the modifications that it imposes on him, man enters into a share of government of the universe. He becomes himself, like GOD, of whom he is the eternal reflection, *creator* and *revealer*; he is a form of the divinity.

All that which does not come to modify the free action of man falls exclusively under the law of God.

Reciprocally, all that which surpasses the force of nature is the proper work of the will of man.

God is *eternal reason*; man is *progressive reason*.

These two reasons are necessary to one another; they complete one another.

Their agreement constitutes what I call the GOVERNMENT OF PROVIDENCE.

Providence is not, then, like God and man, whose convergence it represents, a simple idea; it is a complex idea. — It is the HARMONY between the order of nature and the order of liberty, a thing that the popular proverb expresses by saying : *Help yourself, and heaven will help you!*

All that man does on encountering the divine law is *arbitrary*; all that happens without man's knowledge, or despite it, is a matter of *fatality*.

Depending on whether Humanity is more or less *autonomous*, that is to say mistress and legislator of itself; whether its share of initiative is more or less great and reasoned, and the course of events more or less freed from the unconscious laws of nature, the amount of *good* increased or diminished in the world. So that ORDER, in its highest expression, or, as the ancient philosophers said, the Sovereign Good, results from the perfect accord between the two sovereign powers, God and man, and extreme *misery* from their complete scission.

The *progress* in Humanity can then be defined, the incessant struggle of man with nature, eternal opposition, producing an eternal conciliation.

Everywhere that man misunderstood the law of nature or where it is lacking, it is inevitable that nature and society fall into dissolution. The perfection of the physical world is linked to the perfection of the social world, and *vice versa*. A God, a world, without humanity, is impossible; a Humanity-God is a contradiction. Confusion, exclusion, that is *evil*.

God, eternal and infinite, is *everywhere*, Humanity, immortal and progressive, is *somewhere*.

Neither can the divine order be absolutely absorbed in human law, nor can free will resolve itself entirely in fatalism. These two orders must develop in parallel, sustain one another, harmonize, not blend: the *antinomy* between man and God is unsolvable.

The *absolute* is a conception necessary for the reason, but without reality. In other words, God, considered as the synthesis of the faculties of the finite and infinite, does not exist. From yet another point of view, man is not the *weakened* image, but the *reversed* image of God.

The *equality* of relations between God and man; the distinction and the *antagonism* of their natures; the obligatory convergence of their wills; the progress of their agreement, are the fundamental dogmas of the *democratic and social philosophy*.

Christianity has been the *prophecy*; socialism is the *realization*.

*Atheism* is the negation of Providence, as it results from the agreement between the inflexible laws of nature and the incessant aspirations of liberty, and as I have attempted to define it.

Atheism is, in general, the doctrine that, in an infinite variety of forms, materialism and spiritualism, Catholicism and paganism, deism, pantheism, idealism, skepticism and mysticism, etc., denying in turn equality, contemporaneity, the necessity of the two powers, God and man, their distinction and their solidarity, tends continually either to subordinate one to the other, to isolate them or to resolve them.

God, eternal and inevitable reason, not being conceivable without man; and man, progressive and free reason, not being conceivable without God; and that duality being inconvertible and insoluble, every theory that detracts from it is atheism.

Thus, atheism is the opposite of *antitheism*, which is nothing other than socialism itself, that is to say the theory of Providence, or, as St. Augustine would have said, the organization of the *City of God*.

After that, the vulgar sort who relate everything to a superior will, to a *Supreme Being*, of which man will only be the creature and plaything, while profoundly religious in consciousness, are atheist in beliefs. The supremacy of God is a mutilation of Humanity: it is atheism.

It is as true today to say that the world does not know God, as it was at the birth of Jesus Christ.

Bossuet, in his *Discours sur l'histoire universelle*, where he glorifies the creator to the detriment of humanity, attributing everything to God, and making man the passive instrument of his designs, — Bossuet, without wanting or knowing it, is an atheist.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau is an atheist, when, after having misanthropically denied civilization, that is, the participation of humanity in the government of the universe, he prostrates himself before nature and returns civilized society to the savage state. The philosopher of Geneva has not seen that the knowledge of God is progressive like society, that it really exists because of the progress of that society.

And as in every state of civilization the political form has for point of departure the theological or metaphysical idea, — as in society *government* is produced according to the example of religion, — we constantly see the varieties of atheism become so many varieties of *despotism*.

