

A NEW PROUDHON LIBRARY

Proudhon's Journalism

Articles from
LE PEUPLE

(1849)

This collection contains draft translations of Proudhon's articles in *Le Peuple* from 1849, excluding a few articles on mutual credit and the Bank of the People, as well as some additional material from the period censored in the *Mélanges* volumes. These are all working translations and should be used carefully, consulting the original French texts.

A NEW PROUDHON LIBRARY

— 1849 —

THE
President



is responsible.

Articles from *Le Peuple*,
including those censored in the *Œuvres Complètes*

Working translations by Shawn P. Wilbur.

Last revised July 5, 2024.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

Proudhon's journalism from the years 1848-1850 was collected, in the 19th century *Œuvres Complètes*, in three volumes title "Mélanges" — suggesting a mixture or muddle. The collections were arranged chronologically, limited to the articles published in the newspapers Proudhon was specifically affiliated with, and, — if the testimony of Alfred Darimon, one of Proudhon's collaborators at the time, is to be trusted, — they were also incomplete, omitting some unsigned articles. A comparison of the *Mélanges* volumes with the newspapers themselves also reveals some group statements, signed by Proudhon, which were not included. But the volumes much more obviously suffered from the effects of censorship. Even after Proudhon's death, it appears that certain articles — particularly a series from January 1849, critical of Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, then president of the French Republic, and ultimately the occasion for Proudhon's trial and imprisonment, — could still not be published in their entirety. Some have selected paragraphs omitted and others — like the example below — appear as nothing but dates and titles.

The material collected includes Proudhon's contributions to *Le Peuple* from January 26-31, 1849, together with some unsigned editorial contributions relating to the government seizures of the paper, some "notices" to the readers signed by the full editorial staff of the paper, and a short note from Pauline Roland, expressing her solidarity. I will admit that I turned to the work this week as a bit of a break from other translation, but found that the question addressed by the articles included — Is the President responsible? — turned out to be much more timely than I expected. Not for the first time, I find myself comparing the presidency of Louis-Napoleon to more contemporary events and contemplating the likelihood of further parallels.

These are draft translations, likely to be accurate in most regards, but certainly not polished or rendered uniform with the other translations produced for A New Proudhon Library. So, as always, use with care and don't archive them elsewhere, as they will be fairly rapidly superseded.

— Shawn P. Wilbur, translator.

(N° 74. — 31 janvier.)

PREMIÈRE CAMPAGNE DE LOUIS BONAPARTE (1).

Paris, le 30 janvier.

[illegible]

(1) Allusion à la journée du 29 janvier 1849.

Session of the National Assembly.

WAR

The session began, as always, with a procession of representatives of the right coming to deposit some reactionary petitions on the desk, ordering the National Assembly to dissolve itself immediately.

The Republicans were not moved. They let the procession pass without showing any sign of impatience; and continued the discussion of the organic bill on the Council of State.

The articles relating to auditors and masters of requests gave rise to several more or less monarchical and aristocratic amendments, amendments which were all mercilessly rejected. — First failure for the reaction.

At half past three, M. Berryer goes to the podium and requests urgency for a bill of local interest: the emergency is declared without difficulty.— But the commission, of which M. Berryer is the rapporteur, demands more; it wants immediate discussion of the single article of this bill. — We vote: two tests are declared doubtful; — it is only at the third that the discussion is postponed until tomorrow.

Three tests for such an insignificant vote! Obviously there is something in the air. So what is there? — War.

It is four o'clock. M. Grévy is ready to read his report on the Râteau proposal and all those directly or indirectly linked to it.

At this news, incredible agitation spread throughout the Assembly; a large number of representatives of the right left their benches and besieged the office to register in advance. The cries of the Assembly remind them of modesty and rules. President Marrast evacuates the office, and everyone returns to their posts.

M. Grévy takes the podium and begins reading his report, often interrupted by applause from the left and complaints from the right. — Why do they want the prompt dissolution of the Assembly? Because deep down it is a Republican; because it no longer wants to walk following the reaction; because it thinks about its origin; because it began in her offices the elaboration of important laws intended to strengthen the Republic; because it has decided to considerably reduce taxes (the report by M. Dezeimeris on the Billault proposal, a report read in the Assembly after that of M. Grévy, bears witness to this); because finally the Assembly wants to preserve the Republic by energetically resisting the anarchic demands of the reactionaries.

Why does the Assembly not want to separate before having voted on the organic laws? Precisely because the monarchists of all colors are demanding its dissolution; precisely because it represents the Republic in power, and the Republic must be preserved at all costs.

The attitude and language of the ministry, hostile to the Assembly, impose on it, says the rapporteur, the duty to remain in its post. Why would it withdraw! It offered loyal support to the President of the Republic. If this competition is refused, too bad for the president!

After all, what is this without the National Assembly, even under the terms of the Constitution! — Nothing, less than nothing.

The Constituent Assembly did not intend to found an EMPIRE, any more than a monarchy. Today it made this clear to the enemies of the Republic, by applauding the report submitted to it. — From today, it has frankly and energetically entered the counter-reactionary path. The Grevy report is an act of vigor on the part of the Assembly: it is the accepted duel between the Republic and its enemies. Can victory be doubtful?

M. Grévy, in his report, has not yet lifted all the veils. He kept what we agree to call parliamentary proprieties; he respected the old constitutional fictions. We, who are not subject to all these considerations, do not hesitate to say that the struggle is not only between the Assembly and the ministry, but also between the Assembly and the President of the Republic.

What is the ministry, anyway? The authorized representative, the elected official, the messenger of the President of the Republic, himself responsible, like the last of his ministers, for all acts of the administration. The struggle is therefore between the Assembly and Louis Bonaparte.

Between the Assembly, which saluted the Revolution, which founded the Democratic Republic, and laid, in article 13 of the Constitution, the tooting stone of socialism; the Assembly that wants to maintain its work, and refuses to take a single retrograde step;

And L. Bonaparte, born incapacitated, of lowly ambition, personification of all reactionary ideas; who, guilty towards France of the greatest attacks, amnestied by the vote yes to the representative, elected without titles to the presidency of the Republic, conspires today with all the monarchic coteries, with the Jesuits, the absolutists, the slavery of the People and the return of all abuses!

So here he is, this president who had to work with all his strength to strengthen republican institutions, and who through his inertia and his intrigues, sowing corruption and despair around him, works tirelessly to disorganize the Republic; — the veiled one, this equivocal republican, who claimed to be slandered, and who drives the last republicans out of office, who hands over prefectures, public prosecutor's offices, justices of the peace, etc., to batches of reactors, to emeritus monarchies, tested by thirty years of betrayals! For him, the Republicans of the next day are too dark in remorse; It is absolutists by race and ancient origin that he needs!

The republican Constitution did not want a traitor in the highest office of the State to be able to cover himself with fictitious irresponsibility: why should we be more timid than the Constitution?

It was Louis Bonaparte who, after promising reconciliation, refused amnesty.

It was he who sent armed garrisons to the peasants after promising them the abolition of taxes.

Who is preparing an expedition against the democrats of Italy and Rome;

Who meditates an alliance with the kings against the People;

Who continues the imprisonments, the transportations, the vengeance of the reaction against the patriots;

Who violates the right of association, the mirror of the assembly, the liberty of the press, the liberty of speech and thought;

Who organizes the social bankruptcy and the misery of the People through the calculated obstinacy of its government to resist any financial and economic reform.

The reaction did not go fast enough for L. Bonaparte's liking. He has dared to unbind the Assembly, unbind the Revolution, by ordering the representatives to dissolve. Well! The Revolution has taken up the gauntlet. The challenge is accepted: on Monday the fight. Let the Assembly dare to count on itself; let it count on the People of Paris: and victory will not be doubtful for a moment.

Louis Buonaparte has raised the question of the dissolution of the Assembly. All in good time! Next Monday, the Assembly will in turn ask the question of the resignation of the president.

Let the representatives remember, on Monday, the Republic and their own dignity: and, in one round of voting, the elected official with five and a half million votes will be nothing more than the arm, the organ of the Assembly; the President of the Republic will only be the President of the Council of Ministers, the Grévy amendment will have become the true interpretation of the principle of the presidency. So, if Louis Buonaparte has any feeling of personal dignity left, his duty will be clear: he will only have to resign his powers.

In today's session, we heard revolutionary passion simmer; we saw the republican breath agitate the chests of the representatives and the bad conscience of the rectors twisting them on their benches as they read the report.

Let us hope, patriots! hope more than ever. And more than ever, calm and patience! The National Assembly will complete the Revolution on its own. Our pains cannot wait to end: the president, that is to say the monarchy, corruption, lies, privilege, good pleasure, capitalist exploitation, is impossible.

[unsigned when published]

(*Le Peuple* No. 70. — January 27, 1849.)

Paris, January 26.

We left Sainte-Pélagie this morning, and we arrived at the newspaper office just in time to receive notification of a seizure.

Given the indictment of the Attorney General;

Given today's issue of the newspaper *Le Peuple*;

Given the article entitled: *War*;

Given articles 1 and 4 of the law of August 11, 1848;

Finally, given everything that prosecutors, substitutes, investigating judges, henchmen of all levels and other people of the same ilk see in such cases;

The newspaper *Le Peuple* was seized from its offices.

G. DUCHÊNE.

Paris, January 26.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC IS RESPONSIBLE

(Constitution of 1848.)

We said this morning, in our report from yesterday's session:

"The fight is between the National Assembly and Louis Bonaparte.

"Louis Bonaparte raised the question of the dissolution of the Assembly; Next Monday, the Assembly will ask the question of the resignation of the president."

The public prosecutor, subordinate to the President of the Republic, found this judgment worrying for his superior: he has seized our issue.

So let him grab this one again! For finally, we cannot help saying it: the fiction of royal inviolability was abolished by the Constitution of December 4; the President of the Republic is responsible.

Yes, and it is not we who are saying it, it is the force of things: on Monday a decisive battle will be fought between the Revolution and the Counter-Revolution.

Between the Revolution represented by the National Assembly,

And the Counter-Revolution, represented by Louis Bonaparte.

Is it possible to deny it?

All the forces, all the ideas, all the hopes of the revolution are today concentrated in the National Assembly; ask M. Rateau.

All the forces, all the ideas, all the hopes of the counter-Revolution are united on the head of L. Bonaparte; ask MM. Barrot, Falloux, Faucher, Drouyn de Lhuys, Destutt de Tracy, ask all those who prepared, advocated, favored, and who are currently exploiting the election of December 10! Louis Bonaparte, they will tell you, is the monarchy, is the counter-Revolution!

The Assembly dissolved, the counter-revolution no longer encounters any obstacle. The Constitution is being broken; we re-establish the two Chambers; the inviolability and re-eligibility of the president are declared; we increase our civil list tenfold; we restore the monarchy; we re-establish corruption, we once again bind the People to their chains.

On the contrary, Louis Bonaparte defeated, resigning or dismissed, the counter-revolution is brought down; all its hopes are ruined, irrevocably and forever.

It is strange that, for a month, neither the Republicans in the Assembly nor the democratic press seem to have been aware of this situation.

Formerly, the Constitution prohibited placing responsibility for government actions on the king; and, as the opposition could only address ministers, it never ended, or rather it ended with a catastrophe.

Under the rule of the Republican Constitution, things happen in a completely different way. The head of the executive power is both responsible and removable, the president can be changed every month; it is the Republic alone that is inviolable.

Strike the idol, and, the religion being dishonored, the worship is abolished. This was the practice of the first Christians, of all revolutionaries. Louis Bonaparte, by his antecedents, by his tendencies, his connections, his preferences, constituted himself the enemy of the Republic: he made himself the candidate of the monarchy, the hope of the reaction, the organ of the counter-revolution. Let the vote strike Louis Bonaparte, and the reaction has lost its trump card; the Republic no longer has a single opponent.

When we say that Louis Bonaparte alone is the counter-revolution, this is not an invention of controversy on our part, a slander of opposition.

Who, please, in the December elections, served as a flag for the Catholic and legitimist reaction? — Bonaparte.

Who most desires at this moment to ascend the throne and wear the crown? — Bonaparte.

Who conspires under the cover of the Republic, with the eternal enemies of the sovereignty of the People? — Bonaparte.

Who raised the hopes of capitalist and mercantile feudalism, and destroyed the last illusions of the worker? — Bonaparte.

Who, the first since the Revolution, dared to compose a ministry of pure and frank monarchists? — Bonaparte.

Who closes the clubs, the last asylum of popular liberty? — Bonaparte.

Who swore to continue the unfortunate policy of Cavaignac? — Bonaparte. Cavaignac, at least, defended the Republic; he only wanted socialism. Bonaparte rejects both socialism and the Republic.

Who is organizing the slander and persecution against the workers' association? — Bonaparte.

Who is spreading the word that the institution of the Bank of the People is nothing more than a political machine organized against the order and security of the country? — Bonaparte's police.

Who refuses the reduction of taxes on consumption, so harmful to the health of the People? — Bonaparte.

Who rejects financial reform, administrative reform, budgetary reform? — Bonaparte.

Who calls for the abolition of the primary schools, as incompatible with the security of parasites? — Bonaparte's henchmen.

Who is proposing to wage any kind of war on Europe in order to distract labor from the war against capital? — Bonaparte's bosses.

Who violates the principle of the non-retroactivity of the laws, to better serve the vengeance of the reaction? — The government of Bonaparte.

Who anticipates the fiction of presidential irresponsibility, established in government councils, in order to strike the democratic newspapers opposed to the republic of reaction? — Bonaparte's prosecutors.

Who ruthlessly refuses amnesty, after having promised reconciliation? — Bonaparte, always Bonaparte.

Bonaparte, elected representative of the reaction, instrument of the reaction, personification of the reaction, Bonaparte is at this moment the entire reaction; so much so that anyone who opposes Bonaparte is undoubtedly revolutionary; and that, with Bonaparte fallen, the entire doctrinaire, legitimist, Orleanist, imperialist, capitalist and Jesuit conspiracy collapses with him.

These powerful reactors, united by all despotisms, leaders of all religions, were believed to be skilled. And here they are, betting everything on the fortune of the bourgeois from Thurgau! They took for their representative, for their man, the intriguer of Arenenberg, the Pichrocole of Strasbourg, the Caesar of Boulogne, the socialist of Ham, the bastard of universal suffrage!

Worthy aristocrats, estimable royalists, honest bourgeois, devout Christians, lackeys, poor roués, poor dupes! This was therefore where these profound combinations were to end which were to, through rapid and invincible transitions, metamorphose the Republic of February into the monarchy of 1788! A mannequin and M. Râteau: it was with this that you thought you would cause panic among the revolutionaries!

Representatives of the Republic! The opportunity has never been so beautiful for you, the situation has never been more favorable. You are accused of having opposed the candidacy of this ghost of an emperor. Who is it among you, today, who does not applaud it?

Ah! Certainly, if the People, like the monkey in the fable, inadvertently taking *the name of a port for the name of a man*, had elected the bear Martin or the ox Dagobert as President of the Republic; if this elected official by universal suffrage ordered you to do like him and walk on all fours, would you believe yourself obliged to obey him?...

So show yourself, in the face of this conspiracy of intriguers, inflexible in your dignity, merciless in your irony. Do not be afraid of the reaction: it only has force through the noise it makes, and the astonishment it causes in the country. An energetically motivated vote in five minutes will deal with that. It is necessary, to enter into the constitution, that the President of the Republic bends and bows before the authority of the Constituent Assembly: on this condition alone, he can stay beside you, and drag out his magistracy for another three years and three months.

The election of December 10, don't forget it, was a surprise to the country, I almost said an outrage to the national reason. It is up to you, agent of the People, to repair through your wisdom and your firmness the harm done to the majesty of the sovereign by the mediocrity of the subject and the indignity of his supporters.

And you, patriots, our friends, our brothers, do not forget that our duty, at this moment, is to await the initiative of your representatives. It is in the National Assembly that the reaction must be defeated; it must not cost a single citizen a hair on their head.

P.-J. PROUDHON.

January 27.

We have been seized again today.

Since July 8, seven months ago, we have had: two suspensions, five seizures, five trials; we appeared in court seven times; we must appear there again on the 31st of this month.

Ah! If the moderate Republic was as strong as it was fierce!

No matter! We are ready, for so many misdeeds, to sign a compromise with those in power: We agree to go to prison and stay there as long as the reign of the *honest people* lasts, and we will undertake to ask for our release only to the *democratic and social* Republic.

This is an innovation that could save the government a lot of embarrassment from indictments, investigations, trials, and others.

We will call this *subscription for the repression*. It is good to proceed as a whole, it is more revolutionary.

P. J. For seven months, there have been almost as many ministries as we have had trials; all have tried to kill us. We are still standing, ready to pronounce the funeral oration for the one who will die tomorrow.

The Managing Editor of *Le Peuple*,
G. DUCHÊNE.

NOTICE TO THE PEOPLE.

We implore all good citizens, all those who want with us the progress of the Revolution and the emancipation of workers — whatever the reactionary acts of the government and the votes of the National Assembly — to abstain in this supreme moment from any kind of demonstration, to avoid crowds, not to respond to any provocation, and to let the initiative of the representatives act.

The salvation of the People and the Republic is at this price.

We are not permitted, at present, to say more.

The editors of the PEUPLE:

P.-J. PROUDHON, A. DARIMON, J.-A. LANGLOIS PH.
FAURE, L. VASBENTER, G. DUCHÊNE, ARNOULD
FRÉMY. TAXILE DELORD, L. MÉNARD, A. CRETIN.

PARIS, JANUARY 27.

—
Explanations to the Bourgeoisie.

THE PRESIDENT IS RESPONSIBLE.

(Constitution of 1848.)

We did not invent this principle; it is the Assembly itself which has proclaimed it: it is written throughout the Constitution; the Constitution itself is only development and commentary.

The Constitution states:

Art. 68. The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, the ministers, agents and depositaries of public authority are RESPONSIBLE, each in what concerns him, FOR ALL THE ACTS OF GOVERNMENT and administration.

Any measure by which the President of the Republic dissolves or prorogues the Assembly, or otherwise obstructs the exercise of his mandate, is a crime of high treason.

By this fact alone the president is deprived of his functions; citizens are required to refuse obedience to him, executive power passes automatically to the National Assembly; the judges of the high court of justice meet immediately, on pain of forfeiture, they summon the jurors to the place they designate to proceed to the judgment of the president and his accomplices; they themselves implicate the magistrate responsible for fulfilling the functions of the public prosecutor.

A law will determine other cases of liability, as well as the forms and conditions of prosecution.

If that is not responsibility, we ask what it is called.

The President of the Republic, we will repeat every day, is responsible for the actions of his administration, neither more nor less than the last rural guard of the last commune in France.

The corollary of responsibility in government matters is that we are given the word, the power to act. The Constitution has set the limits within which the president can exercise this power to act, the essence and character of his functions in the State. It says :

Art. 49. The President has the right to have bills presented to the National Assembly BY THE MINISTERS.

Art. 64. The President of the Republic appoints and dismisses ministers.

He appoints and dismisses, in the council of ministers, the diplomatic agents, the commanders-in-chief of the land and sea armies, the prefects, the senior commander of the national guards of the Seine, etc.

He appoints and dismisses, on the proposal of the competent minister under the regulatory conditions determined by law, the secondary agents of the government.

Art. 65. He has the right to suspend, for a period which cannot exceed three months, the agents of the executive power elected by the citizens.

Thus, it is clear that if the president does not reign, it is quite certain that he governs, and that it is on him that all responsibility for the acts of the government must fall.

The president has the right to introduce legislative proposals to the National Assembly. So when a minister comes to submit a bill to the office of the Assembly, it is the president and not the minister who must be blamed. The minister is only the president's messenger.

The president appoints and dismisses ministers. Thus, when he chooses ministers from among the supporters of a dynasty fallen eighteen years ago under the blows of the national guard, it is not the president of the council who should be blamed; it is the President of the Republic himself who, no longer having to argue with the old constitutional fiction of inviolable royalty, makes his choices himself and can impose them on his ministers without incurring their responsibility in any way.

He appoints and dismisses, on the proposal of the competent minister, under the regulatory conditions determined by law, secondary government agents. So when force is entrusted to royalists, teaching to the Jesuits, the prefectures to the eternal enemies of the republican principle, the embassies to traffickers in national honor, etc., etc., it is not such and such minister who must be accused of betraying the Republic, but the president himself.

There is no way out of this: under the terms of the Constitution, the president being responsible, the least citizen has the right to attack, to examine his actions, to approve or disapprove of them; to make jokes about him if his person lends itself to ridicule, to denounce him to public opinion if he errs, etc., etc. The public life of the president belongs to criticism like the public life of the lowest civil servant; there is nothing inviolable except the private man.

What is the good of entering into the path of dissimulation and lies? To stop at the minister, who is nothing except through the president, it is to deceive the nation, tear up the Constitution and mock the Republic. If the doctrine that we support is not recognized as consistent with the spirit and letter of the fundamental pact, if it is pursued as facetious and anarchist, you are under the regime of inviolable and sacred royalty, we are in full constitutional monarchy, and we are no longer in a Republic. The Constitution is no longer the political code of France, it is the Charter that must be engraved in its place on the tables of the law.

We can well understand that this chapter of responsibility displeases a president, the friend and accomplice of the reactionaries, a president who does not consider the Constitution to be serious, who dreams of the restoration of the Empire, and who plots against us who knows what compromise between regency and legitimacy. We understand very well that the royalists, their friends and our adversaries, denounce us because of this as facetious people to whom an end should be put.

But, we ask the citizens whose principle is respect for order and law, should we renounce the right that the Constitution gives us, when this renunciation endangers the existence of the Constitution itself? Is the Constitution not by chance a truth? Has the bourgeoisie made an act of hypocrisy and lying when it accepted it as the most conservative of its interests? Is the Constitution or is it not the expression of the wishes of the majority of French people? Is it not considered by them as the strongest guarantee of order and stability?

Is it being facetious to remind the men who insult and violate the respect for the conservative work accepted by the class most hostile to revolutions? Is it wanting the overthrow of the

government to preach the only doctrine that can make the republican government stable? Is it looking for abrupt and violent changes to put reality in place of fiction, gradual transition in place of conflicts, universal suffrage in place of *coups d'état*?