Thus Bossuet, after having made the theory of divine absolutism in his *Discours sur l'histoire universelle*, has been carried by the force of his principle to make the theory of monarchical absolutism in his *Politique tirée de l'Écriture sainte*. Thus Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the theoretician of deism, a kind of compromise between reason and faith, can be considered as the father of *constitutionalism*, an arbitrary transaction between monarchy and democracy. Rousseau is the predecessor of M. Guizot: besides, the *Social Contract* is only a contradiction on the part of the philosopher of Geneva. And as deism is the worst of hypocrisies, constitutionalism is the worst of governments.

The present society, finally, a society without energy, without philosophy, without an idea of God or of itself, living from day to day on some extinct traditions, rejecting every intervention of free will in its industrial economy, awaiting its salvation only from the fatality of nature, as it awaits the sun and rain, is profoundly atheist.

And the most detestable of atheists, although they do not cease to claim to follow God and Church, are those who envy the people liberty and knowledge; who make them march at the points of their bayonets, who preach resignation and renunciation to them, the respect of parasitism and submission to the foreigner. — It is those who say to them: Make love but do not make children, because you cannot feed them; labor, but save, because you are not certain that you can always work.

It is time that we knew them, these detractors of divine and human Providence, who pose as defenders of religion, and who always deny one of the faces of the infinite; who award themselves the title of *party of order*, but who have never organized anything but conspiracies...

The readers of *Le Peuple* understand at present why, in a recent article, where I brought out the deep and incurable powerlessness of these men, I called their

tyrannical domination the *reign of God!* Aren't they fatalists, indeed? Don't they oppose every effort of liberty! Don't they want us to relate it exclusively to the force of things? Don't they have, as maxims, these simple phrases:

*Laissez faire, laissez passer!*

*Chacun chez soi, chacun pour soi!*

*Qui vivra verra!*

and a thousand others, which are so many acts of despair, so many professions of atheism?

Similarly, the readers of *Le Peuple* will understand how, in a work where I will proceed to the determination of the socialist dogma by the analysis of the contradictions, I have successively been able to make the critique of God and Humanity, and to show that, either through one or by the other, the order in society, or what I today call *Providence*, was impossible: the convergence of both is required. I showed on that occasion that the God of the deists and of the Catholics, the God of the *Constitutionnel* and the *Univers*, is as impossible, as contradictory and immoral as the man of Rousseau or La Mettrie; that such a God would be the negation of God himself, and would deserve to be called *Satan* or *Evil*. In what sense have I failed my principles? How have I offended the intimate beliefs of Humanity?

One has so often cited, in horror of socialism, that passage of the *Economic Contradictions*, that the readers of *Le Peuple* will be grateful to me for making it known to them. True ideas cannot spread too widely or too soon: it is the remedy against atheism, against superstition, oppression and exploitation in all its forms.

The author of the *Economic Contradictions* begins by positioning himself within the catholic hypothesis, namely that God's reason is like that of man, although infinitely superior, and he addresses this question to his adversaries:

Would God be guilty if, after having created the world according to the laws of geometry, he had put it into our minds, or even allowed us to believe without fault of our own, that a circle may be square or a square circular, though, in consequence of this false opinion, we should have to suffer an incalculable series of evils? — Undoubtedly.

Well! that is exactly what God, the God of Providence, has done in the government of humanity; it is of that which I accuse him. He knew from all eternity, as we mortals have discovered it after six thousand years of painful experience, that order in society — that is, liberty, wealth, science — is realized by the reconciliation of opposite ideas which, were each to be taken as absolute in itself, would precipitate us into an abyss of misery: why did he not warn us? Why did he not correct our judgment at the start? Why did he abandon us to our imperfect logic, especially when our egoism must find a pretext in his acts of injustice and perfidy? He knew, this jealous God, that, if he exposed us to the hazards of experience, we should not find until very late that security of life which constitutes our entire happiness: why did he not abridge this long apprenticeship by a revelation of our own laws? Why, instead of fascinating us with contradictory opinions, did he not reverse experience by causing us to reach the antinomies by the path of the analysis of synthetic ideas, instead of leaving us to painfully climbing the steep summit of antinomy to synthesis?

The reasoning is this: If God is such as the theists claim, sovereignly good, fair and provident, how has he not prevented evil? That is the standard argument of the materialists. Now what will the conclusion of the author be? It is here that he completely separates himself from his precursors.

If, as was formerly thought, the evil from which humanity suffers arose solely from the imperfection inevitable in every creature, or better, if this evil were caused only by the antagonism of the potentialities and inclinations that constitute our being, and which reason should teach us to master and guide, we should have no right to complain. Our condition being all that it could be, God would be justified.

But, in view of this willful delusion of our minds, a delusion which it was so easy to dissipate and the effects of which must be so terrible, where is the excuse of Providence? Is it not true that grace failed man here? God, whom faith represents as a tender father and a prudent master, abandons us to the fatality of our incomplete conceptions; he digs the ditch under our feet; he causes us to move blindly: and then, at every fall, he punishes us as rascals. What do I say? It seems as if it were in spite of him that at last, covered with bruises from our journey, we recognize our road; as if we offended his glory in becoming more intelligent and free through the trials that he imposes upon us. What need, then, have we to continually invoke Divinity, and what have we to do with those satellites of a Providence which for sixty centuries, by the aid of a thousand religions, has deceived and misled us?

What does that line of argument mean? Nothing but this: Reason, in God, is constructed otherwise than it becomes each day in man; apart from that, God would be inexcusable. — Note that the author guards himself well from concluding after the manner of the atheist materialists: Providence is unjustifiable; thus there is no God. He says on the contrary: If God and Providence are not justified, it is because we do not understand them; it is because God and Providence are different than the priests and philosophers say that they are.

The discussion continues on this terrain, and soon we see that not only does reason, in God, not *resemble* that of man, but that it is precisely the *inverse* of man's intelligence.

When the theists, in order to establish their dogma of Providence, cite the order of nature as a proof, although this argument is only a begging of the question, at least it cannot be said that it involves a contradiction, and that the fact cited bears witness against the hypothesis. In the system of the world, for instance, nothing betrays the smallest anomaly, the slightest lack of foresight, from which any prejudice whatever can be drawn against the idea of a supreme, intelligent, personal motor. In short, though the order of nature does not prove the reality of a Providence, it does not contradict it.

It is a very different thing with the government of humanity. Here order does not appear at the same time as matter; it was not created, as in the system of the world, once and for eternity. It is gradually developed according to an inevitable series of principles and consequences, which the human being himself, the being to be ordered, must disengage spontaneously, by his own energy and at the solicitation of experience. No revelation regarding this is given him. Man is submitted at his origin to a pre-established necessity, to an absolute and irresistible order. That this order may be

realized, man must discover it; that it may exist, he must have divined it. This labor of invention might be abridged; no one, either in heaven or on earth, will come to man's aid; no one will instruct him. Humanity, for hundreds of centuries, will devour its generations; it will exhaust itself in blood and mire, without the God whom it worships coming once to illuminate its reason and abridge its time of trial. Where is divine action here? Where is Providence?

What then is the progression of this discussion?

It is: 1. that before an invincible error, which it was so easy to dissipate, the inaction of Providence (as the catholic atheists understand it) is not justified; 2. that from this it is necessary to conclude, not that God does not exist, but that we do not understand God; 3. that in fact, the reason that has presided over the order of nature is obviously one thing, while the reason that presides over the development of human destinies is another. Soon we will see, and that will be the conclusion of the chapter, that reason in God is different from that in man, not in its extent, but in its quality; from whence this consequence, that God and man, necessary to one another, contemporary with one another, at once inseparable and irreducible, are in a state of perpetual antagonism, so that the supreme perfection in the one is adequate to the supreme infirmity in the other, and that the destiny of man is, by unceasingly studying Divinity, to resemble it as little as possible.

Here is the passage where that consequence is found developed, and which has so scandalized the devout:

And for my part I say: The first duty of man, on becoming intelligent and free, is to continually hunt the idea of God out of his mind and conscience. For God, if he exists, is essentially hostile to our nature, and we do not depend at all upon his authority. We arrive at knowledge in spite of him, at comfort in spite of him, at society in spite of him; every step we take in advance is a victory in which we crush Divinity.

Let it no longer be said that the ways of God are impenetrable. We have penetrated these ways, and there we have read in letters of blood the proofs of God's impotence, if not of his malevolence. My reason, long humiliated, is gradually rising to a level with the infinite; with time it will discover all that its inexperience hides from it; with time I shall be less and less a worker of misfortune, and by the light that I shall have acquired, by the perfection of my liberty, I shall purify myself, idealize my being, and become the chief of creation, the equal of God.

It is impossible to better bring to light, on the one hand, the progressive character of human reason, and, on the other, the immobility of divine reason. How have some serious men been able to see, in all that, only an atheistic declamation, in the style of those by Diderot or the Baron d'Holbach?