The president is responsible. There are no attorneys general who will forbid us from saying it, unless they want to erase and violate the Constitution.

[unsigned]

NOTICE TO THE PEOPLE.

The most sinister rumors continuing to circulate about the liberticidal projects of the reactionaries, we continue to adjure the patriots to remain in the deepest indifference in the face of all the provocations, whatever they may be, of a police force now without principle, of a sheltered government, of a reaction reaching the last degree of anarchy and despair. At this point, there is only an attack against the National Assembly that can justify the intervention of good citizens.

Let us hope that the Assembly will understand its duty, just as we will be able, if necessary, to fulfill ours.

The editors of the PEUPLE:

P.-J. PROUDHON, A. DARIMON, J.-A. LANGLOIS PH.
FAURE, L. VASBENTER, G. DUCHÊNE, ARNOULD
FRÉMY. TAXILE DELORD, L. MÉNARD, A. CRETIN,
A. MADIER DE MONTJAU, senior, lawyer for the
Peuple.

PARIS, JANUARY 28.

—
The president of the Republic is responsible;
The Rateau proposal makes him inviolable.

I am accused by the prosecutor of the Republic:

1. Of excitement to contempt and hatred of the government of the Republic;
2. Of an attack against the Constitution;
3. Of an attack against the rights and authority that the President of the Republic derives from the Constitution;
4. Of having sought to disturb public peace by arousing contempt and hatred among citizens against each other.

All this, because, in the trial currently pending before the National Assembly, between the revolution and the counter-revolution, I decided to implicate the current President of the Republic, in whose name and for whose benefit, it seems to me, the reactionary fabric is being woven.

While waiting to provide further explanations to those concerned, I ask my honorable colleagues of the National Assembly to weigh in their wisdom, and to assess in the secret of their conscience, what I am going to say to them.

It is not socialism that I am doing right now; it is politics, the oldest and most trivial politics. Must it be me, a man of yesterday, who is remonstrating with the masters!...

We said it from the podium, the ministry admits it, everyone repeats it:

The principle of the Rateau proposal is that the majority, if not almost all of the representatives, having declared themselves against the candidacy of Louis-Bonaparte, the National Assembly is necessarily hostile to the president; that thus the progress of the government is hampered, the policy uncertain, the return to confidence impossible; that consequently, faced with the magnificent gift that universal suffrage has given it, the duty of the Assembly is to dissolve itself.

In a word, it is on the true or presumed existence of a *conflict* or *discord* between the Assembly and the President of the Republic that the request presented by the honorable M. Rateau and by the ministry is based.

To assess M. Rateau's proposal, it is therefore a question of knowing whether, CONSTITUTIONALLY, the question of the possibility of a conflict between the National Assembly and the President of the Republic can be asked? Because it is clear that, if the Rateau proposal was, in its principle, its reasons and its object, unconstitutional; if by itself it implied a violation of the Constitution, there would be no reason to examine it, as it would have to be ruled out by the preliminary question.

To resolve this problem, the only way forward is to examine the respective roles and reciprocal relationships of the Assembly and the President; in other words, it is to analyze, from the point of view of the Rateau proposal, the Constitution.

May the reader give me five minutes of patience: I will be categorical and brief.

Now, it follows from articles 33, 35, 36, 45, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 53, 54, 55, 59, 65, 68, 72, 74, 75 of the Constitution that the President of the Republic, inferior in dignity to the National Assembly, is still only the organ of the Assembly, the subordinate of the Assembly, the subject of the Assembly.

From which it follows that the National Assembly and the President of the Republic do not form, as was believed and as some claim, two equal powers, but a single power of which the Assembly is the head and the president the arm; that the privilege of popular election, conferred on the president by article 43 of the Constitution, constitutes for him only a purely honorary distinction, and that thus the hypothesis of a conflict between the Legislative Body and the head of executive power, contradictory in terms, cannot constitutionally be admitted.

There may be *disobedience* by the President of the Republic with regard to the National Assembly; it is repugnant to the text and spirit of the Constitution for there to be conflict between them, and in any case, conflict. To pretend otherwise is already to misunderstand, I almost said it is to violate the Constitution.

I first say that the President of the Republic is inferior to the National Assembly. In fact:

The Assembly can only ever be elected by the people. The president may, in certain cases, be designated by the Assembly (art. 47).

The National Assembly itself verifies their powers. — It is the assembly that rules on the validity of the election of the president (*ibid.*).

The representatives of the people cannot receive an imperative mandate; they legislate in the fullness of their spontaneity and initiative. The president can only obey the decrees of the

Assembly, which he is required to promulgate within one month, and, if there is an emergency, three days (art. 57).

“The representatives of the people are inviolable. They cannot be sought, accused or judged, at any time, for the opinions they expressed in the National Assembly.” (Art. 36.) That is to say that for all the opinions that they can express, for all the acts that they can produce in the exercise of their mandate, they are absolutely, and by right, irresponsible. “The President of the Republic is responsible for all his actions as well as all his speeches.” (Art. 68.)

“Representatives may only be arrested or prosecuted in criminal matters after the Assembly has authorized the prosecution.” (Art. 37.) That is to say that the representatives are removed from the action of the public prosecutor, dependent on the head of the executive power, and are subject only to the good pleasure of the Assembly. The president, on the contrary, can be accused by the National Assembly, and referred to the high court of justice (art. 68), which is formed on the order of the Assembly (art. 93). I, against whom the government is asking the Assembly for authorization to prosecute, am higher in dignity than the President of the Republic.

“The representatives of the people are always re-electable.” (Art. 33.). “The President of the Republic can only be re-elected after an interval of four years.” (Art. 45).

The National Assembly, the true representation of the people, swears, like the people and like God, only by itself. The President of the Republic is obliged, before taking office, to take an oath in the hands of the Assembly.

Who could say, comparing the two powers, that the President of the Republic is the equal of the National Assembly, and that he must not, in everything and for everything, cede precedence to the latter?

I affirm, secondly, that the President of the Republic is the agent or organ of the Assembly. I quote the constitution:

The President of the Republic promulgates the decrees of the Assembly (art. 57 and 58), although he took no part in their preparation, although he opposes them. Therefore, the will of the Assembly is the law of the President.

He monitors and ensures the execution of the laws made by the Assembly: that is to say that the Assembly orders, and that the President executes. It is for this reason alone, it is because he is responsible for the execution, that he appoints and dismisses, under his responsibility, the ministers and other agents... From which it appears that the President of the Republic is responsible to the commands of the National Assembly.

He resides in the place where the National Assembly sits (art. 63), of which he is the arm, and which he must follow as the shadow follows the body. Therefore, the President of the Republic is the acolyte of the Assembly.

“He presents each year, by a message, to the National Assembly, the general presentation of the affairs of the Republic (art. 52),” as befits every accountant towards his constituents, every debtor with regard to his creditors. Therefore, the President of the Republic is the vassal of the Assembly.

I go further, and I say that the President of the Republic is the servant and subordinate of the National Assembly. This proposition is only the corollary of the previous one. Indeed :

“The President of the Republic has the armed forces at his disposal, BUT without ever being able to command them in person (art. 50).”

This means that, under a republican government, where the militia is above all citizens and the bayonets are essentially intelligent, the President of the Republic has the army at his disposal for the cases provided for by law, but that, if he wanted to dispose of it according to personal views and contrary to public liberties, the armed force, commanded by others than the president, would not obey.

According to this article, the concentration of all military forces in the hands of General Changarnier is an indirect attack on the Constitution; for, either General Changarnier is devoted to the interests of Bonaparte, and, in this case, it is as if Bonaparte commanded the army, THE WHOLE ARMY, in person; or else Changarnier obeys other influences, and then the reunion in his hands of commands that should remain separate constitutes both a rivalry to Louis Bonaparte and a danger for the Republic. And, in fact, is not the affair of Commander Aladenize a symptom of the danger that, through the violation of art. 50, the Constitution is currently running!...

The president negotiates and ratifies the treaties: BUT these treaties are only final after having been approved by the National Assembly.” (Art. 33.) That is to say that, as far as foreign policy is concerned, the President of the Republic is responsible for the correspondence of the Assembly.

“He ensures the defense of the State, BUT he cannot undertake any war without the consent of the National Assembly (art 54).” That is to say that the president is the sentinel of the Assembly.

“He has the right to pardon; BUT he can only exercise this right after having obtained the opinion of the Council of State (art. 55).” — Now the Council of State tests the creature of the Assembly (art. 72); therefore, the president is only the interpreter of the feelings of the Assembly.

“He appoints and dismisses ministers; BUT the number of ministers and their responsibilities are fixed by the legislative power (art. 66).” So, the president is the office manager of the Assembly.

He is responsible for administration; BUT it is the Council of State that makes the administrative regulations; BUT the administration is placed under the control and supervision of the Council of State (art. 75); BUT, once again, the Council of State, in everything it does with respect to the administration, is the representative of the Assembly. Therefore, the President is the agent and clerk of the Assembly.

He has the right to present draft laws to the Assembly through his ministers; BUT, in certain cases, he must first consult the Council of State on these projects (art. 75); in all cases, the Assembly alone deliberates sovereignly. Therefore, the president, only having the right of proposal, and never that of *veto*, is only the authorized representative and proxy of the Assembly.

In the event of the forfeiture of the president, executive power returns IN FULL RIGHT to the National Assembly (art. 68). Therefore, executive power emanates primarily from the legislature, as action emanates from thought; therefore, the President of the Republic is the representative of the Assembly.

I add, finally, that notwithstanding article 100 of the constitution, which provides: “The President of the Republic is only liable to the High Court of Justice,” he is in reality the subject of the Assembly. Let us not argue about words.

Article 55 states:

“The President of the Republic, the ministers, as well as all other persons condemned by the high court of justice, can only be PARDONED by the National Assembly.”

The right of justice and the right of pardon are consanguineous and homogeneous. Formerly they both belonged to the king, who could delegate or retain them. To do justice and to grant mercy was an act of the same nature, quality and attribution. Today, it is from the people, the only sovereign, that all justice and grace emanate. The first has special courts as its organs; the second belongs to the Council of State and the Assembly. To say that the President of the Republic can only be pardoned by the National Assembly is to create a jurisdictional relationship between them, it is to make the first litigant of the second.

If there is one thing in the world that is clear, obvious, demonstrated, it is certainly the proposition that I put forward earlier, which has been the subject of the polemic of the *Peuple* for four days, but that the ministry seems not to understand, namely:

1. That the President of the Republic is inferior to the Assembly;
2. That he is the organ of the Assembly;
3. The servant of the Assembly;
4. The person responsible for the Assembly.

Because, according to articles 43 and 46, the president is appointed, as are the representatives of the people, *by secret ballot and by an absolute majority of voters, by all the voters of France and Algeria*, — it is imagined that this community of origin made him equal to the National Assembly; that it made him an independent power, reporting only to the people, and able, by virtue of some prerogative that has not yet been defined, to issue orders and make injunctions to the Assembly. It was enough for the former professors of governmental dualism to read in the republican constitution of 1848 that the separation of powers is the first condition of a free government (art. 19); that the French people delegate executive power to a citizen who holds the title of President of the Republic (art. 43); that the said president is appointed by secret ballot by all voting citizens (art. 19), to immediately conclude that the new Constitution was only a rearrangement of the charter of 1830, and that the President of the Republic was a species of king, minus the *veto*, inviolability and heredity. Except for this, they thought, the President walks in equality with the Assembly; his consideration is the same: he does not have the *duty* of SUBORDINATION towards the Assembly: he has a *right* to the ASSISTANCE of the Assembly.

Our great parliamentarians, finally, disregarding all the provisions of the constitutional act that they themselves had worked to establish, and taking into account only this deceptive label of *separation of powers* and of *presidency*, took a republican constitution for a monarchical constitution: and it is from this reversal of principles that they claim to explain and defend the attributions of the President of the Republic, all of which are second rate, and which they name, as

in the good times of the charter-truth and with the same style, *the rights and authority that the President of the Republic derives from the Constitution!*

They reason, these astonishing publicists, like clumsy industrialists who, making a partnership contract between themselves, declare, at the beginning of their act, to form a *general* partnership, and all of whose provisions invariably reveal a *limited* partnership. The content taking the form, the operations of the company take, unbeknownst to the editors, a legal character quite contrary to that which they had thought to foresee; and while they counted on a certain responsibility, they actually incur another.

No, no, M. Barrot, the constitution that you are responsible for applying is not, as you imagine, a dualist and monarchical constitution, more or less degraded and mutilated: it is, very fortunately for honor and the future of the French people, a constitution, a true republican constitution, which I urge you to reread and meditate on, if you do not want to lead your president to a catastrophe. Despite your efforts and those of your friends, despite the doubts that you managed to spread, the republican principle, which dominated the National Assembly, prevailed, and after having first rejected the Grévy amendment, then after the amendment of Parrieu, the National Assembly, which had only the Republic in mind, found itself having made a republican constitution: *Vox populi, vox Dei!*

A few words will be enough for me now to assess, in its extent, its timeliness, its morality, M. Rateau's proposal.

M. Rateau's proposal seems to have been made expressly to reveal to the country, I will not only say the counter-revolutionary tendencies of the government, but the incredible hallucination under which it lives.

What does M. Rateau demand?

That the National Assembly, the majority of which would have compromised itself in the elections for the presidency, separates before having voted on the organic laws and established the budget, because, says M. Rateau naively, this majority is not very favorable to Louis Bonaparte, and business suffers from this misunderstanding.

M. Rateau, as we see, dominated by this idea that the President of the Republic enjoys an authority equal to that of the Assembly, creates for the President a prerogative analogous to the ancient royal prerogative, and according to which, the prince dealing equal to equal with the chamber of peers and the chamber of deputies, the cooperation of the three powers was necessary for the running of the government.

Now, M. Rateau's idea, or better said the inner thought that dictated his proposal, is the overthrow of the entire republican economy, the negation of the Constitution.

Demanding, in the name of the President of the Republic, that the National Assembly lend its support to the executive power, while it is up to the head of the executive power to CONFORM to the decisions, the policy, the ideas of the legislative power, is to create for the president a prerogative of the most monarchical kind; it is consequently to make him inviolable, at least within the extent of this prerogative; and if it were that this prerogative encompassed all the attributions of the presidency, it would follow that the president would be irresponsible for all the acts of his

government, whatever they were, which, in the terms of the Constitution current, is contradictory.

Therefore, M. Rateau's proposal, considered in its principle, in its reasons and in its goal, is *unconstitutional*; therefore, similarly, the petitions collected to support it, which appear to have for an instant shaken the opinion of a few inattentive representatives, tainted by the same vice, are themselves unconstitutional.

May the National Assembly, now enlightened on the facts and on the law, appreciating the false and detestable doctrine which has brought the Republic into this burning situation, reject, by an energetic vote, the suicide that some dare to demand of it at this moment, and, while saving the Constitution, it will have saved the Republic, it will perhaps have preserved the country from the horrors of the civil war, and it will have been well worthy of the homeland.

P.-J. PROUDHON.

To the citizen editors of the PEUPLE.

Citizens,

Sick in bed, I cannot appear, as I would like, in your offices to ask to sign with you the journalists' protest against the odious reaction which today threatens the Republic.

Obscure soldier of democracy, after having received kind hospitality in your newspaper, I come to ask you in the name of fraternity, to let me once again take my place in your ranks to fight the common enemy.

Please, citizen, add my name to yours. I have the right to be counted among the most devoted friends of the democratic and social Republic.

Fraternal greetings.

PAULINE ROLAND.

January 23, 1849.

PARIS, JANUARY 29.

REPUBLICANS,

Your attitude, during this moving day, your calm in the presence of a conspiracy that does not dare to admit itself, which seeks, without being able to find it anywhere, a pretext of legality and right, has initiated you all into political life, to parliamentary life.

While the Republican minority, an ever-increasing minority through its daily oscillations, protested in the Assembly against the ministry, you protested in the street, through majestic silence, against the provocations of power. The People march in unison with their representatives: from now on, civil war is impossible. Civil war! You have seen, citizens, with your own eyes, that it would be the victory of the reaction.

Yesterday, the Republican minority was 288 votes.

Today it is 403.

Thanks to a behind-the-scenes intrigue, the ministry gathered, with great difficulty, out of 821 voters, a majority of 6 votes!...

A few more efforts, a few more days together, and this minority will pass into the state of an indissoluble majority.

When events move faster than the intelligent, and the mind is no longer enough to digest the idea of each day, is it any wonder that a panting, surprised, intimidated, divided Assembly was unable to resolve to crush its unworthy ministry in one fell swoop? But, have no doubt, citizens, the National Assembly has received the mandate to found the Republic: it will not fail in its task.

Republicans, you were in your strength today, because you were within legality, within right. This is why the conspiracy, however provocative it was, did not dare risk an attack. May this experience enlighten you! Do not provide the enemies of the Republic, drunk with insignificant success, with the opportunity for a struggle, where they would have the advantage of legality and right over you.

Tomorrow you have nothing to do in the public square! Let the patrols, the police officers, the informers, walk alone on the quays and the boulevards, we implore you in the name of the freedom of the homeland.

Besides, the real question of the day was not the Râteau proposal: it was the *coup d'état* being prepared by the government. Well! The *coup d'état* failed; the mine charged by the reactionaries fizzled. The victory that the ministry promised itself in the streets, it is you who won it. What compensation for this failure is a majority of six votes!

The editors of the PEUPLE:

P.-J. PROUDHON, A. DARIMON, J.-A. LANGLOIS PH.
FAURE, L. VASBENTER, G. DUCHÊNE, ARNOULD
FRÉMY. TAXILE DELORD, L. MÉNARD, A. CRETIN,
A. MADIÉ DE MONTJAU, senior, lawyer for the
Peuple.

PARIS, JANUARY 30.

—
The first campaign of Louis Bonaparte.

The People of Paris are the most intelligent of all the Peoples. Give them an idea, and in the blink of an eye they will have developed it in all its aspects: give them a principle, and they will not stop until they have drawn the final conclusion from it. But they sometimes need someone to put his finger on things: they are so absent-minded, so wandering, so nosy, that at times they do not notice what is staring them in the face.

Yesterday Louis Bonaparte, the leader covered in a feathered hat, came, at the head of his army, to present the battle to the Parisian people. It was for him, as once at Austerlitz for Napoleon, to earn his emperor's spurs. All the troops from thirty leagues around had been brought in, the best soldiers, the most skillful leaders. Changarnier was generalissimo; Bugeaud, who had left for Bourges, was to lead the rearguard. The strategic plan was to go up the Seine by both banks; they had to cut and fortify the bridges, divide the riot, bring about the junction of the two wings above the Austerlitz bridge, then, retreating by the interior and exterior boulevards, attack by rifle fire, by cannon, by bomb, by undermining, the various centers of insurrection. We will have two hours of combat, said two of the generals of the expedition in the Salle des Pas Perdus; six hours at most!...

The People refused to fight! The People of Paris are so capricious! They have their days of combat, as well as their days of celebration. They fight if it pleases them to fight; they don't fight if it doesn't suit them. It was enough, that day, for the faubourien to make fun of the regiments everywhere!

Five or six hundred blouses were stationed near the National Elysée, waiting for the President of the Republic. As soon as Bonaparte appeared, they welcomed him with cries of *Long live the Republic! Long live the Constitution! Long live the National Assembly! Amnesty! Down with ministers!*, etc. These less than dynastic cries, growing louder by the minute as Louis Bonaparte passed by, despite the efforts of a paid deadbeat to shout *Long live the Emperor*, the pretender, having reached the height of the Boulevard des Capucines, was forced to retreat to his headquarters, established on Place de la Concorde, forty steps from the Obelisk!

And everything was said!

The troops, who had been equipped for war, bivouacked on the sidewalk; part returned to the barracks: 80,000 elite men, led by the best generals in the country, seemed to have arranged to meet on this memorable day to parade in front of the windmills of the Butte Montmartre!...

How it grows ideas and character, to serve pretenders! How noble they are, the Changarniers, the Bugeauds, these men who served the homeland in the French campaign and on the land of Africa, with their Napoleonic nepotism...

It's all just ridiculous, really: but it didn't occur to the Ministry that all this became disastrous. The left demanded that an investigation be carried out regarding the day of January 29. The right refuses the investigation, therefore the right was conspiring, therefore the Government is guilty, therefore Louis Bonaparte, who appeared at the head of the provocative and reactionary army, is complicit in the attack.

Never did Emile de Girardin gather together as much and as damning evidence against General Cavaignac as there is against Louis Bonaparte. And if the crime has not been executed, the cause must be attributed to completely unforeseen circumstances, and independent of the will of the accused.

Follow my reasoning, I beg you, and try, if you can, to answer it.

Soldiers are brought from all sides by rail; 80,000 men are gathered, provided with everything necessary for siege warfare: picks, ladders, cannons, cans, etc. Mr. Léon Faucher recalls the National Guard to combat against the eternal enemies of society, property, and the family; against these men who made the June Days, and who have the audacity to accuse the Ministry. He adds in finishing his proclamation: *The victory of order must be decisive and irrevocable!*

They had therefore intended to kill, shoot, bomb, since they were deploying, in the streets of Paris, an army of 80,000 men, equipped with all kinds of tools and projectiles. They had planned the fight, I should say to execute the Republicans, since they designated the enemy, presented the victim; since they predicted the victory, read the massacre, a definitive and unremitting massacre.

The affair was premeditated since, from two o'clock in the morning, the troops surrounded the palace of the Assembly and President Marrast was not informed until eleven o'clock; since all arrangements were made with a view to a hoped-for resistance, the systems of which were known in advance and which did not take place; since the spark that was going to set off the insurrection had been sparked the day before by the dismissal of the mobile guards, a sad plagiarism of the dissolution of the national workshops.

Finally there was an ambush, since, as Colonel Guinard revealed in the gallery, the order to sound the recall had only been given to the colonels of the 1st, 2nd and 10th legions, reputed to be the least favorable to the cause of the Republic, and that it was only on the advice that the Assembly was threatened that the colonels of the other legions, inspired by their patriotism, had taken it upon themselves to gather their men.

There was, I say, an ambush, since the government was not attacked; since there was no conspiracy, except the ministerial plot organized for the dissolution of the Assembly; since the excitements of the authorities and the police were received everywhere with cries of: *Long live the Republic! Long live the National Assembly!*

The Government, ashamed of its defeat, accuses the existence of plots against the Company; it dares to designate, to exonerate himself, the representatives of the Mountain as the instigators of this plot.

And it refuses the investigation!

As far as the Government is concerned, the facts, that is to say the will to fight, the premeditation, the ambush, are not in doubt: it cannot be justified by proving that, sentinel of society, representative of society, it acted in self-defense.

And it rejects the request for an investigation!

Well! I am not afraid to tell it: It was you who prepared the civil war, you who plotted the assassination of citizens!

And since you trace back to the representatives who sit on the far left complicity in the crime of which you cowardly accuse the social democracy, I will in turn trace back to the President of the Republic complicity in your liberticidal projects.

The Montagnards have not been seen in insurgent meetings, preaching fire and pillage. You have no more charges against them than against this People whom you always slander, because they never take revenge!

But Louis Bonaparte, what was he doing at this review? What role would he play on the Place de la Concorde and the boulevards? What would he have to respond if he were questioned in person about the part he took in the events of that day? What is his opinion on the events that preceded, accompanied and followed his walk from the Elysée-Bourbon to the Hôtel des Capucines? What do these testimonies of satisfaction to the cries of *Long live the Emperor*, these signs of spite at *Long live the National Assembly* mean? Wouldn't the plot of January Twenty-Ninth be the third act of this tragi-comic drama which began in Strasbourg, which continued in Boulogne, which will end in Charenton?...

You don't want an investigation! Ah! If it is in order to veil from the eyes of France the incurable monomania of its chief magistrate, I approve of your reservation. But is it only the blood of patriots that can wash away the shame of the homeland!

P.-J PROUDHON.

TO BE DONE WITH M. CONSIDÉRANT

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

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

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

Let's clear up the incident first.

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

TO M. PROUDHON

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

V. CONSIDÉRANT
Representative of the people.

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

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

M. Considérant is now vehemently protesting against the *disgraceful behavior* I have displayed towards him by not replying to his letter. According to him, I have *passed all limits*; and it is in order to *repress this feverish personality, this overexcitement of pride, this envious mania for accusing, denigrating and destroying everything that is not me*; it is in order to *mark, in terms that will no longer allow them to be confused, the abyss that separates peaceful, democratic and organizing socialism from destructive and savage socialism*, that he, M. Considérant, driven to the limit, *weary of opposing reason and courtesy to unreason and violence*, has resigned himself to publishing his reply!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I hasten to add: there were neither apostates nor traitors there; and had I been at the office of *Le Peuple* when the unfortunate words that served as a pretext for M. Considérant were written, I would have removed them, as lacking not precisely in justice, but in accuracy. Those whom *Le Peuple* had to denounce, after the article of *La Démocratie pacifique*, were nothing but schemers or dupes.

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

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

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

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

But have no fear that either M. Considérant or any of his cronies will answer the summons; have no fear that they'll ever tell you what the theory of Fourier or Fourier's organization of labor is. They'll refer you to their pamphlets; they'll offer you a subscription, or speak to you in slang; of science, nothing! M. Considérant, in whom I am pleased to recognize as much knowledge as he accuses me of ignorance, knows nothing of substance except what he learned at school and the École Polytechnique. From Fourier, his revered master, he inherited only gibberish and barbarisms. More than any of the followers or exploiters of Fourierism, M. Considérant has contributed to spreading throughout the world this amusing opinion that a phalansterian doctrine exists. Now that he is slandering serious socialists, whose energetic competition threatens to engulf his scrap business, I challenge him, for the fifth time, to publish in his newspaper and offer up for discussion the first element of a social science based on Fourier!

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

sufficiently agitated the world: let it finally be known whether the idol of *La Démocratie pacifique* was the most marvelous of geniuses, or the most colossal of madmen.

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

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

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

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

Fourier's views on the relations between the sexes are diametrically opposed to marriage and the family. After appealing to the country's epicurean sensibilities, it was felt that public conscience recoiled from this depravity of free love, and while the faithful continue to be initiated into the *Loves of the Saints*,² the most profound respect for the family and marriage is proclaimed to the uninitiated. Violent socialism is even accused, if necessary, of wanting the community of property in order to more quickly achieve the community of women. Such is the interest of order: let socialism perish rather than Fourierism! Such is the tactic of M. Considérant.

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

² Title of a manuscript by Fourier.

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

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

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

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

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

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

M. Considérant, alerted by public opinion, could not help but acknowledge that I was indeed an unparalleled destroyer. In this regard, he lavished praise upon me, the

full extent of which he could scarcely imagine, which would have been enough to turn heads ten times stronger than my own. But, seeing no further, he told me, in the form of friendly advice, that my role as destroyer, as Attila, as Herostratus, as EXECUTIONER, was over; that the reactionaries were mocking me, and that I had no choice but to clear out and make way for the true organizers, the true socialists, that is to say, for M. Considérant and his associates.

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

SPEECH DELIVERED BY PROUDHON

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

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

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

Thus, everyone now agrees on this point.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ah! You will see.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The same thing has been repeated here.

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

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

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

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

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

ON THE FAR LEFT. Very good! Very good!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A MEMBER. From Strasbourg. (Laughter.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SEVERAL MEMBERS. And who are they then?

CITIZEN PROUDHON. M. Odilon-Barrot.

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

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

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

CITIZEN PRESIDENT. All the ministers voted for the Constitution.

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

A VOICE. That's one opinion.

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

SEVERAL MEMBERS. And the United States!

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

TO THE RIGHT. Yes! Yes!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SEVERAL MEMBERS ON THE LEFT. Very good!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Paris, February 16.

To the Proofreader of LE PEUPLE.

Citizen,

You must collate your proofs and not transpose the sentences.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Let's recall the principle once again.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(No. 122 — March 21, 1849)

Paris, March 20.

TO THE CITIZEN EDITORS OF *LE POPULAIRE*

Citizens, I have read in your esteemed journal the letter you did me the honor of addressing to me, on behalf of the Icarian communists, regarding my article of March 12.

You complain, first of all, that in mentioning the leaders of the various socialist schools, I said nothing of the theory of the honorable M. Cabet, an omission you regard as being as unjust to you as it is offensive. Furthermore, citing a passage from my article in which I state that “Saint-Simonianism, *through its communist tendencies*, simultaneously jeopardized marriage, the family, inheritance and liberty; and that what it fought against within humanity was not the economic system, but humanity itself,” you conclude from my words that I accuse the Icarian communists of being the most ardent enemies of marriage, the family, inheritance, liberty and even humanity — a charge which you rightly regard as a calumny.

Citizens, it was a long time ago that I first told your illustrious master that I did not consider anyone to be a communist who claimed to incorporate into the COMMUNITY such things as those mentioned: *marriage, family, inheritance, liberty*; and that what separated me from him was not the substance of the matter, but a pure misunderstanding, a mere matter of definition. It is true that I regard this definition of socialism, namely community, which you have put forward, as inaccurate, as perpetually leading to a false interpretation of socialism and as serving only to draw down upon it formidable calumnies. It is also true that I have often criticized your leader for persisting in a hypothesis that is, in my view, incompatible with *marriage, family, inheritance and liberty*. Yet never, neither in my thoughts nor in my writings, have I accused you of opposing the very things you ceaselessly defend, and of which you provide the most edifying example; never, I say, neither in deed nor in intent have I parted ways with you. I am a socialist of your school; like you, I seek solidarity and fraternity, alongside marriage, family, inheritance and liberty. For ten years I have championed this doctrine, without ever having been able to grasp, until now, how it could be construed as communism. I did not even find community in Icaria; indeed, when I critiqued the ideas of M. Cabet, it was precisely to demonstrate that its presence there was an impossibility.

You will understand, then, citizens, why, after having recounted the systems of Saint-Simon and Fourier, and the one attributed to Louis Blanc, I made no mention of your school or your leader. From my perspective, to have done so would have been to slander you; it would have been to lump you together with those sects I consider defunct, sects that appeared but for a moment, merely to mark time, if I may use that expression, in the march of progress. Fully apprised, as I am, of the substance of your theory, I was bound to regard you — and indeed, I did regard you — as belonging as much to the party of the present as to the party of the future. In this, I was merely acting consistently with the judgment I have passed upon M. Cabet’s theory, and with

the sympathies I harbor for his disciples. Moreover, M. Cabet himself, through the conduct he has displayed since February, has granted me the right to treat him in precisely this manner. Did he not constantly declare, in his proclamations and in *Le Populaire*, that one must guard against any untimely or violent application of communism; that one must study the means, take established institutions into account, proceed through legal and peaceful channels, etc., etc.?

From that moment on, it was no longer possible for me to doubt the complete identity of views that existed, fundamentally, between M. Cabet and myself. What, then, am I doing — I ask you yourselves, citizens — other than seeking *means*? As for a *system*, I have none, I want none; I formally reject the very notion of one. The system of humanity, we shall know it only at the very end of humanity... As for the ultimate *goal*, I care little for it. Call it community, phalanstery or whatever else you please: it is all the same to me; I do not concern myself with it. I seek — I tell you again, just as M. Cabet requests — *means*. These means, in my view, must be legitimate, that is to say, they must stem from existing institutions and rely upon them; and they must be legal, meaning they must do violence to no opinion, to no individual will.

Let humanity go wherever it may — once again, I do not know where that is; I do not dispute the matter, nor am I in the least curious to find out. What interests me is discerning its path and, if I can, clearing the way for it. Now, if by not declaring myself a communist I may appear less audacious than you, at least you cannot accuse me of acting unjustly toward you: quite the contrary, even assuming that community were the ideal form of society and the ultimate terminus of progress, you would still remain indebted to me. Upon the chariot of humanity, you are the passengers, and I am the postillon.

With less touchiness or prejudice, citizens, you would have understood the reasons for my silence; and, seeing as I am doing your work so effectively, you would not have said to me, with such scant goodwill: *Citizen Proudhon, take care!...*

I am perfectly on my guard. I know — whatever you may say, both friends and adversaries — that I do not believe I have, thus far, merited the reproaches of the one group any more than the congratulations of the other through any error of tactics. Yet it was written that the deepest mistrust and the fiercest opposition would come to me from those very people whose interests I serve best! After having stirred up so many contradictions, I would know very little of men and affairs had I not foreseen this one!...

Yours always, come what may.

APPEAL

TO THE CITIZENS OF ALL PARTIES — TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL POLITICAL
SHADES — TO THE EDITORS OF NEWSPAPERS OF ALL OPINIONS.

Citizens,

The Constitution, by imposing upon all citizens the duty to secure, BY LABOR, the means of subsistence, simultaneously imposed upon the Government of the Republic the duty to ensure, THROUGH FRATERNAL ASSISTANCE, the subsistence of those citizens who might find themselves without work.

The National Assembly, faithful in this regard to the spirit of the Constitution and to the seeds of progress embedded within it, has decided that the law on public assistance shall be numbered among the *organic* laws; that is to say, those laws intended to interpret and expand upon our Constitution in a republican spirit.

As a result of forced unemployment, stemming from the stagnation of business and the cessation of work, THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND CITIZENS currently find themselves with no other resource than the subsidy of 12 and one half centimes previously granted to them by the National Assembly and the City of Paris.

This relief, by means of which these citizens, our brothers, have for four months painfully sustained their own lives and those of their families, is about to be withdrawn from them. A circular issued by Citizen Berger, Prefect of the Seine, to the mayors of the twelve arrondissements, informs them that this distribution, for reasons it is needless to assess at this moment, will cease at the public welfare bureaus effective the 25th of the current month.

Thus, Louis Bonaparte and his ministers, who are bound, under the terms of the Constitution, to uphold and apply the principle of public assistance, show utter disregard for this obligation. Thanks to them, and by means of a simple administrative measure, three hundred thousand citizens are about to be thrust into the horrific dilemma of either starving to death or, in their desperation, seeking some extreme recourse in order to escape death.

When a governing power fails to fulfill the mandate prescribed to it by the fundamental compact, citizens have the right — indeed, the duty — to step in and take action where that power has failed.

We therefore appeal to all citizens, regardless of the party to which they belong; to all representatives, on whichever bench of the Assembly they sit; and to all organs of the press, whatever motto they may adopt.

In our view, there are no longer Socialists or anti-Socialists in the face of misery that must be alleviated; there is no longer a Mountain or a Plain when confronted with a nation that must be saved from the calamities of civil war; there remains only the sentiment of compassion in the face of this immense misfortune of one hundred thousand families prey to the torments of hunger.

French citizens are suffering!... To bind up this wound inflicted upon the nation, it should suffice that we are French.

Let the governing power, in its impotence and ill will, come and tell us now — as it did regarding the political clubs, as it already insinuates regarding workers' associations, and as it will surely say regarding credit institutions and countless other matters — that to organize relief efforts without its involvement is to create a society within a society, a State within a State, *imperium in imperio*. We shall let the authorities have their say; for by learning, through the organization of these relief efforts, to govern ourselves without bureaucrats or parasites, we will have done more for the Republic than could be achieved through thirty years of parliamentary debate.

Citizens, the task before us is to organize public assistance, without the governing power and outside the sphere of the governing power. The task is, in order to avert civil war, to ensure that unemployed workers continue to receive that meager pittance of twelve and a half centimes that the administration had previously allowed to fall into their hands.

We propose:

1. *That patriotic subscription drives be opened at the offices of all newspapers, without exception;*

2. *That, through the efforts of all the representatives of the National Assembly, a committee be appointed from within its ranks, charged with overseeing the collection of these subscriptions;*

3. *That committees likewise be formed, through the efforts of the representatives and the public welfare bureaus, for the purpose of regulating the use of the subscribed funds and distributing them to the needy citizens of the twelve arrondissements of Paris.*

Citizens, time is of the essence, and hunger does not wait. You witnessed — in Lyon in 1832 and 1835, and in Paris in June 1848 — the destructive power of the despair of a population left without work and without bread. Let us leave those in power to their sinister machinations. Let us act to forestall those scenes of mourning and bloodshed which would, this time, mark the fall of the Republic and the ruin of the homeland.

There must be but a single class remaining in France. We have long hoped that this ultimate union would be forged upon the altar of Labor. Since destiny has not willed it so, we resign ourselves to awaiting the promised times. Yet, in the name of humanity, let this union be forged, starting today, upon the altar of Compassion!

Greetings and Fraternity.

P.-J. PROUDHON, A. DARIMON, J.-A. LANGLOIS, PH. FAURE, L. VASBENTER, G. DUCHÊNE, ARNOULD FRÉMY, TAXILE DELORD, L. MÉNARD, A. CRÉTIN, CH. CHEVÉ, A. MADIER DE MONTJAU senior, attorney for *Le Peuple*.

(No. 124 — March 23, 1849)

Le Peuple was seized this morning, by virtue of the law of 1819, at the post office, on the boulevards, along the quays, in public squares and within our own offices. A swarm of agents and commissioners pursued and hunted down this incendiary sheet everywhere. Yet, despite the police's efforts, 45,000 copies — 45,000 bundles of matches! — managed to be distributed and reach their intended destinations.

To tell the truth, we fully expected this seizure. Would men who do not shrink from violating the Constitution really shrink from an arbitrary seizure? Where, pray tell, is the law that forbids one from anticipating, eight days in advance, the possibility of a constitutional violation, and from determining the means, should the need arise, to organize not a revolt, but legal resistance? Where is the moral code that authorizes the prosecution of a journalist for having merely paraphrased the declaration of three hundred and fifty-nine representatives?

But is it really a question, with M. Faucher, of legality or morality? It is the ministerial portfolio that is at stake; it is the ten-year presidency; it is the *bancocratic* and Malthusian Republic! What is the Constitution? What is the law? What is order itself, when weighed against such grave interests?...

Certainly, we can appreciate that it is difficult for these gentlemen to govern alongside a press such as ours; and yet, they are only at the beginning of their tribulations: we fully intend to teach them that it is even less pleasant to have to contend with us in court. Do they, then, take us for desperate men staking their all on the chance of a riot?... Do they believe that we act toward them in this manner without the slightest reflection, and out of sheer temperament? Poor M. Barrot!

Go ahead. You may have us fined and sent to prison; but once you have rid yourselves of us, once you have crushed *Le Peuple* beneath the weight of a hundred convictions, you yourselves will be lost. Through our defense arguments, the country will have learned the true nature of republican public right — of which you do not even know the first word: our death will mark the beginning of your torment and our vengeance!

(No. 124 — March 23, 1849)

The importance of the matters we had to address yesterday left us no time to correct the assessment made by our Bourges correspondent regarding the testimony of the Honorable M. Ledru-Rollin. We now take this opportunity to rectify whatever may have been erroneous in that judgment.

It is not accurate to state, as our correspondent does, that M. Ledru-Rollin *associated himself with the calamitous measure of the forty-five centimes*. On the contrary, it is an established fact, confirmed both by the official minutes of the Provisional Government's sessions and by the highly explicit admission made from the rostrum by M. Garnier-Pagès, that M. Ledru-Rollin opposed with all his might this increase in

direct taxation, a measure destined to rouse the entire rural population and become a source of animosity toward the Republic.

Had the correspondent who wrote to us attended the recent sessions of the National Assembly, as we did, he would have learned at the same time as we did the true origin of those unfortunate 45 centimes. Thus, the alleged role M. Ledru-Rollin played in the 45-centime tax serves as just as poor an argument for his *belief in the virtue of capital* as the magnificent speech he delivered at the Rue Martel hall might serve as an argument for his opposition to the socialist democracy.

As for the order issued by M. Ledru-Rollin on April 16, the call to arms, an order that has been the subject of so much recrimination, we declare today, in all conscience, having heard the various accounts of that day of dupes, that, in our opinion, M. Ledru-Rollin took the only course of action possible at the time; and that, however regrettable the outcome may have been, he fulfilled an imperative duty.

When, then, shall we judge political acts solely from the standpoint of principles, the only legitimate guides for a statesman, rather than in hindsight and from the standpoint of success, which is always uncertain and often immoral? Must we — we republicans — perpetually reason about the incidents of the Revolution just as our most ardent slanderers would?

If, on May 15th, the dissolution of the Assembly been upheld, Barbès, simply for having gone to the Hôtel de Ville, despite being opposed to the dissolution itself, would have been proclaimed the savior of order and of the nation. Faced with anarchy, Barbès believed it was his duty to throw himself into the movement, the better to guide it. Barbès acted as a magnanimous citizen. And yet, Barbès is in prison; he stands accused of having conspired against universal suffrage, violated the National Assembly and attempted to alter the form of government. It is not the morality of his action that condemns Barbès: it is the outcome!

If, on February 24th, the insurrection been defeated, M. Guizot, triumphant, could have had Messrs. Barrot, Crémieux, Lamartine and Ledru-Rollin — indeed, all those who had instigated the banquet of February 22nd or who had attended it — sentenced to penal transportation. Yet Messrs. Barrot and his associates were merely exercising a right and fulfilling a duty, a fact acknowledged by everyone from February 24th until March 20th, 1849. Must we, then, be forced to say once again that what rendered the opposition of Messrs. Barrot and Ledru-Rollin morally justifiable was not the violation of the law, but rather the triumph of the insurrection?...

On April 16th, we were in constant attendance at the Club of the Revolution. There, from the early morning hours until four in the afternoon, the most confused and contradictory rumors circulated ceaselessly. On one side, it was said that the Legitimists were conspiring; on the other, that a club — I know not which one — was marching on the Hôtel de Ville. Meanwhile, the workers' guilds were gathering at the Champ de Mars, and accusations were being leveled — for accusations are always being leveled — accusing Albert and Louis Blanc of plotting a purge of the Provisional Government. A delegation from the Club of the Revolution went to offer the club's

assistance at the Hôtel de Ville. Barbès himself stood ready to march with his legion against the enemies of the government, whoever they might be.

Confusion reigned everywhere: in the city, in the clubs, within the police force, and at the seat of power. The actual peril, of which we have since acquired the firm conviction, arising from specific parties or individuals, was nil. What lent gravity to the situation was a general state of agitation, which, mounting minute by minute, threatened to escalate into a genuine panic and set the entire city ablaze. We have since witnessed, during the June Days, a stark illustration of the power that the mere perception of an imaginary danger can wield within a great capital: the notion that insurgents were looting, killing, raping, and putting everything to fire and sword was, in itself, the sole cause of the nocturnal fusillades and the mass executions of prisoners. The panic of June provided us with the key to understanding the infamous September massacres.

It was to a danger of precisely this nature that Paris stood exposed on April 16th; this was the sole peril that required averting. And — we do not hesitate to assert this — unless one contends that the proper conduct of a statesman should mirror that of a conspirator, M. Ledru-Rollin, by making the call to arms, did the only thing that prudence then dictated. To save a people from panic, from something even more horrific than civil war, the only recourse is to issue a general call for aid, summoning everyone to the rescue. When every citizen stands on one side, there can be no one left to stand on the other; calm is then reborn from this universal convergence, and order is restored without conflict and without violence.

Thus, on April 16th, Paris was saved, not from the Legitimists, who were careful not to show their faces just yet; nor from Blanqui, nor from Louis Blanc, nor from anyone else in the world. Paris was saved, by the beat of a drum, from its own anxiety; and for this, the entire credit belongs to M. Ledru-Rollin. The honest moderates, who ceaselessly accuse this powerful revolutionary, ought not to have forgotten him so soon.

We know — alas! — and we were among the first to deplore it, that on April 16th, the first blow was struck against the Revolution. It was to the cry of “*Down with the communists!*” — suddenly raised amidst the general anxiety and soon propagated by malice — that the National Guard rallied and the legions issued their challenge. Was it not inevitable that someone had to personify the danger, a danger that no one could actually see, and that, since men were gathering under arms, an enemy had to be found somewhere? Thus, they fell upon the communists!... The communists! That was the name given to the *brigands* of 1848. It was in communism that the Revolution suffered its first injury, and that the era of persecution began for the democratic and social Republic. But who, at that moment, could possibly have foreseen it? And what could the Minister of the Interior have done to prevent it? I put this question to any man of good faith.