A single moment of disorder which the Omnipotent might have prevented and did not prevent accuses his Providence and shows him lacking in wisdom; the slightest progress which man, ignorant, abandoned, and betrayed, makes towards good honors him immeasurably. By what right should God still say to me: Be holy, for I am holy? Lying spirit, I will answer him, imbecile God, your reign is over; look to the beasts for other victims. I know that I am not holy and never can become so; and how could you be holy, IF I RESEMBLE

YOU? Eternal father, Jupiter or Jehovah, we have learned to know you; you are, you were, you ever will be, the jealous rival of Adam, the tyrant of Prometheus.

So I do not fall into the sophism refuted by St. Paul, when he forbids the vase to say to the potter: Why hast thou made me thus? I do not blame the author of things for having made me an inharmonious creature, an incoherent assemblage; I could exist only in such a condition. I content myself with crying out to him: Why do you deceive me? Why, by your silence, have you unchained egoism within me? Why have you submitted me to the torture of universal doubt by the bitter illusion of the antagonistic ideas which you have put in my mind? Doubt of truth, doubt of justice, doubt of my conscience and my liberty, doubt of yourself, O God! and, as a result of this doubt, necessity of war with myself and with my neighbor!

Is there need at present to warn the reader that this does not really fall on God and Providence? — How, if the author was atheist, would he reproach God for having made him doubt him, and then to have made him fall into sin! That would not make sense. Under the names of God and Providence, it is Catholicism and deism, principles of Malthusian economy and of the constitutional theory, that the writer attacks. The catholic papers are not mistaken. The lines that follow, and which are the paraphrase of the Sunday oration, could not in that regard leave them in doubt.

Such, supreme Father, is what you have done for our happiness and your glory (*Ad majorem Dei gloriam!*); such, from the beginning, have been your will and your government; such the bread, kneaded in blood and tears, upon which you have fed us. The sins which we ask you to forgive, you caused us to commit; the traps from which we implore you to deliver us, you set for us; and the Satan who besets us is yourself.

On the one hand, capital, authority, wealth, science; on the other, poverty, obedience, ignorance: that is the fatal antagonism that it is a question of bringing to an end; that is malthusian fatalism, that is catholicism! That is all that socialism has sworn to lay waste. Listen to his oath:

You triumphed, and no one dared to contradict you, when, after having tormented in his body and in his soul the righteous Job, a type of our humanity, you insulted his candid piety, his prudent and respectful ignorance. We were as naught before your invisible majesty, to whom we gave the sky for a canopy and the earth for a footstool. And now here you are dethroned and broken. Your name, so long the last word of the savant, the sanction of the judge, the force of the prince, the hope of the poor, the refuge of the repentant sinner, — this incommunicable name, I say, henceforth an object of contempt and curses, shall be a hissing among men. For God is stupidity and cowardice; God is hypocrisy and falsehood; God is tyranny and misery; God is evil.

As long as humanity shall bend before an altar, humanity, the slave of kings and priests, will be condemned; as long as one man, in the name of God, shall receive the oath of another man, society will be founded on perjury; peace and love will be banished from among mortals. God, take yourself away! for, from this day forth, cured of your fear and become wise, I swear, with hand extended to heaven, that you are only the tormentor of my reason, the specter of my conscience.

It is useless to prolong this citation, the sense of which can no longer be in doubt.

A few weeks ago, at the news of the liquidation of the Bank of the People, the *Constitutionnel* let out a cry of joy and nearly presented me as a huckster. — I responded by producing my resources and my accounts: the *Constitutionnel* was silent.

Some time after, I published in *Le Peuple* a plan for a *Code de la résistance*; and the *Constitutionnel* cried out that this was the organization of social disorganization. I then demonstrated that the organization of the resistance, the right of insurrection and conspiracy was the pure spirit of the constitutional system: the *Constitutionnel* was silent.

The other day, I proved, by a review of the year 1848, that all the evil that has been produced from February 22 until May 1, 1849, was due to the providential theory, current in the world of the Catholics and doctrinaires. The *Constitutionnel* accused me on that occasion of atheism, and found nothing better, to justify its claim, than to cite a passage where I had intended precisely to establish that the true atheism is Catholicism, the religion of the *Univers* and the *Constitutionnel*.

Will the *Constitutionnel* deign one time, instead of always slandering, to seriously discuss the Bank of the People, the doctrinaire theory and the Catholic faith?

Working translations by Shawn P. Wilbur, last revised June 15, 2026.