Democrats, let us for once learn to discipline ourselves, to undertake nothing without one another, and never to take any initiative without prior consultation and full transparency. April, May and June stand as monuments to our defeats, for they

were the periods of our indiscipline. Must we, for the sake of sterile regrets and fleeting impressions gathered in the courtroom, remain suspicious of one another, always ready to denounce and proscribe our own kind? The circumstances are graver than ever; more than ever, we stand in need of order and unity. Let us finally learn to stifle our grudges and to exercise vigilance over our judgments. If not out of a spirit of fraternity, then let it be, at the very least, out of prudence.

In this regard, allow us to express here our desire to see — soon, and face to face with the enemy — all shades of the Republican party unite and labor, in common accord, toward the defense of the Constitution and the fulfillment of our homeland's destiny. If, through our humble labors, our persevering efforts, and our untiring devotion, we have rendered any service to the cause of liberty, the sweetest reward we could hope to receive would be to see the sincere and selfless wish we express at this moment taken into consideration.

(No. 125 — March 24, 1849.)

Paris, March 23.

APOSTATES AND JESUITS

An immense yellow poster, bearing the title: CANDIDACY OF THE CITIZEN PROUDHON, and addressed to *Catholic voters*, covered the walls of the capital this morning. The day before, it had already been distributed to all the newspapers.

It was, in the form of a profession of faith, a politico-theological dissertation on *Apostasy*, its various forms and the penalties pronounced against it by the Church and, in certain cases, by civil laws.

The whole thing was signed: J.-P. PROUDHON.

What did this poster signify? What, then, is there in common between Citizen Proudhon and apostasy — of whatever kind, be it political or Catholic? To what end, and with what purpose, was this strange rhapsody produced, in which mention is made of Pliny, Hobbes, Saint Augustine, the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the American republics and lying to the Holy Spirit? No one understood a thing; no one, unless I were to explain it myself, would know what it meant.

The one thing that seemed clear to everyone was that the signatory — the presumed publisher of the piece — was mad; or else that an enemy had uncovered this sin of youth committed by the all-too-famous socialist, and was hurling it in his face like a shovelful of filth, daring him to respond. The editors of *Le Peuple*, unable, in my absence, to see anything in all this but a malicious slander, immediately declared *that I was entirely unconnected to the poster in question, and that I would take legal action against its author and publisher.*

I thank my excellent colleagues for the high opinion they held of me. Fortunately, I have no more to defend than to disavow, as will soon become apparent:

In 1839, I contributed a series of articles to the *Encyclopédie catholique*, published by M. Parent-Desbarres — articles for which, incidentally, I was never paid — including

Apostasie, *Apocalypse* and several others beginning with the letter A. The celebrated Abbé Bergier — my compatriot, author of the *Traité de la vraie religion* and the *Dictionnaire de théologie*, and the most learned Christian apologist of the eighteenth century — did not disdain, in the interest of religion, to contribute to the famous *Encyclopédie* in collaboration with Diderot, d'Alembert, Voltaire, Helvétius and J.-J. Rousseau. Surely I, a humble figure, could, in the interest of philosophy, contribute to M. Parent-Desbarres's *Encyclopédie catholique* in collaboration with the Abbé Glaire, Professor of Hebrew at the Sorbonne. Having been assigned the article on *Apostasie*, I penned—addressing certain highly prominent figures of the day, most of whom are still living—the short pamphlet that follows:

Excerpt from the ENCYCLOPÉDIE CATHOLIQUE:

APOSTASY. This term is ordinarily understood to mean the crime committed by one who abandons the true religion to embrace a false one.

From the very inception of Christianity, there were apostates: Pliny interrogated several of them; and he declares, in his letter to Trajan, that all he discovered through their confessions was that Christianity is merely an excess of superstition. This testimony from Pliny, so unequivocal and so impartial, serves as proof, in favor of the early Christians and the martyrs, that they were never accused of any crime other than their religion itself; and since Roman policy admitted all gods and all forms of worship, this testimony further strips the emperors of the sole pretext they might have used to justify their edicts of persecution, namely, the necessity of defending the State religion. Finally, what further attests to the purity of early Christianity is the eagerness with which apostates came forward to seek penance as soon as the storm had passed, and to be reconciled with the Church — conduct demonstrating that it was solely the fear of death, of torture or of the loss of property that had driven these cowardly and carnal souls to act and speak against their own consciences!

It is not uncommon today to hear the label *apostate* applied to those who switch from one political party to another: this breed far surpasses in malice the one of which we have just spoken; consequently, one sees it provoking general indignation against itself. In times past, Christians who had fallen sought to redeem the shame of their weakness through the care they lavished upon their more courageous brethren; they visited them in prison, tended to their wounds, and took charge of their families. The political apostate, however, will, if need be, call for the very death of those he once called his brothers. The Church, while forgiving its frail children, imposed upon them a long and severe penance; what punishment, then, would the treachery of these new Julians deserve? Let us refrain from passing judgment: their crime is so great in the eyes of men that vengeance for it belongs to God alone.

Hobbes, who placed the authority of the sovereign above that of religion, and who derived morality from the mere pleasure of the legislator; Hobbes, who

drafted the code of despotism, maintained that a Christian is bound in conscience to obey the laws of an infidel monarch, even in matters of religion, and consequently to deny Jesus Christ with his words, provided that he preserves the faith within his heart. In that case, he argued, it is not the subject who denies Jesus Christ, but the king and the government. A subtle distinction which, by separating, within the same individual, the Christian from the citizen, furnishes the coward and the ambitious man with an easy justification against the branding reproach of apostasy.

This sophistical doctrine, profound as it may be in its execrable perversity, has been far surpassed by the theories of the nineteenth century. Hobbes's argument would appear pitiful today, and we doubt that anyone would be ill-advised enough to employ it. The genius of the apostates has doubled their means of defense.

"I am reproached," says Serapius, "with no fewer than six acts of apostasy: what does this signify? Different and hostile factions have, in turn, wrested power from one another; under each of them, I have served my country as a good and worthy citizen. The head of the government has changed, yet I have remained faithful to my country. Men and things, everything has revolved around me; I, however, have remained motionless. Was I to desert my post simply because ephemeral systems swept past like a storm? And was I to place men above the State?"

"As for me," said Protagoras, swept up by the ardor of youth, "I had the misfortune to associate myself with desolate doctrines: the son of Monica, too, was once a Manichaeon! I may well have erred in the past during my fervent search for truth; but, thank Heaven, I embraced it the moment it revealed itself to me. I surrendered my life and my reputation to the fury of slanderers in order to obey my conscience, preferring peace with myself to the adulation of a blind and fanatical faction. And since when has it been a crime for an honest, sincere and candid man to abandon a pernicious error simply because he once publicly professed it? Is a momentary adherence to false systems to forever bar the way back to sound doctrines? Who are these men who forbid the sinner from repenting, or the fallen from rising again?"

Thus it is that the informer, the ingrate and the turncoat, having received the price of their infamy, still attempt to cloak it in the noble names of patriotism and good faith; or, to borrow the language of the Church, they seek to lie to the Holy Spirit after having deceived men through perjury. As a sufficient response, one need only demonstrate that they are shifting the ground of the argument, and prove to them that their lofty maxims do not, in fact, apply to them. As for Hobbes's argument, let us simply say that it stands in direct opposition to the words of the Gospel: "*Whoever is ashamed of me before men, I will be ashamed of him before my father.*" The love of God, fidelity to the law, respect for justice and the practice of the fundamental virtues cannot compromise with human respect or the fear of the world's potentates.

God demands more than mere interior adoration. He also desires public praise and proclamation, without which religious instruction would soon cease and religion itself would perish. Now, every Christian preaches and teaches whenever he makes a public profession of the Gospel.

The ancients distinguished three types of apostasy:

1. *A supererogatione*: that of the priest or religious who reverts to the lay state. It is termed *supererogation* because it adds the sin of sacrilege to the other two categories;

2. *A mandatis Dei*: that committed by anyone who violates the Law of God, to which he otherwise adheres, while nonetheless retaining his faith;

3. *A fide*: this constitutes a total defection from Christianity; in times past, it was subject to the punitive force of the civil laws. Several edicts and declarations promulgated during the reign of Louis XIV prescribed specific penalties for any Catholic who embraced the Reformed faith: namely, the *amende honorable* (a public act of atonement), perpetual banishment and the confiscation of all property. Without claiming to fully justify the utility and appropriateness of these laws, we shall merely observe that they fell within the State's prerogative, just as did those laws by which the ancients expelled the impious and the sacrilegious from their territory and punished them with death. Even today, a man who openly professed atheism would not be admitted into any of the republics that constitute the United States of America."

This is what the gentlemen of the police, acting in concert with the Jesuits, have contrived to place, in the form of a colossal poster, right before the eyes of the voters during my candidacy!

Indeed, if there is any page I dare boast of having written, it is, without a doubt, the very passage I have just cited, a passage of which I had entirely lost all memory. You Tartuffes, I thank you! More than once, especially since the events of February, I have found myself playing the prophet; yet I was unaware that the exercise of this marvelous faculty within me dated back as far as 1839: you have served to remind me of it. However, you are much like foxes, creatures whom poets have adopted as the symbol of cunning, yet whom every hunter knows to be the most foolish of all animals.

Can you conceive of such imbeciles? They go and unearth, as if it were damning evidence against me, this very article from the *Encyclopédie catholique* in which, while discussing the early Christians, I prophetically depict the persecuted socialists; in which I establish their innocence; in which I expose those apostates of the Republic, men who, the better to conceal their own crimes, clamor for *the death of their brethren*; in which, under the names of *Serapius* and *Protagoras*, I consign to utter contempt both the politician, a traitor to every government, and the philosopher, a traitor to every doctrine! SERAPIUS and PROTAGORAS! They actually mistook these two characters for two Greek authors!...

And when, adhering to the requirements of my subject, — do not forget, I beg you, that I was writing for the *Catholic Encyclopedia* — after having defined, in accordance

with the theologians, the three principal types of apostasy, and having noted that the last of these was formerly subject to the vindication of the civil laws, I terminated without further conclusion, “Without claiming to fully justify the utility and appropriateness of these laws, we shall merely observe that they fell within the State’s prerogative, just as did those laws by which the ancients expelled the impious and the sacrilegious from their territory and punished them with death;” — who cannot see that I am thereby drawing a complete distinction between ancient society, where atheism was deemed a political crime, and modern society, where the liberty and equality of religious faiths preclude the very idea of a law of proscription against religious indifference; where, to borrow the phrase of M. Odilon Barrot, the law itself is atheistic?...

And this is what the Basils of the reaction have trumpeted to all of France! This is what threw Paris into an uproar last May, as if it was a question of a call to arms! Behold the great apostasy of the citizen PROUDHON!...

Ah, you petty theologians of slander! It is of you that the Scripture truly speaks: Slander always ends by accusing itself — *mentita est iniquitas sibi!*

(No. 127 — March 26, 1849)

REPUBLICAN RIGHT

In presenting a bill against political clubs, M. Léon Faucher unwittingly raised one of the gravest questions of republican right: the question of legal resistance.

Legal resistance: this phrase was a lie under the monarchy; it becomes a truth with the Republic.

Under the monarchy, any violation of the constitutional compact inevitably led to armed insurrection, to citizens slaughtering one another. Under the monarchy, even a representative one, the people did not possess sovereignty; they always found themselves facing and, in some sense, beneath a sovereign by divine right, whose name was *the king*. The people could resist this sovereign only by breaking him — and that is precisely what they were invariably compelled to do, sooner or later.

Under the Republic, conversely, since all authority emanates from the people, the people alone are the masters. If, by the very nature of things, a government still exists, that government, by virtue of its elective origin and the nature of its mandate, remains perpetually subordinate to the people. It is nothing more than their servant, charged with safeguarding their liberties. If the people are ill-served, they simply replace their servants. To accomplish this, there is no need for gunfire; legal resistance suffices.

Under the Republic, the legislative branch acts as the natural overseer and auditor of the executive branch. Should the latter violate the Constitution, it falls to the former to outlaw it and to suppress its acts of treason.

Such must be the nature of democracy. If it fails to be this, it is nothing at all. It is not a reality; it is a mere word, a lie.

Thus, the Constituent Assembly was not at liberty to infringe upon the liberty of the citizens, that is to say, among other liberties, the right of assembly, the right of association and the right of free discussion. Had the Constitution not formally recognized these rights, it would not have been valid.

Today, when the Constitution has been voted upon, and accepted by the citizens on the condition that it be open to revision after three years, the National Assembly is bound not only to itself but also to the people. For the current Assembly, just as for the next, to violate the Constitution is to abdicate its authority. To violate the Constitution is to return the full and complete governance of France to the people. Article 5 of the Constitution is explicit in this regard: *The National Assembly*, states this article, *entrusts the safekeeping of the present Constitution AND OF THE RIGHTS IT CONSECRATES to the guardianship and patriotism of ALL French citizens.*

Under the monarchy, a similar article inserted into the Charter would have enshrined the right of insurrection; under the Republic, it enshrines the right of legal resistance.

Legal resistance, that is to say, the maintenance, defense, and preservation of the Constitution and *of the rights it enshrines*. Three days ago, we explained how we understood this resistance; we reiterated this two days ago. If we did not repeat it yesterday, it was because, at that moment, the National Assembly appeared to us to have returned to a more constitutional frame of mind. But should it revert tomorrow to a violation of right, then tomorrow we shall raise the issue once again.

The people, moreover, have grasped this issue with admirable instinct, and by the people we mean not only those who desire the upholding of right, but also those senseless and blind individuals who seek its violation without giving a thought to the future. Even the ministers themselves have fully grasped the power of the measures we have proposed.

Yes, the people have understood us; and if, for the past two days, Paris has not been covered in barricades, if the precious blood of citizens has not been spilled, if shops remain open and if commerce fares no worse than it did a week ago, it is to the possibility of legal resistance that we owe it all.

Yes, the authorities have understood us. Faced with the prospect of a dearly bought victory and trusting in the brute force of cannons and bayonets, they could have risked a battle against citizens armed in defense of their rights. Yet, their bellicose impulses vanish in the face of the threat of a refusal to pay taxes. The authorities are compelled to respect the Constitution.

Let us assume that only 500,000 citizens engage in this legal resistance. What power do the authorities hold against them? To keep them imprisoned, they would require more than 500,000 gendarmes. And with what funds would they pay them?

We speak of 500,000 citizens, but that is an *exaggerated* figure: the true number is 2, 3, 4 or 5 million. The peasant, who knows the government only through taxation, would be the first to resist; he, who rose up in revolt against the 45 centimes.

Thus, the power is disarmed whenever it violates the Constitution; the power is forced to yield. — No more blood shed in defense of right! Such are the blessings of the Democratic Republic!

Such is republican right, which guarantees the liberty of minorities just as it does that of majorities.

The so-called conservatives of the National Assembly, by the manner in which they interpret the democratic principle, are leading us toward the most monstrous and dangerous consequences. They understand universal suffrage just as our forefathers of 1789 and 1793 understood it. For them, there is but one principle: the omnipotence of majorities; for them, once the elections are concluded, the minority is placed outside the law, outside the Constitution, outside of democracy itself!

Such is the system expounded just yesterday by *Le Constitutionnel*. Sovereignty, according to this supposedly conservative newspaper, resides entirely within the majority, whether it be a majority of citizens or a majority of representatives.

If this is indeed the case, then what is the use of a Constitution? Is not the representative majority always present, with all its omnipotence?

If majorities are omnipotent, then they are at liberty, whenever they so choose, to violate the Constitution; they are at liberty, whenever they so choose, to abolish the rights of minorities; they are at liberty, whenever they so choose, to suspend the liberty of minorities; they are at liberty—whenever they so choose—to deny minorities the right to a jury trial; they are at liberty, whenever they so choose, to deport minorities *en masse*. It is open to them, whenever they wish, to eliminate minorities by means of the guillotine.

Le Constitutionnel has said it: Sovereignty, omnipotence, resides solely in the majority.

Why, then, do *Le Constitutionnel* and all newspapers of its ilk rail daily against the Convention? Was the Convention not the product of universal suffrage? Was the Convention not the body elected by the majority of French citizens? Was the Convention not omnipotent? Did the Convention not possess the right to imprison, to mow down with grapeshot, to guillotine?

Ah! Indeed, when we thus demonstrate the monstrous consequences of the system advocated by *Le Constitutionnel*, we are far from disavowing the tradition of the men of '93; yet, while we are their successors, we are not their copyists.

Eighteen centuries ago, the Revolution was called Christianity; as successors to the Revolution, we are not Christians in the manner of Minister Falloux.

Four hundred years ago, the Revolution was called Protestantism; as successors to the Revolution, we are not Protestants in the manner of Pastor Coquerel.

A century ago, the Revolution was called democracy, and it signified the rule of majorities over minorities; as successors to the Revolution, we are not democrats in the manner of Minister Barrot.

We are not copyists; we are successors, that is to say, men of progress. We embrace tradition, but we do not merely reenact it! In 1793, it was in the very nature of things that democracy should be misunderstood. The despotism of commoners and plebeians

was required to vanquish the tyranny of kings and nobles. Yet this system, an instrument of progress, could not endure. And that is why the Republic of '92 was followed by the Empire of 1804 and the Restoration of 1815.

Today, different times, a different system. The Republic means liberty: liberty for minorities just as much as for majorities. And that is why we, republicans heart and soul; we who do not wish to return, through bloodshed, to a fourth Restoration only to arrive, once again through bloodshed, at a third Republic; we who seek to spare France another century of civil wars; we cry out with all the energy of our conviction: No, it is not true that the majority is omnipotent; yes, the Constitution is a sacred pact, not merely between the National Assembly and the French people, but also, and above all, between the majority and the minority.

What we assert here is not true solely under the Republic; it holds true under all forms of government.

The day when majority and minority no longer exist, the day when there are no longer any parties, the day when there is a unity of wills, a unanimity of citizens — on that day, one might decree: The Constitution being useless, the Constitution is cast into the fire. — But, alas! We are not there yet. And that is why we still protest in advance against any violation of the social pact; why, in such a case, we were right to say: Legal resistance is the right and duty of minorities; why we reject with horror that appalling principle of *Le Constitutionnel*: the omnipotence of majorities.

The omnipotence of majorities! — This is not merely something horrible; it is also something absurd and impossible. Who, then, would dare claim today that there exists a compact, indissoluble majority? Who would dare say that, were the minority to be eliminated tomorrow, the majority would not itself splinter? Who would dare give the lie to history?

The omnipotence of majorities! — Yet it is through this very system that the Girondins killed the Royalists, the Dantonists killed the Girondins, the Montagnards killed the Dantonists, and the Thermidorians killed the Montagnards.

The omnipotence of majorities! — It is the decimation of the citizens. With this system, one goes far, very far indeed! With this system, one begins with the imprisonment of citizens and ends with the guillotine in permanent session. Let no one object by citing the mildness of modern mores: the most peaceful of peoples, once hatred has taken root in its heart, becomes a people of cannibals.

Will the bourgeoisie, so liberal in its leanings, finally grasp that it is being led toward the worst of all monarchies: the monarchy of the executioner? Will they wait until then to align themselves with the movement for a democratic and social republic, which ALONE, both politically and economically, safeguards the liberty of all, without sacrificing anything to order, which is, after all, merely the preservation of all liberties?

SPEECH OF PROUDHON BEFORE THE COURT OF ASSIZES (1).

The citizen Proudhon. — Citizen jurors, you have heard the accusation; you will evaluate the defense. You will judge the good faith of the first; allow me to begin by expressing gratitude for the devotion of the second. The Advocate General made a mistake just now when he believed that if I was not speaking after him, it was because I had in reserve a few arguments that I wanted to present to you in all their freshness, without allowing him to answer them. I repeat, the Citizen Advocate-General was mistaken; I have nothing to say to you regarding the accusation and I have nothing to add to the defense; I have only to tell you about the origin of this lawsuit.

Either I am very mistaken, or you have already understood, listening to these long developments, that I sought this trial. I desired it, in order to establish a great principle of our new republican right.

I am charged today with four crimes; because I am myself more severe than the public prosecutor, than the Penal code: the acts for which I am reproached are in my eyes as many crimes.

I am accused, they say, of having incited hatred and contempt for the government of the Republic. Now, I ask you, is this possible for a republican like me, a republican, as you know, of the most pronounced hue? (Prolonged movement.)

I am accused of attacking the Constitution; here, the same observation occurs; I wanted to demonstrate the rights of the president, to show, in all its truth, the mechanism of the republican Constitution. But, because it happens that the Constitution, in its mechanism, is not as favorable to the claims of the first magistrate of the Republic as several of the authors of this Constitution had believed at first, as the ministers currently in charge of the government of the Republic had hoped, I am, as a result, accused of having attacked the Constitution. However, I only interpreted it differently from them.

As you have seen, the accusation was nothing more than a refutation of my opinion; but it could not establish that my opinion was in any way incriminable, much less that it was false.

I come to the third offense, that of attacking the right and the authority that the President of the Republic derives from the Constitution.

Again, what have I done? I stated the limit of the rights of the president; I will presently show you that this limit has not been well understood.

I wanted, on the occasion of a solemn debate, to establish the limit of the right of the president. From this limit flows first the responsibility of the President, and from this responsibility his subordination to the orders, to the will of the National Assembly.

As for the fourth offense—incitement to hatred and contempt of citizens against each other—in what sense am I guilty? I have spoken of the royalists, absolutists, imperialists, Jesuits, bankocrats, Malthusians; since when do the Jesuits, the imperialists, the royalists form recognized classes of citizens! Do they have a legal existence!

It would seem, if you will allow me this comparison, that I am the most skillful of hunters. Thus I would have lured the government, the public prosecutor into a trap; I would have caused the latter to bring against me charges that are not only unjust, but also ridiculous and absurd, which I would deplore if they did not to serve the strengthening of the Republic. No, I wasn't that clever; I did not want to lure either the President of the Republic or the public prosecutor into any trap; I just wanted to see how vulnerable and attackable they were, and I am glad that I did; and you will see that there is a long premeditation on my part.

I am accused here, not of an attack on the Constitution — such an attack would not be understood — but of having infringed on the rights of the president, these rights that we find too restricted and that we would like to make sovereign.

I am then accused of inciting the citizens to hatred of one another. If I wanted to recriminate, I would refer that accusation to the ministry. In fact, read the *Moniteur*: there is not a day when I am not singled out for the hatred of the citizens; there is not a day when I am not named there as the most dangerous of men. No, gentlemen, I am not such a dangerous man; what is pursued in me is socialism, it is the man who said: Property is theft; the man who blasphemed the divinity, who knows? Well, that man, here he is at last! Here we have him. (Movement.)

How will he extricate himself from this quadruple accusation with which he is hemmed in! But these four crimes, I did not commit them. You have been told, it has been proven to you just now. It is only socialism that is on trial, so I must tell you what socialism is.

The citizen President. — But it is not about socialism; socialism is not in question. You are not accused as a socialist; confine yourself to the facts of the case.

The citizen Proudhon. — Thank you, Citizen President, for your kind observation. But I wanted to say, without the troublesome celebrity that has been made for me, I would not be here; and since people have been asking for so long what socialism is, I will tell them.

Socialism is the doctrine of synthesis, of universal conciliation; what socialism attacks is universal antagonism. Socialism claims that peace can only be established by identifying the contrary terms; workers and capitalists, producers and consumers must be identified as the electors and those eligible were identified by the February revolution; we claim, I repeat, that the contrary terms must be identified; this is socialism.

To get closer to the question, allow me to talk to you about the Constitution.

We said that in the Constitution one should not pronounce the incompatibility between the mandate of representative and the quality of civil servant; it has been claimed that, in the present state of things, this incompatibility was necessary, in order to establish a profound distinction between the executive power and the legislative power.

According to socialism, the executive power and the legislative power should not be separated: the principles, according to us, are not separable into two parts; rightly or wrongly, we regard this distinction as the infallible cause of a near or distant

catastrophe. Convinced of these principles, we believe that the Assembly took a wrong turn when it created the distinction that we were combating.

I wanted to demonstrate to the country that this distinction, this mutual independence of the two powers would lead to a catastrophe, to an inevitable collision. The government itself gives me the opportunity; I must have struck hard, but it was through dialectical force that I struck. — I succeeded; I have awakened the attention of the National Assembly; the articles of January 26 and 27, which the prosecution deems criminal, are not the only ones in which I have dealt with this question; on January 29, I published another one that was not prosecuted.

After I had thus posed the question, after I had pointed out the germ of conflicts in government, if the public prosecutor had been as skillful in exonerating as he was in accusing, he would have read the article of January 29.

I ask permission to read it, it will be my whole defense; you will see there that the Assembly, after having established the distinction between the two powers, was led to destroy the coexistence and the equality of these powers; what it has made on one side, it has destroyed on the other. Here is that article:

“I am accused by the public prosecutor:

“1. Of excitation of contempt and hatred for the government of the Republic;

“2. Of attack against the Constitution;

“3. Of attack against the rights and authority that the President of the Republic derives from the Constitution;

“Of having sought to disturb the public peace by arousing the contempt and hatred of the citizens against one another.

“All this because, in the trial currently pending before the National Assembly between the Revolution and the counter-revolution, I have taken it into my head to call into question the current President of the Republic, in whose name and for whose benefit, in my opinion, the reactionary web is woven.

“While waiting for me to provide further explanations before whom it may concern, I beg my honorable colleagues of the National Assembly to weigh in their wisdom and to appreciate in the secrecy of their conscience what I am about to say to them:

“It is not socialism that I am engaged in at the moment, it is politics, the oldest and most trivial politics. Must it be me, a man of yesterday, who shows a thing or two to the masters?...

“We said it on the rostrum, the minister admits it, everyone repeats it:

“The principle of the Râteau proposal is that the majority, if not almost all of the representatives, having declared themselves against the candidacy of Louis Bonaparte, the National Assembly is necessarily hostile to the president; that thus the progress of the government is impeded, policy uncertain, the return to confidence impossible; that consequently, before the magnificent gift that universal suffrage has given it, the duty of the Assembly is to dissolve itself.

“In a word, it is on the real or presumed existence of a conflict or discord between the Assembly and the President of the Republic that the request presented by the Honorable M. Rateau and by the Ministry is based.

“It is therefore a question, in order to appreciate Citizen Rateau's proposal, of knowing whether, constitutionally, the question of the possibility of a conflict between the National Assembly and the President of the Republic can be posed. Because it is clear that the Rateau proposal was, in principle, its motives and its object, unconstitutional; if by itself it involved a violation of the Constitution, it would not be necessary to examine it, it should be dismissed by the previous question.

“To solve this problem, the only course to follow is to examine the respective role and the reciprocal relations of the Assembly and the President; in other words, it is to analyze, from the point of view of the Rateau proposition, the Constitution.

“Let the reader grant me five minutes of patience; I will be categorical and brief.

“However, it results from Articles 33, 35, 36, 45, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 53, 54, 55, 59, 65, 68, 72, 74, 75 of the Constitution, that the President of the Republic, inferior in dignity to the National Assembly, is still only the organ of the Assembly, the subordinate of the Assembly, the justiciable of the Assembly.

“From which it follows that the National Assembly and the President of the Republic do not form, as has been believed, and as some claim, two equal powers, but a single power, of which the Assembly is the head and the president the arm; that the privilege of popular election, conferred on the president by article 43 of the Constitution, constitutes for him only a purely honorary distinction, and that thus the hypothesis of a conflict between the Legislative Body and the head of the executive power, contradictory in its terms, could not constitutionally be admitted.

“There may be disobedience by the President of the Republic with regard to the National Assembly; it is repugnant to the text and the spirit of the Constitution that there be no conflict between them in any case. To claim the contrary is already to misunderstand, I almost said it is to violate the Constitution.

“I say first that the President of the Republic is inferior to the National Assembly. In effect :

“The Assembly can never be elected except by the people. — The President may, in certain cases, be appointed by the Assembly (Art. 47).

“The National Assembly verifies its powers itself. — It is the Assembly that decides on the validity of the election of the president. (Ibid.)

“The representatives of the people cannot receive an imperative mandate; they legislate in the fullness of their spontaneity and their initiative. — The president can only obey the decrees of the Assembly, which he is enjoined to promulgate within one month, and, if there is urgency, within three days (Art. 57).

“The representatives of the people are inviolable. They cannot be investigated, accused, nor judged, at any time, for the opinions that they have expressed in the bosom of the National Assembly. (Art. 36). That is to say that for all the opinions they may express, for all the acts they may produce in the exercise of their mandate, they

are absolutely, and by right, irresponsible. — "The President of the Republic is responsible for all his acts as well as for all his speeches." (Art. 68.)

The Citizen President. — Citizen Proudhon, I am obliged to interrupt this reading; please, I repeat, confine yourself to the facts of the case; the January 29 article is irrelevant to the trial.

The Citizen Proudhon. — I will stop at the observation of the citizen president; my observations will be very short. I have been criticized for attacking the principle of the presidency; it is to this objection of the public prosecutor that I wanted to respond by reading this article.

What I wanted to establish is that the president, according to MM. Barrot, Faucher, Falloux, etc., is not the president according to the Constitution. Now I end with one word.

I desired this trial in a great republican interest. (Movement.) Ah! it is a singular thing to seek a trial at the end of which there may be from three months to five years' imprisonment, but you will appreciate, I hope, the true aim and utility of my conduct: what I wanted to bring is the discussion, it is the establishment, in practice, of the limit of the rights of the president.

"Tell your cousin," I said a few days after December 10 to one of the close relatives of the President of the Republic, "to take good care of one thing, which is the responsibility that weighs on him." What I said then, a month later I was called to put into action. Departmental policy, government protests forced the Republicans to protest; it was urgent to show what an unfortunate slope we were being led down.

Sworn citizens, I stand before you as guilty; but I am aware that I have done a good deed. I maintained right, I will always maintain it. There are men to whom it is enough to be born to in order become kings or presidents of Republic; I have worked for twelve years, and I come here to seek my reward. (Prolonged stir.)

(1) Hearing of March 28, 1849. Two articles by Proudhon were incriminated, one entitled "The War," the other "The President of the Republic is Responsible." Both were condemned, and Proudhon had, consequently, to undergo three years of prison and a fine of 3,000 francs.

(No. 196. — April 4, 1849.)

Citizen Proudhon has just addressed the following letter to the President of the National Assembly:

“Monsieur President,

“As a result of the legal proceedings instituted against me with the authorization of the National Assembly, the Court of Assizes of the Department of the Seine has just sentenced me to three years of imprisonment and a fine of 3,000 francs.

"I have just filed an appeal in cassation against this judgment.

“I know that every moment of my time belongs to the National Assembly. Being at liberty until the day the final judgment is rendered, I ought to devote the time remaining to me, pending the outcome of my appeal, to legislative duties.

“However, by authorizing proceedings against me, the National Assembly implicitly authorized me to take, from the time owed to my duties as a Representative, the leave necessary to prepare my defense as an accused man.

“I therefore request, M. President, that you kindly, in consideration of the considerable work required for the legal brief supporting my defense, request on my behalf a leave of absence of one month from the National Assembly.

“Greetings and Fraternity.

“PROUDHON.”

Working translations by Shawn P. Wilbur, last revised June 4, 2026.

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 prejudice 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.

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 95th; 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.

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!*

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.

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 proceeded 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.

(No. 176. — May 14, 1849.)

SOCIALISM JUDGED BY M. PROUDHON

To the Editor of the Journal des Débats.

Dear Editor,

I am addressing you as a colleague, I wish I could say as a friend.

You recently published two articles, one of *seven hundred* and the other *five hundred* lines, intended for socialism far more than for me, in which your readers could see that neither socialism nor I were at all flattered. — By virtue of the press laws that your employers have left us as sole souvenir, and the subsequent legal precedents, I might have the right to address you with a reply twice as long as your attack, which would amount to exactly *two thousand four hundred* lines in your newspaper, a pamphlet of about eighty pages...

Rest assured, however. I know the hardships of the profession too well to take revenge in this way for the minor infractions of a colleague; and I also respect criticism too much, its right to err and to mislead, to appeal to its judgments by such means. But what I cannot abide is its distortion or falsification of texts; it is that, when it holds in its hands the justification of an author, it lets it slip through its fingers like water. Such, M. Editor, is the sentiment that has prompted me to reply to you: allow me to presume enough of your fairness to believe that you will publish my response in your next issue.

Your latest article, the one that concerns me at the moment, is titled: *Socialism Judged by M. Proudhon*.

Now, it is clear from your correspondent's own words, as well as from the numerous passages he himself extracted from my pamphlets:

1. That I am not a communist;
2. That I reject the organization of society by the State;
3. That on every occasion I have defended the family;
4. That along with the family, I maintain the principle of heredity;
5. That I do not have the superstition of universal suffrage, any more than anyone else; that I want it to be enlightened, not arbitrary; thoughtful, not enthusiastic, such as, for example, has been done and is advocated by the organizers of the election of December 10;
6. Finally, that I protest against *humanism*, that is to say against the latest form of atheism formulated by the Hegelian extreme left.

This is what emerges from your correspondent's letter, what dominates all his criticism and what he, as a conscientious arbiter, should have shown first and foremost to your subscribers.

Well then! I ask you: Is there anything in all these proposals that shocks you? Isn't that the very foundation of all security? Something that cannot be called into question without denying humanity itself! Something you preach every day to your readers? Something you pretend to defend every morning against the socialists!

*Individual liberty,
Freedom of labor,
The family,
Heredity,
Education of universal suffrage,
The affirmation of Providence.*

This is what your correspondent has discovered as most salient in my books! This is what I have been fighting for against all odds for the past ten years that I have been involved in philosophy and political economy! In truth, M. Editor, seeing this strange way of refuting me, I thought that your correspondent was one of us, who had wanted, in the form of criticism, to slip an electoral advertisement into your paper for the candidates of the socialist democracy.

What! I, the most frightening of socialists; the one who inspires the most anxiety in the government, the most horror in *honest republicans*, and the most hatred in our good peasants, deceived by reports, I affirm, prior to any discussion, and as essential conditions of society, liberty, family, the Republic and Providence! Truly, you are either the most clumsy of enemies or the most cunning of all our coreligionists!

Yes, and I take note of your correspondent's testimony: despite the theoretical discussions that have taken place in certain schools concerning the community of labor and property, and state intervention in commerce and industry, the vast majority of socialists, especially the most enlightened segment, think exactly as I do on all these fundamental questions. There is no one among us who dreams of abolishing liberty and the family, who denies the inherent, incorruptible, and providential reason of societies. On all these points, and on their consequences, we are all in agreement. Speculative minds can indulge their fantasies as much as they like; in short, and in practice, we remain in the communion of the human race: we have, thus far, no adversary in the world.

How many questions would become clearer, and how many sterile struggles would be spared, if all of us, innovators and critics, sought the truth in good faith!

What then is socialism, since it affirms everything that the world recognizes: liberty, family, the sovereignty of the people, Providence!

This is what your correspondent replied to again, but in a way that no one could understand. He is one of those people who would believe they were betraying the truth if they seriously said something serious.

I said somewhere that socialism was a *protest*. In expressing myself in this way about socialism, I meant to value it, not to define it. Your critic, finding this appreciation petty, seized upon it as a condemnation and, without further examination, proceeded to ridicule both protestants and protest.

Is it you, then, M. Editor, who should be reminded that progress for liberty consists only in constantly destroying the obstacles that, under the name of institutions and laws, liberty ceaselessly creates for itself, so that half of our existence is spent protesting against the other half? Is it you who should be told that everything in society is fluid and transient; that such an institution, liberal at its inception, becomes,

over time, an obstacle to liberty; that what is reality for us today will be nothing but a utopia tomorrow?

Thus, for 4,000 years, society has successively abolished, and continues to abolish, the utopia of castes, the utopia of slavery, the despotic utopia, the theocratic utopia, the feudal utopia, the constitutional utopia, and so on. Are we not witnessing, at this very moment, the fall of that great utopia of modern times, which was meant to consolidate kingdoms and empires forever: the HOLY ALLIANCE! What a chain of destruction! What a series of societal protests against itself! What a philosophy that, with the aid of metaphysics, political economy, and history, would theorize all these revolutions!... Well, M. Editor, this philosophy, whether you like it or not, is socialism. It was entirely up to you, since you honored me by quoting me, to find it fully formed in my work. But what! This crowd, of which you are the mouthpiece, is already as frivolous and blind as the eighteenth-century aristocracy was when the Revolution of 89 suddenly surprised it like a corsair! A bad omen, think about it!

Progress in society is nothing but a series of destructions. That is the first act of faith of socialism.

Now, how does society proceed with these successive negations? — By continually opposing official utopias, momentarily realized, with other utopias, most of them unrealizable, or realized only on a very limited scale. Such was the utopia of Pythagoras, and, after him, those of Lycurgus, Plato, the Essenes, Manichean, the Albigensians, Waldensians, Hussites, Anabaptists, Moravians, etc. Such were also the utopias of Campanella, Mores, Fénelon, Morelly and Babeuf. The effect of this opposition is to almost always lead society to a fusion, composition, synthesis or middle ground, which persists until freedom again deems it inconvenient and expels it in turn with the help of another utopia.

All this, M. Editor, is history, I would almost say fate; and you can already judge that, although it is very old in the world, socialism is nonetheless a very serious thing, and that to treat it lightly, there is, as M. Guizot would have said, *a serious wrong and a grave danger*.

And, to speak only of what concerns me, what did I think I would do with this *System of Contradictions* that your correspondent quotes in every sentence against socialists, but which he carefully avoids ever quoting against economists!

I wanted, by showing the march of liberty and its perpetual oscillations, to make society aware of its contradictions, that is to say, of its utopias. I wanted to make impossible in the future any governmental abuse, any democratic eccentricity, any doctrinal mystification; above all, I wanted to reveal the great elimination that is being prepared, which constitutes the entire meaning and value of the February Revolution. In short, I believed that by demonstrating the essential antagonism of our society, I was constructing the true philosophy of history. I put into this demonstration all the force of language and the energy of style I possessed, and now, for having proven my thesis too well, I am presented as both the despiser of Divinity and the opponent of humankind. I attack utopia, wherever and in whatever form I find it; and it is I who am burdened with the social contradictions. What in my book is addressed only to

systems, I am made to say to people; what I put in the mouths of utopians, which I defend and refute in turn, is attributed to me as the expression of my feelings! So that, in the end, I find myself to be all at once Gorgias the sophist, Protagoras the atheist, Diogenes the cynic and Timon the misanthrope.

Is this criticism? Is this good faith?...

Yes, I am a socialist, but a socialist with premeditation and awareness: a socialist not merely because I *protest* against the current social order, but because I *affirm* a new order, which, like everything that occurs in society, must result from the negation of a reality that has become a utopia. I am a socialist, that is to say, both a reformer and an innovator, a destroyer and an architect; for, in society, these terms, though opposed, are synonymous. *Destruam et aedificabo*; translate: I destroy, THUS I build: this proposition is the innermost thought of humanity itself. I am astonished that my critic, so eloquent on Hegel, has not understood it. The Latin conjunction *et* is taken here for *id est*, as frequently happens in the Bible, from which I took this epigraph, and as required by the principle of the identity of opposites, which forms the whole basis of Hegel's theory.

Thus, in order to understand the February Revolution and the social structure that it is to establish, I had to begin by reviewing all the utopias that have been prevalent in society until now. By their very nature, these utopias naturally fell into two main categories: one that seeks everything through the individual, which I have called *economism*; the other that seeks everything through society, which I call *socialism*, or more often *communism*.

I have demonstrated, to the best of my ability, that all these doctrines, equally exclusive, were equally impractical: citing as proof, against the former, the misery and revolutions they engender; against the latter, their radical inability to establish themselves. I have tried to refute them all, one after the other; I have affirmed that socialism, the speculative utopia, is only good as a protest, and for abolishing the official utopia; I have declared that, this abolition achieved, it was necessary to stop immediately and leave to liberty the care of proceeding further. I believed, for all this, that I had earned some right to the esteem and recognition of my contemporaries: I have thus far gained, thanks to the intelligence and good faith of critics, only the reputation of a Herostratus!...

What then, you might ask, is this new and definitive abolition that liberty must bring about? — For, after all, it is not enough to protest; one must arrive at an action, at a suppression first, and later at a creation! And since you do not recognize any practical value in the utopia of Saint-Simon, nor in that of Fourier, nor in that of Owen or Cabet, what existing utopia at least is there that these have as their common goal to dissolve?

That is what your correspondent would have told you, M. Editor, if he had been more concerned with making me known than with disfiguring me.

Could he have been unaware that our entire economic system rests on the hypothesis, the fiction, the utopia — whatever you prefer to call it — of the *productivity of capital*? That, by virtue of this hypothesis, created by law but which no legislative

power could today abolish, half of society's products, under the names of *rent, lease, rent, interest, profit, premium*, etc., constantly pass from the hands of the worker into those of the capitalist, who is supposed to produce, as Say said, by his instrument? That the sum of these levies amounts today, for the whole of France, according to some, to *four*, according to others, to *six billion* per year! That the consequences of this diversion are an abnormal, unnatural inequality of conditions and fortunes; the division of society into two hostile classes; the necessity of a police force and a public force that cost no less than 500 million per year; Then the glut of products, the stagnation of capital, the lack of markets, the cessation of work, the enslavement of the most numerous class in society, POVERTY?...

I believe it unnecessary to elaborate further; socialism has been voicing these complaints for some time now. The question for us socialists, therefore, is not, believe me, whether we will build a trial phalanstery, whether equal wages will be established everywhere, whether workers will form communities, whether the State will become the sole entrepreneur of agriculture, commerce and industry, etc. All of this, in our view, is a question to be set aside.

The crucial issue is that the four to six billion francs levied by capital on labor be abolished, just as feudal dues were abolished on the famous night of August 4th. Is it nothing, in your opinion, to abolish a six billion franc rent, which would immediately double the average wage of workers, and then, through the labor of the unproductive, quadruple it?

Now, we maintain that this general abolition of seigneurial property rights would happen of its own accord, gradually, without expropriation, without upheaval, if the State, taking the initiative of the Revolution, began by abolishing interest on money, and organized free circulation and discounting.

And as for this same suppression of interest on money, we affirm, with the proprietors themselves, that it is a matter of right as well as of public necessity; that there would henceforth be spoliation and betrayal on the part of the power towards all citizens in whom the interest of labor is superior to that of capital, if it persisted in opposing the measure.

Finally, we affirm that, by the mere fact of this abolition: 1. of interest on money, through the initiative of the State; 2. of all rents, leases, interest, etc., through the natural effect of the new credit institutions, society would be renewed from top to bottom, in its government, its institutions, its laws, its philosophy, its customs, its literature and its arts...

Here again, M. Editor, I can dispense with any further elaboration. If it has been said of steam power that it would revolutionize industry, how much more so should one think of a reform which, by restoring to the producer what the unproductive takes away, and forcing the latter to labor, doubles overall production, quadruples workers' income, and destroys pauperism and revolt forever.

This, for my part, is what I have been saying and repeating for ten years, in every possible way. Refute me if you can; but, for God's sake, don't talk to me again about attacks on liberty, the family or Providence! Liberty, the family and Providence have

nothing to do with any of this: it concerns the profits of capital; and, for the second time, M. Editor, I will remind you and yours that in turning a deaf ear to this question of capital — so clear, so categorical, so decisive — there is *grave wrong and grave danger*.

And look, to get back to the theory of contradictions, see where this unintelligent, impolitic, immoral war you are waging against socialism has already led you.

The day when, to support your privileges, you wanted to put socialism out of society, accusing it of wanting the community of goods, the community of women, the community of children, confusion, chaos, crime, everything that the imagination can conceive of as most monstrous and most terrifying, on that day socialism answered you with an intrepid gesture and a fateful faith: And I, more powerful than you, inaccessible to your calumnies, pronounce your dissolution.

Then, as if by some unknown power, the social bond had suddenly shattered in people's souls, you saw division, a spirit of mistrust and hatred, permeate all classes of citizens; the elements of society enter into conflict with one another, all interests separate and become mutually hostile. You saw the tenant conspire against the landlord, the farmer against the lord, the merchant against the capitalist, the wage earner against the entrepreneur, the employee against the boss, the servant against the master, the soldier against the officer, the poor against the rich, the peasant against the townsman, the citizen against the State, the farmer against the industrialist, the worker against the idler, the producer against the consumer.

Everyone isolates themselves; they close ranks: *Chacun chez soi, chacun pour soi*; you are dismayed by your own maxims. The citizens see in the citizen a rival, an envious person, an informer. You thought you could maintain by force the exploitation of one class of society by another: socialism, which knows the secrets of society better than you, has responded with universal dissolution. You had stirred up, encouraged, rewarded social warfare: you thought you could stifle the protest of the socialists in their blood; socialism has taken its revenge by unleashing upon you the storm of your contradictions.

Spread anti-socialist propaganda when you can no longer agree among yourselves; when your priests despise you, your soldiers curse you, your servants hate you and all who still obey you are ready to tear you apart. Navigate this chaos into which socialism, in a single word, has plunged you; where the peasant simultaneously cries: *Down with the profiteers!* and *Down with the rich!* — *Long live Bonaparte!* and *Long live the Republic!* — where the organization of labor by the State is rejected, and where the only talk is of handing over mines, canals, railways, banks, insurance companies, etc., to the State; — where progressive taxation and the preservation of property are demanded at the same time; a tax on luxury and incentives for the arts; an inheritance tax and respect for families; freedom of education and free education; equality of political rights and hierarchy in discipline; the repression of speculation and the maintenance of usury; — where, finally, universal suffrage is already nothing more than a means of making the people lie and the Republic a form of dictatorship.

Bring back credit with the power of bayonets; restore confidence in this crumbling society; re-establish circulation and labor, fill the Bank's coffers with the excitements of the Stock Exchange!

O materialists! who thought you could bring order with force, who still believe you can win the people back to you with lies and mockery; come back, there is still time, to repentance! For, I swear to you, and you can take my word for that of 25 million proletarians and exploited, the people will never return to you.

(No. 181. — May 19, 1849.)

MORALITY OF THE SEINE ELECTIONS

There were four serious parties involved:

The royalist party,

The imperialist party,

The Moderate Republican Party,

The Republican Socialist Party.

A few honest souls, animated by excellent intentions, but taking measures of concession for means of conciliation, had tried to form a fusion party, which turned out to be in reality a party of confusion and disappeared in the electoral turmoil.

The imperialist party, if it ever existed, no longer does. No one wanted to believe us when we said, in the aftermath of December 10th: "It was republicans and socialists who gave votes to M. L. Bonaparte; his name either means nothing, or, like his uncle's, signifies the triumphant Revolution." M. L. Bonaparte's policy is all mapped out; the royalists only contributed to supplementing the immense majority he obtained; [socialist or traitor, there is no middle ground for him. Of these two alternatives, M. L. Bonaparte preferred to choose the second he betrayed the hopes the People placed in him;]³ Count the number of votes given to his most ardent supporters: on which side did the two hundred thousand Parisian votes of December 10th go!

The moderate Republican party has received a harsh lesson. In the June elections, it still held a respectable position; it had managed to get one of its candidates elected, and it held a favorable balance against the Royalist party. Today, it finds itself decidedly relegated to third place, and this same candidate, M. Goudchaux, despite his sincere republicanism and reputation for honesty, is ranked sixtieth, a few steps below M.A. Fould, the big-time stockbroker and advisor to the governmental bankruptcy.

The fault of the moderate republican party is that, while understanding that at heart Republic and Socialism are one and the same thing, while admitting that political Revolution and social Revolution are identical, it did not dare to say it out loud, and thus betrayed in fact, if not in intention, the Republic and the Revolution.

This party has, in recent times, preached fusion, it is true, and we ourselves regretted that its overtures were met with such disdain. Fusion, it was conquest. But,

³ The passage in brackets was censored in the *Mélanges*. — TRANSLATOR.

having expressed this regret, we saw with sorrow that this party, which preached fusion, could only half-heartedly implement it. The miraculous appointment of citizens Boichot, Ledru-Rollin and Lagrange is due to the joint selection of certain candidates by the Friends of the Constitution and the Socialist Committee.

Consider the result that would have been obtained if the fusion had been complete, if the moderate republican party, abandoning foolish and unintelligent repugnances, had agreed to do as the Mountain did in December, to declare itself socialist, and above all had accepted, through that republican spirit of discipline which it has always lacked, the entire list of the central committee: all the socialist republican candidates would have prevailed over the royalist candidates; the Republic, strengthened by this resounding victory, would henceforth have defied the attacks of its dismayed adversaries; the fatal dualism, which forms the basis of the situation, and which is increasingly turning into a duel, would have disappeared in a supreme conciliation; the Revolution, finally, would have peacefully resumed the course of its glorious destinies.

The struggle was therefore only serious between the royalist party and the socialist republican party. The result, by giving them both the upper hand, suggests that this dualism we mentioned earlier will transform into a terrible battle. The Revolution is saved; this is written in every single vote figure; but it has one last, formidable effort to make to free itself from the monster clinging to its flanks. Let our friends be vigilant: our carelessness, in the face of our adversaries' obstinacy, could lead us through the most terrible trials. Now is the solemn hour: shame on anyone who would allow themselves to be lulled to sleep!

But let us analyze the votes: we will draw our conclusions later.

Of the twenty-eight elected representatives, significantly, with the possible exception of Messrs. Rapatel, Garnon and Peupin, who, in one way or another, belong to the Legitimist movement, there is not a single candidate of pronounced royalist leanings. Messrs. Odilon Barrot, Bedeau, Passy, Vavin, Bixio, Lasteyrie and Wolowski belonged, under the monarchy, to the constitutional opposition; Messrs. Murat, Moreau, Hugo, Coquerel and Roger (from the North) are indifferent royalists, meaning that any monarchy is acceptable to them, provided it preserves the privileges of caste or wealth.

The extreme royalists, the party leaders, such as Messrs. de Montalembert, de Falloux, de Larochejaquelein and even Léon Faucher, were ruthlessly sidelined. Thiers didn't even receive the number of votes he had obtained in the June elections.

Ten clearly, frankly socialist candidates crossed the threshold of the ballot. It is worth noting that three of them, citizens Ledru-Rollin, Boichot and Lagrange, are at the top of the list; the others occupy the middle, and the last, Considérant, has a rather good number of votes.

The socialist candidates who did not obtain the required number of votes nevertheless came very close to their colleagues. Citizens Madier de Montjau, Greppo, Thoré, Demay, d'Alton-Shée, Proudhon, Hizay, Langlois, etc., were only a few thousand votes short of being elected.

Proudhon suffered the consequences of the influence generated by his conviction. Yet he obtained 30,000 more votes than in the June elections.

These are the material facts. What is their moral significance?

The answer is easy; it lies in the facts themselves. The royalist party no longer exists as a principle, but as a caste; the Revolution is not dealing with this or that dynasty, but with an aristocracy, a coalition of those privileged with money. The question is no longer political, but social, as the Rue de Poitiers was saying before May 13th, and these words, coming from them, were more of a problem than a truth. Universal suffrage has solved the problem; it has proclaimed it for the third time, and this time with a more resounding voice: the Revolution is socialism, just as reaction is anti-socialism. So much the worse for those who willfully plug their ears.

Secondly, socialism is definitively recognized as an official party, a political, constitutional and legal party, just as the dynastic opposition was before February. It has this immense advantage over the dynastic opposition: by representing one of the two terms of the political dualism, it simultaneously represents both the Revolution and the movement. Indeed, it does not merely demand vague reforms; it outlines clearly defined ones, and these reforms, which strike at the very foundation of society, constitute the entirety of the Revolution.

Recognized as the official party and as representing the Republic and the Revolution, the socialist party has the right to reckon with its adversaries. The government, composed of royalists in permanent conspiracy against the Constitution, had hitherto acted more than cavalierly towards the socialists; it had spared them neither slander, nor imprisonment, nor persecution; if universal suffrage has a language that those in power understand, they will have to change their conduct towards socialism and henceforth give it its due.

Socialism, having obtained, if not the majority of nominations, at least that of votes in the Seine elections, has the right to demand from the government:

1. a general amnesty — It would be strange that men destined for prison, writers condemned for their doctrines by royalist judges, after having seen their ideas proclaimed by a hundred thousand voices, should continue to groan on prison hulks or in dungeons.

2. A policy in line with the Revolution taking place throughout Europe. — The guarantee of this change is readily available: it is the change of destination of the army of Civitavecchia. That the soldiers of the French Republic, instead of attacking the Romans, join them against the Austrians; is this not what the voters who elected Citizen Boichot want?

3. The annulment of the elections wherever they have been influenced by the dispatches of M. Léon Faucher, or by any other means. — The citizens singled out for the wrath of popular suffrage were the *men of June*, that is to say, the socialists. It must not be allowed, under the Republic, that the sovereignty of the people has been manipulated against a legal and constitutional party by a faction temporarily in power.

These three measures would, for the time being, be expressed by a general measure: the retirement of the ministry, without prejudice to impeachment against

whomever it may concern for the crime of permanent conspiracy against the Constitution.

4. Finally, the socialist party must demand that the authorities prosecute all newspapers, publications, etc., in which it is subjected to the hatred and contempt of citizens; likewise, it must not allow itself to be referred to henceforth under any other name than that of *constitutional opposition*, which acknowledges its legal and political existence.

The socialist party would abdicate, betray the people, and fail in its mandate if, before any deliberation, it did not demand all these things from the government. Amnesty lies at the heart of the ballot box on May 13th. The war in Rome is a war waged against the Republic; it must cease immediately. M. Léon Faucher's telegrams are an outrage against the Constitution; the invalidation of the elections must restore the integrity of universal suffrage. The attacks on socialism are in reality attacks on a part of the national will; they must stop! That is what we demand! Is that too much?

For five months, despite its numerical strength, the socialist party has resisted all provocations. We see it today; it only had to rise up and crush its adversaries, bayonets and cannons alike. Instead, it chose to respond through the ballot box, to demonstrate its imposing majesty. Will it now be treated as it has been in the past? Will its warnings be disregarded? Will it be refused any consideration? Will it continue to be vilified?

Let's think about it: everything has an end, even patience. Socialism now holds peace or war within the folds of its flag. Do we want war?

(No. 183. — May 20, 1849.)

Paris, May 19

THE SITUATION

"The defeat of the royalist party is a *fait accompli*; socialism triumphs!" We are not the ones saying this, but the vanquished themselves. Struck with astonishment at the sight of this victory, on which they had counted for themselves, and which has fallen into the hands of their adversaries, they are nevertheless not so defeated that they fail to find enough strength to hurl at us, with a few blunted barbs, two or three final insults.

Let us not be lulled into complacency by triumph, and above all, let us not squander victory. The struggle, by suddenly revealing our strength, has exposed the still formidable position of the enemy. More than complacency is needed to dislodge them and gain complete mastery of the battlefield.

The insults hurled at us by the royalist party, in its spite over its defeat, partly reveal the secret of the tactics it will undoubtedly employ later to try to regain the upper hand. These tactics are not new: they are those of all reactionary parties, in every revolutionary era, and the coalition itself, as was said eight days ago, has used them successfully for the past fifteen months to divert the Revolution from its goal and to carry out its plans of conspiracy and treason.

What did the royalist party say at the time of the provisional government and the Luxembourg Commission, that is to say at the time when socialism, still vague and poorly defined, nevertheless had a kind of official existence!

It admitted, along with socialism, that the Revolution was not political, but social; that all the old parties were finished, and that it was less a question of reforming the government than of transforming society. But at the same time as it made this admission, it could not find enough insults and calumnies against Louis Blanc and Ledru-Rollin, then the representatives of the Revolution in power; it stirred discord between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat; it sought to sow division among the workers by labeling those who distinguished themselves by their socialist aspirations as bandits and idlers; it spread the rumor that the national workshops, a caricature of socialism, were populated by ex-convicts and released convicts; finally, it represented the various socialist systems as a confused mass of sophisms put at the service of brutal passions, and above all as preaching the destruction of what human conscience has been accustomed to respecting for six thousand years, as preaching the abolition of belief in Divinity, of the family, of property.

This tactic succeeded for the royalist party, and the disastrous June Days, fueling its calumnies, came to its aid. For a few months, it was able to seize control of the Revolution and confiscate it for the benefit of monarchical privilege and principle. The election of December 10th was its triumph. We then witnessed, in a monstrous spectacle, a man appointed by republicans to preside over a Republic, becoming allied, against the Republic and the republicans, with kings and aristocracies. We saw repression at home, betrayal abroad and a policy of faction and vengeance in place of a national and conciliatory policy. The royalists had sown the wind; they reaped the whirlwind. The whirlwind helped us regain our advantage. Let us remember this well.

It would not suffice, to prevail this time against our adversaries, to counter their arguments with the numerical strength that socialism gained in the elections. Undoubtedly, it is a highly valuable response to counter their calumnies with the one hundred thousand votes cast for even the least of our candidates; it is impossible that there are, in Paris alone, one hundred thousand citizens who wish to destroy the family, property and religion: this argument is untenable. — In our opinion, the best way to pursue our victory is to present our adversaries with new challenges.

The royalist party will hold a majority in the Legislative Assembly. Will it dare to pursue this insane policy that has so disgusted the Parisian population? That is the question that must be asked of it before anything else. Its mouthpieces already admit, and admitted again this morning, that there is no salvation except in the frank and loyal acceptance of the Republic, and above all in the implementation of the social reforms that have become necessary. It is the same rhetoric as in the aftermath of February 24th; it is also the same lack of heart and sincerity. The royalist party must be compelled to define for itself the conditions under which parties can rally under the banner of the Republic, and what means must be employed to implement reforms. By forcing it to move beyond vague words and formulas, it will soon be forced to expose

its impotence, its lies, and its ill will. On that day, it will be struck down, never to rise again.

Let us not deceive ourselves: what perished in the battle that has just been fought was that party of adventurers who had for so long bolstered the royalist party; the bulk of the army remained untouched; on the one hand, if we have recruited forces, they serve only to counterbalance those of the enemy; our soldiers are ardent, but they are recruits. Let us not tire them out in a guerrilla war. Let us send the terms of peace to the opposing camp, and await their response proudly, on the offensive. Depending on what that response may be, if we are vigilant and skillful, we will soon march to the triumph of the democratic and social Republic.

(No. 184. — May 22.)

Paris, May 22.

As soon as the results of the elections in Paris and several departments were known, we declared that the consequence of these elections was, for the socialist republican party and for the citizens called upon to represent it in the Legislative Assembly, the right and the duty to demand, prior to any deliberation, these three things:

1. General amnesty;
2. Change of foreign policy, and recall of the Civita-Vecchia expedition;
3. Annulment of the vote in all departments where the suffrage of the electors was influenced by the telegraphic dispatch of May 12.

The *National* and the *Constitutionnel* are publishing this morning the reflections that our article suggested to them.

The first one shares our opinion on all points. However, it points out that by claiming for socialism the status of *constitutional opposition*, we thereby undertake the commitment to defend the Constitution point by point, and never to place ourselves either below or above it.

We will tell the *National* without hesitation that this is precisely our intention, if the conditions we have set for the conservative party are accepted.

We know that majorities can be wrong; but we also know that they can reverse an error, and that is why we submit to the law of the majority, as long as the majority itself respects the Constitution, and does not place itself below or above it.

We are not so fanatical about universal suffrage as to believe it infallible; but neither are we so blind as not to believe that it might, after a moment of error, come to its senses. That is why we will obey the decisions of universal suffrage, as long as it remains true to itself, that is to say, to the republican principle.

Finally, we are not unaware that the Constitution is far from perfect; but we read in the Constitution that it is perfectible; and that is why we commit ourselves to defending the Constitution, without reservation, without ulterior motive, without any other desire than its legal and legitimate improvement.

The Constitution, the whole Constitution, nothing but the Constitution, we ask for nothing more; we need nothing more.

We invite our colleague, *Le National*, to take note of our statement.

The *Constitutionnel* finds our demands exorbitant. To ask for amnesty is one thing, it tells us, but to DEMAND it is against the rights of the majority; it is unconstitutional and already demonstrates our unworthiness.

If, however, the *Constitutionnel*, once convinced that we are in the aftermath of a revolution, were to reflect on the facts and the texts, it would understand on its own that in demanding, as we are doing, amnesty, etc., we are only exercising our right; we are fulfilling a duty; we cannot do less, without denying our opinion and forever compromising public peace.

We have said it more than once, the 1848 constitution shifted the political center of gravity in our country.

Under the Charter of 1830, the legal country was naturally divided into two parties: the conservative party, which wanted the literal execution of the Charter and a share of influence for the royal prerogative, and the opposition, which tended to tighten this prerogative more and more, and inevitably ended up making the monarch either an inactive figure or a president.

This last alternative is the one achieved by the February Revolution.

By the constitution of 1848, the legal country found itself once again divided into two parties, which we call: one, the party of constitutional democracy; the other, the party of social democracy.

Articles 19 and 43 of the Constitution, one of which establishes the principle of the separation of powers and the other creates a president as head of the executive branch, are the legal basis of constitutional democracy.

Articles 1 of the preamble, 13 and 111 of the Constitution, are the legal basis of socialist democracy.

The election of December 10th enshrined the representative and constitutional principle of our Republic.

The elections of May 13th have just confirmed the socialist element.

Either we do not understand the facts, and we have not the slightest understanding of the Constitution, or it must be recognized, with us and with universal suffrage, that the *misunderstanding*, — we deliberately use the most benevolent term for our opponents, — which has existed since December 10, which goes back well beyond December 10, must now cease.

Before and since December 10, the government has been concerned with only one thing: to fight by all means, internal and external, the socialist party, that is to say, one of the constituent elements of the Republic, whose legitimacy has just been declared by universal suffrage.

It is from this struggle of the government against a principle that it had, by virtue of the Constitution, the mission to represent, in the relationship between the minority and the majority of representatives; it is from this fierce war between republican

constitutionalism on the one hand, and socialism on the other, that all the perils of the situation have arisen.

To a war of extermination, socialism had to respond with a desperate attack. We can see today who lost the most in this struggle, as unintelligent as it was deplorable. Thirty years in prison to be shared among five or six individuals, plus a fine of a few hundred thousand francs: that's what socialism got.

Le Peuple alone will bear more than half of all these sentences. What are a hundred thousand francs in fines and thirty years in prison to a party that today encompasses a third of France?... — On the side of the government, what enormous, perhaps irreparable, losses!

The five and a half million votes of December 10, reduced by half by the elections of May 13; the nation's elected representative discredited in his policy, in his administration, in his intentions, in his person; a ministry driven, by its anti-socialist frenzy, from mistake to mistake, to conspiracy and treason: this is what it costs the government, what it costs the country, for it is always the country that pays for the defeats of the power, for this absurd persecution aimed at socialism.

Learn, you self-proclaimed defenders of order, to read the Constitution, and to understand the meaning of the events that you yourselves provoke, and which are for you nothing but inexplicable signs from heaven.

For a year now, you have been trying to impose order AGAINST us: and you have led the homeland to the brink of its destruction.

Today, universal suffrage, in accordance with the Constitution, compels you to restore order WITH us. Dare to obey it.

Yes, help us bring order, and you will see if, while preserving our ideas and pursuing their implementation, we are not stronger in helping you with this difficult task than a million bayonets.

Settle things right with us, and within a month, by the sole act of this high conciliation, not economic, but only political, we will restore to you a situation already better than it was before February.

Socialism asks nothing more of you, as is its right, than that you recognize its political and legal existence, both domestically and internationally: domestically, through a general amnesty; internationally, through the recall of our soldiers from Civitavecchia. We would add the annulment of the elections in a number of departments, as redress for a scandal from which you could not, without becoming complicit, wish to profit.

You are certain of a large majority in the Legislative Assembly; and we swear to you that we will claim nothing except through legal and constitutional means. What are you afraid of?

Do you want peace, or do you want war?

Paris, May 23.

On June 24, at the height of the civil war, the honorable M. de Larochefajacquelein, meeting me on the Concorde bridge, asked me what I thought of the events.

“I know nothing of the insurrection,” I replied; “but its triumph would still be, in my opinion, the best thing that could happen to us.”

It is sad to have to acknowledge today that this opinion, however anarchic it may have seemed at the time, was nevertheless the only reasonable one, the only true one.

The people had just raised a question on the barricades that could no longer be ignored without endangering society: it was the right to work.

However, faced with a question that demanded a successful revolution and the consequences of a civil war, the quickest and most amicable solution was undoubtedly the best. And this was precisely the solution that seemed to us to be the only one that could emerge from a victorious insurrection; indeed, it could only emerge from that.

The insurrection represented no system, did not adhere to any school of thought: it was rejected by all parties; it faced opposition from the National Guard of Paris and the departments, as well as the army. Lacking a political and social symbol, and faced with a nation in revolt, the insurrection, even if victorious in Paris and based at the Hôtel de Ville, could only end in a compromise.

As for the party of resistance, subsequent events proved that no reconciliation could be expected from them, even though such reconciliation was then, as it is now, the only possible policy. With the uprising defeated, the Resistance party saw itself as the savior of the country, and almost of civilization itself. The National Assembly declared that General Cavaignac had rendered great service to the nation. The subsequent vote on the Constitution, in which the right to work was abolished, led many to believe that, with this combined force of the legislature and the armed forces, socialism and the right to work were finished forever.

So what has resulted from this supposed victory of ORDER over *anarchy*? Listen carefully and reflect, all of you who, under the name of Providence, have never been taught to worship anything but chance!

The state of siege;

The courts-martial;

Transportation without judgment;

The suspension, the mutilation of constitutional liberties;

The counter-revolution both within and without;

The hoax of December 10th;

The conflict between the powers;

The expedition from Civita-Vecchia;

The fall, moral if not yet actual, of Louis Bonaparte;

Eleven months of tension, stagnation and misery;

The elections of May 13th;

The division of the Republic into two enemy camps;

The social war made more imminent by the absence of a middle party, between two extreme opinions;

The question of work more pressing and more formidable;

And no solution!

What am I saying? The more the need for a solution is felt, the more its impossibility becomes apparent. We are inevitably drawn, by the contradiction of ideas and interests, into a struggle from which only the unknown can emerge; our situation is a hundred times worse than it would have been on June 26, after the victory of the insurgents.

In June, the conservative party had rallied to the Republic: at least it was not openly conspiring against the Revolution. The test of a democratic constitution had not yet been carried out, and this test, begun under different auspices than those of December 10th, could yield entirely different results. At that time, no one was thinking of Louis Bonaparte; the Orléans dynasty, as well as the senior branch of Bourbon, seemed forgotten. The descendants of the crusaders had not yet joined forces against the democracy with the descendants of Voltaire. The government would not have considered undertaking a war of oppression for the benefit of the Pope and the Jesuits, any more than it would have considered forming a Holy Alliance with the autocrat of Russia against the anarchists of Europe. On the political front, no difficulties appeared to exist between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. As for the social question, we have proven many times that with a few million in credit to industry and workers' societies, and by reaching an agreement with school leaders, we could give ourselves a margin of ten years to solve the problem.

Now the arrangements are no longer the same.

The so-called party of order was able to plumb the depths of this Revolution, which everything compelled it to initiate and lead. Under the influence of a few misguided individuals, it shrank from the undertaking. If pushed, it will regress even beyond the universal suffrage, the representative principle, the constitutional monarchy and all the gains of the first Revolution. Momentarily stunned by the results of the recent elections, but soon reassured by the majority they brought it, and full of hope in its ability to manipulate parliamentary mechanisms, it refuses to hear of peace. Domestically, it is busy legalizing repression; abroad, while besieging the Republic in Rome, it has it recognized by Emperor Nicholas, which means that it is forming a coalition against it with him.

The party of resistance, in short, is pushing for the Revolution.

The party of movement follows the same path, but in the opposite direction.

A year ago, before the events in Italy, Hungary and Germany made evident to all eyes the close solidarity of all the movements which are stirring the various parts of Europe, it was possible, on foreign policy, to give some time to socialist democracy; first, by confining itself to the strict observance of Article 5 of the preamble of the Constitution, that is to say in a sphere of absolute neutrality; then by drawing the attention of the people above all to economic and social issues.

The social questions, so dreaded, thus became for our country a safeguard against revolutionary excess. And, if we may be forgiven for repeating it, under what advantageous conditions could they have been resolved, at least temporarily!

The June insurrection, however socialist it may have been, brought no socialism with it. Behind the barricades were only workers demanding to work, who had risen up spontaneously to claim a promised right, without consulting the *Représentant du Peuple*, or the *Démocratie pacifique* or the *Populaire*. With them, one could settle accounts with socialism without hardly even mentioning it.

Things could not be the same today. The people have learned, through facts and through the association of ideas, that those who fight in Rome, in Breslau, in Komorn, are their brothers; they would no longer be satisfied with mere neutrality towards all these rebels.

On the other hand, the elections of May 13th were made possible through the participation of all socialist schools and all shades of republicanism, from the party represented by the National to the delegates from Luxembourg and the Icarians. The systems that, in June, had not appeared on the barricades, filled the ballot box on May 13th: they demand reward and payoff, that is to say, each in its own way, fulfillment.

The result was easy to predict.

The people, initially stirred only by *sentiment*, soon feel the need to transform that emotion into an *IDEA*; and since, in the present case, the science does not exist, or at least is not universally accepted, the people, obeying a kind of probabilism, have adopted as many diverse ideas as have been proposed to them. In the head of this giant with a million arms — Saint-Simonianism, Fourierism, Babouvism, dictatorship, the triad, government regulation, even Anglican and Malthusian economism — contain all the speculative utopias of socialism, all the retrospective utopias of capital and privilege. Socialism, at this moment, is simultaneously the hydra and the sphinx, for which an Oedipus and a Hercules would be needed.

Eleven months ago, it was possible, if I may say so, to halt this eruption of revolutionary theories by prophylactic means; presently, there is no other remedy than to encourage it; and the whole question consists of knowing, no longer with whom and how one will compromise, but how one will go about making the experiments both more decisive and less costly.

The party of movement, like that of resistance, therefore pushes towards Revolution.

On one side, blind resistance, which, in order to better escape the consequences of an irresistible movement, having acquired strength over sixty years, retreats to feudal institutions and theocracy, and will only lead to catastrophe.

On the other hand, there is an overflow of ideas and hopes, which tire the memory and the imagination, only to dissipate into sterile agitation, or get lost in contradictory projects.

On both sides, there has been a disregard for right, unconstitutional claims, hostile and provocative demonstrations. Certainly, if we do not have a war with foreign

countries — civil war and social war — it will not be the fault of men: only chance will have prevented it!...

For us, who, while defending with equal devotion the cause of the Republic and our own ideas, have not ceased, in all circumstances, to seek common ground where the foundations of a reconciliation could be laid, which we will have to achieve, we believed we saw, in the elections of May 13, one of those events where it is possible for the parties to come together and understand each other, and we said what, in our opinion, it is the duty of the government to do, what it is the right of socialist democracy to obtain:

General amnesty,

Recall of the Civita-Vecchia expedition,

Repairing the scandal caused by the telegraphic dispatch of May 12.

In other words, recognition of the socialist party as an advanced expression of the February Revolution; recognition of this same Revolution, through respect for nationalities, and the alliance of the Republic with the people against the despots; all confirmed by the renewal of the ministry.

For all further questions, refer to the daily light of parliamentary discussions, and to the secret labor of public opinion.

This is what seemed to us to be the logical and legal outcome of the elections of May 13; what the government cannot refuse without declaring itself counter-revolutionary; what the democratic and socialist minority of the Legislative Assembly cannot fail to demand, prior to any discussion, without neglecting its duties.

To grant less would be, on the part of the conservative party and the government, to remove an essential element of the Constitution from the Constitution, and to declare themselves hostile to the most authentic tendencies of the February Revolution.

For the social democrats to ask for more would be to anticipate events and do violence to public opinion; it would be to demand what neither the Constitution, nor universal suffrage, nor socialism itself are currently able to provide.

We therefore say to those of our adversaries who still find it amusing to mock and conspire in such a grave situation: Imagine that in the heart of France, fifty kilometers below the surface, there lies a powder keg of one hundred million cubic meters; that socialism holds the fuse that can ignite it, and that it is resolved to blow itself up rather than allow the Revolution to back down. Do you want peace, or do you want war?

We say to those of our friends whose fervent zeal calls for grander scenes instead of these prosaic compromises: Practical utility must take precedence over epic. What do you want? What do you propose? Are you making Revolution for Revolution's sake, like art for art's sake? Speak, so that your thoughts may be known, and, being known, judged. Otherwise, you are not revolutionaries; you are merely playwrights. You do not want the success of the February Revolution; you want, to satisfy your artistic whim, to lose this Revolution, as the Collot-d'Herbois, the Anacharsis Clootz, and all those actors of the Terror lost the Revolution of '92.

Paris, May 24,

Our readers have no doubt noticed that our entire policy, as long as *Le Peuple* has existed, has consisted of constantly placing ourselves in line with legality and facts.

For our part, we rejected the presidential principle during the vote on the Constitution. But, once the Constitution was adopted, we did not hesitate to adopt it as our rule: because, while it is true that this Constitution is imperfect, it is no less true that absolute perfection is unattainable and that one must always rely on some established point if one wants to take a step forward.

Therefore, without prejudice to the legitimate hope of reform, we have frankly accepted the Constitution.

But this Constitution, like any human creation, had in turn to recognize a judge superior to itself: that was experience.

At the same time as we accepted the authority of the Constitution, we also submitted to the authority of facts, to the law of progress.

It is by virtue of the Constitution that we have *attacked* the policies of Louis Bonaparte for the past five months.

It is by virtue of the progress of the facts that we *condemn* this policy today.

We will not dwell on the past. We believe we can say that the debate we supported, from December 23rd to May 13th, was endorsed by the entire French republican establishment. We will confine ourselves to citing the present.

Is it true, yes or no, that the Constitution implies, in its current terms, an obviously socialist tendency, as well as a principle of conservation and resistance?

Is it also true that for the past ten months the progress of events has been constantly in the socialist direction, and that the evil of the situation comes solely from the obstinate antagonism between the principle of conservation and the principle of progress?

If anyone were to deny the accuracy of these two propositions, we would refer them, on the one hand, to the text of the Constitution, articles 13 and 111; on the other hand, to the elections of May 18, in which the people expressed their opinion on the point that concerns us as sovereign judge.

Now, it is impossible to deny these two things today, and the enemies of the Republic are the first to admit: 1. that the Constitution is at least half socialist; 2. that the actions taken over the last ten months justify socialism at least halfway; we must conclude with you that the only possible policy at present is to recognize, independently of any subsequent action, this dual meaning of the national pact and the actions that interpret it, the legality and the necessity of socialism.

This is what we wanted to indicate by first calling insistently for a general amnesty, which restores the socialist element to its constitutional and legitimate position; secondly, for a change of foreign policy, which leaves no doubt in the eyes of foreigners about the republican character of our institutions.

Amnesty and recall of our troops from Civita-Vecchia: the Revolution is there in its entirety, although reduced to terms which one cannot have the right to worry about.

As for the annulment of the elections held under the influence of the telegraphic dispatch of May 12, it would only be the reform, in certain parts of the country, of the popular judgment, vitiated by a fraudulent maneuver by the government.

We have deduced these consequences as the only ones that result from the Constitution and the facts, the only ones that the government should accept as a course of action, *WHATEVER IT MAY BE*.

But, we are told, the government accepts socialism neither in fact nor in right; on the contrary, it persecutes it; it fights it in France and throughout Europe. And since, in its eyes as well as ours, the Republic is in solidarity with socialism, far from recognizing socialism, it conspires against the Republic.

In such a situation, what is to be done? Assuming the possibility of conflict, can we escape either of these two alternatives: the extermination of socialism, and consequently, the fall of the Republic; or the triumph of an insurrection, the consequence of which would be the suppression of the Constitution, dictatorship, etc.? In the latter case, where are we going?...

Where are we going? — This is the question that is currently causing hesitation among the enemies of despotism, the republicans who are still not very convinced of the effectiveness of social theories, and all the bourgeoisie who are friends of order and legality.

Where are we going? — It is perhaps due to the lack of a positive answer to this question that the presidency of Louis Bonaparte still holds. We would gladly lend ourselves to a reshuffling of power; but we recoil for fear of consequences that we do not see, and we prefer to keep a known disorder to an unknown order of things.

Where are we going? — That is the question that we will answer, always guided by the Constitution and the facts.

We declare first that, in the supposed case of a battle and a victory, republicans, whatever their shade, should less than ever depart from legality, and renounce the strength they derive from the Constitution.

Let us remember that the Constitution is no longer a contract between the people and the president, as it once was, between the nation and the monarch; a contract, therefore, liable to be dissolved by the treason of the prince and the insurrection of the people. — It is a contract of the people with themselves, as independent of presidential successions as of ministerial changes, and which, consequently, survives all revolutions.

The Constitution is explicit on this point. By writing Articles 68 and 91 to 100, the legislature necessarily assumed that the Constitution would survive the president's betrayal; otherwise, how could it have provided for resisting the government and bringing the president and his ministers before a high court?

The course of action that we must follow is therefore clearly laid out.

The Constitution exists: whatever happens, it must be respected.

The Constitution cannot be revised before 1852: whatever happens, it must be maintained, as it is, until 1852 — We have said it many times: to a well-intentioned government any Constitution is good; and that of 1848 would not delay our social destiny by a minute.

But the current President of the Republic, aided by all the reactionary exterminators of socialism, is conspiring; he falls under the purview of Articles 68 and 91-100 of the Constitution. Supposing he were overthrown by a riot and brought to trial, the question is, in that case, what would happen? And to this we reply without hesitation, that all that would need to be done, from the point of view of the Constitution, would be to provide for the replacement of Louis Bonaparte.

The Constitution must, above all, remain: it would be disastrous for the honor of republican institutions, and for the dignity of the people, if the Constitution were to suffer from the fall of a president. It would seem, therefore, that the people only modify their institutions when they change their leader! This would be a contradiction to the sovereignty of the people, a blasphemy against the Republic.

The people are free to modify their Constitution; but this must not be as a result of the rebellion of their representative. The people no longer recognize a prince; and if the Constitution is progressive, they must not forget that it is eternal.

In our view, therefore, all that could legally result from the dismissal of Louis Bonaparte would be, along with the amnesty, with the change of destination of the troops sent to Rome, with the reform of the last elections, to vigorously maintain the Constitution, and to appoint another president.

What kind of president would that be?

We do not need to designate him. The true head of a government is always the man who best expresses the thought of the day; who most completely summarizes the fact and political law; who has been able to present himself as the clearest antithesis of the overthrown system.

We are not anyone's courtiers here; we are simply following our own logic and adhering to all our precedents. We are commenting on articles of law and facts; it is not our fault if our readers' thoughts may have already influenced our own.

We do not want a dictatorship under any circumstances: we prefer, subject to review, a constitutional presidency to this unusual, exorbitant and illegal power. It is because the provisional government was a dictatorship that it did nothing: the absolute is nothing; it can do nothing.

We do not wish, after having had a Constituent Assembly, then a Legislative Assembly, to push the limitations of our fathers so far as to create any Convention whatsoever.

We believe that with the reform of a number of elections, and a complete change of system, the government could suffice for our revolutionary destiny.

Moreover, we are all the less suspect in this expression of our opinion, since we voted against this very Constitution that we now defend; and since later, on December 10th, we felt compelled to protest again, by breaking with the Mountain, against the principle of the presidency which we suspected it intended to support. But since then,

the doubts have been dispelled, the mistrust has vanished; and we no longer doubt the socialist sentiments of the Mountain, nor its desire to see the Constitution reformed and improved in the same direction as we ourselves would like it.

That is why we will say today to the Mountain, and especially to its leader, the honorable Ledru-Rollin:

You have, at this moment, the immense honor of representing the Revolution; but do not forget that you also represent the Constitution.

It is through respect for this Constitution that you have gone from success to success for the past six months;

It was through it that you won the last election.

You have confirmed this Constitution, you have adopted it and you have made it your own, through all your speeches, through your polemics, through the votes you have just collected from all of republican France.

Therefore, do today, out of political duty, what you did out of a duty of protest on December 10th; remain within the Constitution! Remain within it until the legal time for its revision has arrived.

No dictatorship! You would be the first slave of your absolutism.

No suspension of laws, and above all, no systems. Beware of making any commitments to anyone other than those resulting from the Constitution and the logical sequence of events. Follow the collective thought as it emerges; grasp it in its least ambiguous expression, and be assured that good citizens will not fail you and will make governing easy for you. Finally, have the courage to be only the last president of the Republic; and, before long, we firmly hope, the people and the bourgeoisie will tell you that you have served the nation well.

Paris, May 27.

THE POLICY OF *LE PEUPLE*

There are those who, in order to indulge their theatrical fantasies, seem to have taken it upon themselves to prevent by all means the legal and regular establishment of the Republic. While they cannot be called accomplices of reaction, it cannot be denied that they serve it admirably. For a year now, in *Le Peuple*, *Le Représentant du Peuple* and other publications, we have ceaselessly denounced to the common sense of the people this retrospective mania and this love of theatricality as the sole cause that nearly destroyed the Revolution, which, in any case, has postponed its consequences indefinitely.

We thought that, on this point, public opinion was formed; that the Republican party had completely abandoned its ancient limitations, and that everyone understood, as we did, that the Revolution of 1848 was a matter of *right* and *accounting* that left almost no room for demonstrations in the Forum. It seems we were mistaken. There are people, so-called democrats and socialists, who, unable to follow us on this ground of legality and political economy, and turning their backs on the future, accuse us of retreating from the very ground that they themselves are retracing. Since they insist on doing so, we will answer them, once and for all, by comparing their policies with ours.

Who then made the government commissioners so ridiculous, and sometimes so odious, with their affectation of revolutionary memories?

Who aborted the Luxembourg conferences? The revolutionary apparatus. It was not with processions of workers, harangues without ideas, absolutist decrees, theories worthy of Gracchus Babeuf, that one could solve the social question, and rally the bourgeoisie to the Revolution.

Who caused the rout of April 16th? The foiled plan for a revolutionary demonstration. — Socialism, it seems, wanted its April 16th, just as politics had its March 17th: we paid dearly for this whim. An assembly without energy, of dubious republicanism, whose imagination was unsettled by any practical ideas emerging from the barricades; which, thanks to the power of circumstances, only succeeded in creating a Constitution impractical for anyone but sincere democrats; which leaves without having had the courage to expel the traitors it leaves in power: this is the result of the day of April 16th, the fruit of the Luxembourg conferences and the appearance of the commissioners.

Who suggested these two ill-fated expeditions by Risquons-Tout and Kekl? The revolutionary frenzy! We ourselves visited the battlefield of Risquons-Tout; we had the details of this deplorable adventure explained to us on the spot; and we can say that no public politician ever dreamed up, in their narrow mind, such an absurd escapade. The democrats of Belgium are still weeping over it.

Who instigated the unspeakable demonstration of May 15th? Revolutionary reminiscences. The Bourges trial revealed to us the misery of that day, which Blanqui repudiates, which Barbès repudiates, which Raspail repudiates. It is the reaction of disgust produced by the attempt of Risquons-Tout and by the May 15th demonstration that has since halted our propaganda and, after a year, led to the counter-expedition in Civitavecchia!

While Garnier-Pagès, the routine bourgeois, invented the 45-centime tax, what did revolutionary imitation imagine as compensation? Voluntary donations; and later, the billion on the rich! Unfortunate people, who have never been able to understand that devotion is essentially inorganic and therefore sterile, and that any exception, however equitable it may seem, is an attack on the republican principle.

We could lengthen this review considerably; we will cite only one more fact.

What prevented the fusion of the Republican party in the last elections? A false rigorism, revived from the darkest days of the old Revolution. We were among those who dared to advise this fusion; we were reduced to silence. But if we felt compelled then to sacrifice to the passion of our friends, we owe it to ourselves to declare to them today that this is for the last time. What has resulted from this detestable intolerance! Reread the election results: three of our candidates, supported by those we sought to exclude, obtained between 10,000 and 20,000 more votes than the others. The list would have passed almost in its entirety if there had been a fusion: instead of 28 nominations, we obtained 10!

After so many unfortunate trials, we may perhaps be found to be excusable for having changed course: however, we still wish to make our reasons known.

We said to ourselves:

To achieve the best, one must begin by doing good: to establish the social Republic, the last expression of the Revolution, one must begin by establishing the governmental Republic.

The Constitution of 1848 is the first form that universal suffrage, so fully represented, has given to the Republic. This Constitution is essentially improvable and progressive; and what we see every day proves that it is no less opposed to monarchy and arbitrary rule. Let us therefore take this Constitution as our starting point; let us rely on it; let us defend it against the encroachments of power. The Constitution currently constitutes the entirety of the Republic's assets; it therefore contains the entirety of the Republic's future.

This has been the principle guiding our conduct, the *criterion* for all our judgments. And we can say that success has consistently responded to our efforts.

What is it that, for the past five months, has brought strength and progress to the democratic and socialist party? — The Constitution.

What gradually led to the weakening of the power and sowed confusion in the reactionary party? — The Constitution.

On what principle did we base our attack on the Râteau proposal, thwart the plot of January 29, prevent the law on clubs, defend freedom of the press, the right of association, the right to assistance! — On the Constitution.

By virtue of what right do we now, instead of imploring the grace of amnesty as before, claim to demand it? — By virtue of constitutional right.

In the name of what law did we declare the government a traitor to the Republic during the expedition to Civita-Vecchia? — In the name of the Constitution.

What do we say every day to the royalists who, using universal suffrage, momentarily misled, talk about restoring the monarchy? — It is that the Republic being, according to the Constitution, democratic and progressive, the universal suffrage can neither abjure itself nor regress; it is, in short, that the Republic is above the universal suffrage.

Take away the Constitution, and we fall into the void: we are under the rule of force; we have no other motive against the power than hatred and envy.

If for a single moment during the last five months we had placed ourselves outside the Constitution, we would have been lost. We would have provided the government with the only pretext, which it has always lacked, for a coup d'état.

If for a single moment today we were to give the government the right to think that we are attacking the Constitution, we would be doomed once again. It would have everything it needs to join the coalition of kings against the people.

The Constitution alone gives us our life, our progress, our strength. With it, we have made constant progress for socialism; while the power, in order to establish its arbitrary rule, has been constantly forced to violate it.

Well! Would you believe it? It is at the very moment when the future of socialism, the destiny of the public and perhaps of humanity, hangs on the Constitution, and when socialism is accused of wanting to plunge society into chaos; when the Pope, the Tsar, the Emperor of Austria, the Kings of Prussia, Naples, Sardinia, Bavaria and Württemberg, assured of the bourgeoisie and a portion of the peasantry, form a Holy Alliance against the *Anarchists* of Europe; it is when, finally, the 200 citizens who are to represent socialist democracy in the Legislative Assembly need all the prudence of the party, and all the strength that the Constitution lends them; it is at this moment that the men we are talking about, pursued by their retrospective ideas, come to tell us that, as for them, they do not want the Constitution! They, who write socialist newspapers, which, like us, have no strength, value, or meaning other than that which they derive from the Constitution, alternately violated and defended, they place themselves above the Constitution! They accuse us of *modérantisme*, almost of desertion, because we adhere, firmly and loyally, to the Constitution!

What do they want, good God! these incomparable patriots? Let them show us, since they are in a mood for frankness, what they have done more than us and better than us for the last six months... Or rather, let them tell us how their current policy differs from that of Louis Bonaparte! For it is here that we, in turn, demand that they explain themselves.

Louis Bonaparte wants nothing at all to do with the Constitution. They don't want it either: therefore, on this essential point, they agree with Louis Bonaparte.

Louis Bonaparte aspired to change the Constitution through a *coup d'état*. They, on the other hand, aspired to change it through an insurrection, which amounted to exactly the same thing. In this too, they shared Louis Bonaparte's views.

Louis Bonaparte violates the Constitution every day, to the best of his ability, in every act of his government. They, on the other hand, despise it, revile it and trample it underfoot in their articles and speeches; and speeches, like writings, are also acts. They are therefore complicit with Louis Bonaparte.

Thus, Bonaparte, insofar as he denies and violates the Constitution as much as he can, is excused, justified, and glorified by these so-called republicans. They have nothing to reproach him for. They share his opinions and hopes; since the only grievance against him is that he believes, no more and no less than our detractors, that the Constitution is detestable, and that the happiness of the French people depends on its immediate reform in both form and content. We, on the contrary, are enemies of order as much as of socialism, since by resisting the dynastic tendencies of Louis Bonaparte, we condemn, by that very fact, the dictatorial tendencies of these so-called revolutionaries!...

But, we are told, you are forgetting only one thing: the difference in *intentions*!

What are these, these intentions?

We deny that there is any difference between the intentions of Louis Bonaparte and those of our critics, firstly because in politics, as in business, intentions are irrelevant; they do not exist. Secondly, because here the intention can only concern the form of government, and, in the minds of our adversaries, as in that of Louis Bonaparte, this form is despotism. Indeed, he who admits no other constitution than the one he chooses to imagine is necessarily a despot.

Consider, then, you imprudent lot, that once the Constitution is rejected, nothing distinguishes you from Louis Bonaparte; from the would-be tyrant as from the tyrant in office. It is not the Republic, indeed: Bonaparte is as much a republican as anyone else, if you grant him that the Constitution that hinders him is null and void. The reproach you make to us for clinging to this Constitution is, for Bonaparte, a certificate of civic virtue. Nor will it be socialism: Bonaparte will be as socialist as anyone, if you grant him that his system of organization is the best of all. On this point too, the secret hope harbored by certain democrats, enemies of the Constitution, to use power to impose the application of their theories on the country, is, for Louis Bonaparte, an irrefutable certificate of socialism.

What, then, once again separates our adversaries from Louis Bonaparte? Will they come forward to cite their ideas on foreign policy, questions of taxation, finance, administration, education, credit, and so on? But, aside from the fact that they may differ in these matters from Louis Bonaparte as well as from the majority of republicans, in what way is the Constitution an obstacle to all these reforms? We address this question to the lovers of Dictatorship, as well as to the supporters of a Consulate for Life. What in the Constitution prevents the government from reforming, for example, the tax system and organizing credit? Why would Ledru-Rollin, if he were

President of the Republic, feel obligated by the Constitution to form an alliance with Austria and the Pope?

We again demand that our adversaries tell us whether they are truly working for Bonaparte at this moment, and, if not, where a policy that fully justifies that of the President of the Republic might lead. And we ask them to respond with something other than accusations like those we are about to report:

“The core of the theory of *Le Peuple* is very clear; it is purely and simply the substitution of legality for justice, the substitution of fact for right. — Since absolute perfection, says the People, is inaccessible, we must frankly accept the mistakes made.”

You are trying to impress your readers. We didn't say that. We said, speaking to the reactionaries, that the events of the last six months justify socialism, at least in part; and we drew this conclusion from it: that, whether from the reactionary point of view or from the point of view of the facts, socialism, at least in part, must be absolved. Is it by falsifying the texts that you respond to your opponents?

“The theory is not new, and Messrs. Guizot, Barrot, and Thiers have always preached it to us. It is with this theory that they have committed so many acts that are detrimental to right.”

This is still wrong, historically wrong, and proves that you have never known the tactics of Messrs. Thiers, Berrot and Guizot any better than you understand ours.

All revolutions have been achieved through legality; all governments have perished through illegality. “*Legality is killing us*,” a statesman of 1830 said in despair. It was the contrary legality that drove Charles X to the July Ordinances, and M. Guizot to the events of February 22nd; it is the contrary legality that is driving Louis Bonaparte to his downfall.

As for the theory of the *fait accompli*, it consists precisely in replacing legality with an act of arbitrariness which is decorated with the name of *fait accompli*, and which is only a surreptitious fact; which is the negation of legality itself.

“The Revolution is the condemnation of existing facts, and the aspiration to transform them;

“It is the ideal, not the real;

“It is the hatred of iniquity and the passion for improvement.”

“It is the love of what is not yet, but of what must be.”

“This is the supreme poetry that God has placed within man, so that man may constantly strive to rise towards his infinite destiny.”

Excuse me, dear colleague: your thought escapes you; we will translate it for you.

The Revolution is the art of talking ten times a day about a subject without understanding anything about it.

The Revolution is not the grass that grows, the wheat that ripens, the vine that buds: it is the romantic harp that murmurs in the mists of dark Caledonia.

The Revolution is not workshops, shops, counters, pretty children, happy women; it is sylphs, fairies, gnomes, shadows fluttering in the universal nightmare.

The Revolution is not a people acting, taming nature, radiating across the globe like the sun in the empyrean; it is a people living, finally, with all the powers of body and soul. The Revolution is metempsychosis and the dialogues of the dead.

This is what the Revolution means to you.

Certainly, we know that by defending the Constitution tooth and nail, by clearing the ground for socialism, and by working, through all the dangers, towards universal reconciliation, we are dragging along in our wake an indefinable party, incapable of thinking and acting, and which, without taking the slightest initiative, without drawing any conclusions from its amphigoric diatribes, under the pretext that it represents poetry and melancholy, and revolutionary hypochondria, is working its best to maintain exclusion, to suppress all legality, and to re-establish governmental arbitrariness for its own benefit, if we were fortunate enough to destroy it.

We know that in the eyes of this party, which is always floundering and never truly revolutionary, we are merely the pioneers of a dictatorship that makes a mockery of liberty as well as legality; instruments of revolution, discarded and broken as soon as they believe themselves strong enough to do without their services. We are like the workers who are sent to the barricade, only to be sent back from the Hôtel de Ville the day after the battle.

We are not fooled. But while the criticisms of our colleagues may not be enough to change our ideas, they cannot alter our resolve either. Our path is set: no consideration of individuals or parties will deter us. Dictators can come whenever they like; we are simply warning them that, upon seizing power, they would do well to completely stifle freedom of the press, because they will not lack opposition from us.

We protest against any thought of amending the Constitution, and of implementing socialist ideas other than through legal means.

Paris, May 28,

THE PROTOCOL OF THE MOUNTAIN

Our readers know how carefully we have, for the past six months, while developing our own ideas, remained within the bounds of the Constitution. We will now draw the practical consequences of this *constitutionalism*, which some men, incapable of understanding it, have seen fit to slander.

There is no more time to lose: within eight days Europe must know whether it should be republican or Cossack; whether the February Revolution is a bastard or legitimate daughter of the Revolution of '89; whether the Revolution of '89 itself was a deviation from progress or the sincere expression of the humanitarian movement.

In Germany, the confederation of kings is quietly undermining the work of the Frankfurt Assembly; in Hungary, the Tsar, allied with the Emperor, is calling on the barbarians against the nationalities; in Rome, the conspiracy of priests is preparing to stifle, by treason and force, the liberal momentum; in France, a foolish and perjured power is preparing, under the guise of parliamentary legality, the extinction of socialism and the Republic.

It is no longer merely, as in the past, the altar and the throne that are conspiring against the people: it is the altar, the throne and the strongbox. The coming week will decide our salvation or our doom; our salvation, if the new Mountain understands its duties; our doom, if it allows itself to be lulled to sleep by the clamor of the tribune.

The representatives of the socialist democracy know it as well as we do: two parties divide the world; the party of capital, which is the old party of monarchy and theocracy, and the party of labor, which is that of philosophy and liberty.

The last elections were held under the sway of this dualism.

The party of capital has published that the great, the only business at this moment is to annihilate the party of labor, socialism.

The party of labor, in turn, declared that it accepted the electoral struggle, not as an instrument for realizing its ideas, but as a means of asserting its rights.

"I vote, therefore I exist," said socialism; "I vote, therefore I am a political party, even a constitutional one; I vote, therefore the persecution, official and unofficial, from which I have suffered for fifteen months, must, by virtue of this vote, cease in France and abroad."

Such was the thinking of the socialist party in the last elections. And it was in order to give this thinking a more energetic meaning, in order to leave no doubt about the spirit and scope of the vote, that the democratic socialist committee for the Seine elections refused to merge with the committee of the *Friends of the Constitution*, which was republican like itself, but which had not yet definitively accepted the social color.

Thus, the meaning, the purpose, the scope of the socialist elections are not ambiguous: above all, it is about demanding recognition of socialism, as part of the legal system, as an essential element of the Constitution.

This recognition, as we have said, must be expressed, internally, by the amnesty of all political prisoners since the February revolution; externally, by the recognition of Hungarian nationality and of the Roman republic.

What the Constituent Assembly could, with some appearance of reason, consider as a matter of current policy, the amnesty of those condemned for political and socialist reasons, and the recognition of the Revolution abroad, rose, through the fact of the elections of May 13, to the level of a constitutional question.

Just as, under the monarchy, the opposition and the ministry had common ground, which was the Charter, and as a consequence the opposition could not be condemned, imprisoned, shot by the conservative party for the way in which it intended to apply the Charter; so today, socialism and the reactionary party meet, whether they like it or not, on common ground, which is the Constitution; and those who call themselves socialists cannot be fined, exiled, imprisoned, at the whim of the reactionaries, for the way in which they intend to apply the Constitution.

One of two things is true: either, before the elections, the socialists should have been exterminated, Rome sacked and the Cossacks called in, or today socialists must be tolerated in France, in Rome, in Hungary, everywhere. For the socialists, both by the rights granted to them by the Constitution and by their participation as voters and representatives, are an integral part of the Republic, an integral part of the Constitution. Socialism and capitalism, like the National Assembly and the President of the Republic, are the two powers of the State...

This amnesty, this recognition of the Roman Republic, which the Constituent Assembly, whether through fear, doubt, or weakness, was excusable to refuse, before the Legislative Assembly are by right.

Therefore, the new Montagnards should no longer proceed by way of *propositions*, as before, with regard to amnesty and foreign affairs: they must proceed by way of *ultimation*.

Before taking part in deliberations, before engaging in the duties imposed on them by their mandate, they must, at the same time as they have their powers verified, have the rights of their principals recognized.

This right, we repeat, is amnesty, it is the recognition of the Revolution in Hungary and in Rome.

For this, they do not need to solicit, propose, discuss or petition: they must demand.

If, within eight days, the question is not posed in these terms from the rostrum; if the situation of the socialist and revolutionary party is not politically defined; if the Mountain is met with the majority's refusal and disregards it, then socialism and the Revolution are finished. No vote of the Assembly, no act of the government can be accused by it of unconstitutionality: perseverance will suffice for capital to defeat its enemy.

We therefore believe that the duty of the representatives of the Mountain is to file as soon as possible a collective declaration stating that they are not allowed to take part in the deliberations of the Assembly, and that they protest against all acts of the legislative power, until it has been decided affirmatively on these two questions: amnesty and recognition of the Roman republic, both of which are nothing other than recognition of the February revolution itself.

The refusal of the majority of the Assembly would result in a second collective declaration from the Mountain addressed to their constituents, in which they would inform them:

That the February revolution, outraged in one of its elements, attacked in its manifestations, is declared by the majority of the Legislative Assembly null and void;

That the socialist party, which has twelve million members in France, continues to be outlawed;

That in the eyes of the government European public right was not modified either by the overthrow of the monarchy in February 1848 or by the Constitution of November 4, which was its consequence, nor by all the external events that followed;

That, in this situation, with the Revolution being denied and the Constitution openly attacked, they are not allowed to fulfill their mandate;

Finally, they should invite the citizens to legal resistance, by immediately organizing the refusal of taxes, military service and all obedience.

If the new representatives of the Mountain hesitated before this measure of public safety, we would not hesitate to tell them that they are unworthy of the people's trust, and that they have no choice but to resign their mandate immediately.

If the democratic and socialist committee, if the people themselves, did not dare to make their voices heard, and impose their will on their representatives in this decisive circumstance, we would be forced to admit that the French people are not ready for political life, and we would tell them to resign themselves to kissing M. Fould's heels and eating M. Grandin's hay...

Let us not waste a minute: minutes, at this moment, are centuries. In eight days, perhaps, the Neapolitans, the Austrians, with Oudinot's soldiers and the Jesuits, will have destroyed the Roman Republic; in eight days, perhaps, the Tsar's slaves will have crushed the patriots of Kossuth and Bem.

Justice! Justice! The time has come, or never, for the representatives to speak; and what they say will be executed.

We have no more resources, no more hope than in their energy: their conduct in the face of the counter-revolution will soon teach us whether we should rely more on the heroism of the Magyars than on the patriotism of our representatives.

Paris, May 31.

SIMPLE QUESTIONS

Le Constitutionnel is waging a war of skirmishes against us, in which, it must be said, it is marvelously aided by its former columnist, now its crony, Citizen Thoré. Such is the fate of *Le Peuple*, every time they put forward a principle, formulate an idea or invoke a right favorable to the democratic and social cause: to be attacked from all sides, by both the so-called friends and the true enemies of the Revolution. The songwriter Béranger, whom we should call the wise Béranger, is quite right when he says: "Before being fully a Republic, France needs to eat, for a little while longer, the monarchical cow."

The *Constitutionnel* therefore points out to us, with its characteristic malice, that the party of the constitutional opposition, as we have been pleased to call socialism, is reduced, for the time being, to the *National* and the *Peuple*, and it cites, as evidence of its assertion, the newspaper of citizen Thoré, which, for its part, is not constitutional at all.

Obviously, the situation that would result from the doubt or mistrust of other organs of the socialist democracy would be untenable, and to be perfectly clear, we readily agree with the *Constitutionnel* that if, unfortunately, we were mistaken, it would be too easy for them. We therefore owe it to ourselves, to our readers, and to our country to address each of our friends in the democratic and socialist press by name and ask them what they think of the constitutionality of the party they represent.

We know the ambiguity inherent in these two words of constitutional opposition, illustrated in turn, from 1814 to 1848, by great acts of energy and by egregious cowardice, by an immortal success (July 1830) and by unparalleled impotence (February 22, 1848). But men who seek above all the truth do not dwell on words; they focus on the facts, and he is a coward who conceals his opinion. Now, so that the matter may be clear and unambiguous, we ask *La Réforme*, *La Démocratie pacifique*, *La République*, *La Révolution démocratique et sociale* and all our friends in the socialist press:

If the Social Revolution is not the final stage of a revolutionary period, whose starting point is in the formation of nationalities, and which has expressed itself in turn through polytheistic institutions, through Christianity, through philosophy, and lastly through the Revolution of 1789! If, therefore, from this first point of view, the February Revolution does not already possess a character of historical legitimacy?

If the application of the principle of equality in the political order did not lead to the application of the same principle in the economic order; such that the representative principle, definitively enshrined by the July Revolution, inevitably engendered a dynastic opposition; the dynastic opposition, a republican opposition, and the republican opposition a socialist opposition; which means that socialism, already legitimized by history, is legitimized a second time by logic?

If it is not true that the social revolution which, despite its historical lineage and its logical necessity, was nevertheless, after February 24, only a *fact*, a simple *fait accompli*, as Thore said, and nothing more, subsequently became a legal and constitutional fact, first by the elections of April 23, then by the vote of the Constitution, and finally by the elections of May 13?

If it is not true that the Constitution of November 4th continues the principles of socialism?

If it is possible to apply this Constitution, it will be without social reforms that fully satisfy the new democracy?

Therefore, if the Socialist Party, implicated as a co-sequence and corollary in the Constitution, is not entitled to invoke the Constitution?

If, in doubt, the elections of May 13 did not give this party a legal, constitutional, parliamentary consideration, which rightly or wrongly could until then be contested?

If the representatives of the Mountain, at the second session of the Legislative Assembly, by shouting: *Long live the democratic and social Republic!*, uttered a constitutional cry or a seditious cry; if they committed an act of rebellion, or if they only exercised their right?

If, as interpreters of the thought of the Montagnards, and anticipating in thought the day when it would be permitted for them to make themselves heard, we were wrong to say that they would be in the Legislative Assembly, in the party of resistance, what the Barrot opposition had been, under the monarchy, to the Guizot ministry?

If, despite our desire to be more revolutionary than constitutional, we have compromised the honor, dignity, and legitimacy of our party, by concluding from all these facts that socialism, since May 13th, has been part of the legal country!

Would we have been better off saying with Thore that democratic and socialist opinion is an *unconstitutional, illegal, factious* opinion?

Wouldn't our party have everything to gain by declaring itself free from all illegality and unconstitutionality in the future?

And, since nature abhors a vacuum, what will the socialist party have to do to make up for what it lacks in terms of the Constitution and the laws?...

These are the questions we implore our friends to answer; for we have decisions to make. We need to know whether, despite the Constitution and events, we must remain on the ground of illegality and unconstitutionality, whether we are ultimately citizens or conspirators.

Paris, June 1st.

NEW QUESTIONS

This morning, we addressed a series of questions to the organs of the socialist democracy regarding whether or not it is useful for socialism to declare itself constitutional. While awaiting the responses of our colleagues, we will present them with further questions on the same subject, to which we also request their replies.

Socialism can be seen as a power that acts directly in proportion to its unity, and inversely in proportion to its extension.

This definition of socialism, deduced from Kant's general theory of concepts, hardly needs to be demonstrated. It is clear that the simpler the idea, the more vividly and fully it grasps the mind; conversely, the more divergence there is — which is the inevitable consequence of all propaganda — the more, by its very divergence, it loses its effectiveness.

In February, as after the June Days, socialism was still in the state of a sect: the number of its adherents was perhaps not 20,000.

In both these periods, socialism was reduced, for the people, to this single term: *Right to work*, soon converted into this other: *Negation of capital*.

Socialism was therefore at its maximum energy, as well as at its lowest degree of popularization.

Five months later, in the December elections, socialism! had gathered around 600,000 votes; it had increased by 2,500 percent. On June 26, it represented only one three hundred and sixtieth of the population; in December, it already represented one fifteenth.

But already the divergence within socialism had also manifested itself: one part of the socialists supported Raspail as their candidate; another part, Ledru-Rollin; a third; finally, that of *La Démocratie pacifique*, had declared itself neutral.

Six months later, on May 13, 1849, socialism, still growing, found itself strong enough to determine the election of 220 representatives, more or less enrolled under its banner: it represents, one can say, a third of the country; it has risen, since December 10, by 500 percent.

Socialism, until the day it becomes a proven system, where, consequently, it compels convictions, is destined to still grow, both by its acquired strength and by its own energy, by about 100 percent. That is to say, that independently of any progress of doctrine, socialism can, in our opinion, reasonably claim to be accepted by two-thirds of the nation, which, given the division of property in France, constitute almost the total of citizens who can consider themselves more particularly interested in social reforms.

But this probable increase in socialism can only occur insofar as it continues to act on the surrounding environment, and insofar as this action is related to the current situation of the party and to the obstacles it encounters.

If socialism were to cease to act, not only would it no longer progress, it would regress. It would suffer the same fate as Louis Bonaparte, who, brought to the presidency by a force of five and a half million votes, now finds himself annihilated by socialism, legitimism, Orleanism, etc., and reduced, in order to be of any consequence, to acting as the mouthpiece of a coalition.

Now, ask the man who contributed most to the election of Louis Bonaparte, M. Émile de Girardin, what the use of this singular decadence is: he will answer you, as we do, that Louis Bonaparte doomed himself because he presented himself as a force of inertia, in a word, through inaction.

So the strength that socialism is currently drawing from universal suffrage will be worn down by inaction, just as it was worn down for the President of the Republic: in three months the Mountain, by the sole fact of its inertia, will be at the level of Louis Bonaparte.

The question of life or death for socialism therefore lies entirely in ACTION. But how will socialism act now that it has become a political party, represented in the Legislative Body by 200 of its elected members?

Perhaps the response will be that socialism will act as it has until now, through agitation and propaganda.

But agitation is a regime which the people soon tire of, and which must be converted as quickly as possible into a regular movement, under penalty of sterility, anarchy, retrogradation and consequently decadence.

As for propaganda, we have already said that the more it spreads, the more it generates diversity: so that, having reached a certain point in its development, socialism loses through its divergence as much as it gains through its principle, and unless it formulates itself as a positive science, it must sooner or later decline and die out.

To escape this double disadvantage of sterile agitation and stationary divergence, socialism is therefore obliged to do two things: the first is to create a new unity of action; the second is to move from the regime of programs and manifestos to the thorough examination of questions.

Let us only concern ourselves with the first of these two things, unity of action.

The elections of May 13th established socialism as a political party: it must therefore act as a political party, that is to say as a fraction of the sovereign.

But how does a political party operate? — Through the initiative of its representatives.

As soon as a party is politically constituted, as soon as it has gained access to national representation, it must seek to expand and assimilate the entire nation through legislative means. From then on, its unity is *officially* constituted: it only remains for it to constitute it *dogmatically*, that is to say, to determine the course of its actions.

Now that socialism is politically and constitutionally represented, by what act will it first manifest its existence?

What will the Mountain do, in short, to hasten the realization of socialism?

It are not, at least for the time being, laws: the Mountain does not have a majority.

It is not a matter of foreign policy: abroad, as at home, the majority of the Legislative Body is opposed to socialism.

What the Mountain can and must do is what all minorities in the world do: it is *opposition*, within the limits of the Constitution, since outside these limits it would not have a voice, and, first of all, it is to have its rights recognized and respected.

Thus, everything in the Constitution that can serve socialism, the representatives must incessantly produce and promote; everything that violates the Constitution, they must prevent.

That's not all. Socialism, by virtue of the importance it has acquired in national representation and in the country; by the outcome of the last elections, as well as by the direction of the new institutions, is now an integral part of the republican system; it can, as we have said and as we will continue to emphasize, claim the status of a constitutional opposition. It follows that the representatives have the right and the duty to prevent anything that might affect socialism in its political existence and its dignity as a party.

This, then, is the current situation of the socialist party.

The Constitution, in its most democratic and progressive aspects, is being violated by the power;

It is violated by the legislative majority, in its relations with the minority;

It is trampled underfoot by the reactionary press, in its daily polemics.

Can the representatives of the Mountain, without peril for socialism and for the Revolution, tolerate such a state of affairs? — This is the first question we address to our colleagues.

How, unable to tolerate it, will they manage to prevent it? — That is our second question.

We would be happy if someone discovered a solution that could satisfy everyone; as for us, we only see three possibilities:

1. Parliamentary protest: this is inertia, abdication. The May elections have pulled us out of this condition of being persecuted, which we could bear for a time, but to which it would be shameful to resign ourselves any longer.

2. Armed protest: that is civil war. We do not know it, we would never advise it. Moreover, the very essence of the representative principle opposes it. The mandate of a representative can never become an instrument of civil war: the duty of the people's elected representative is to offer himself, if necessary, as a sacrifice, and to expose himself alone to the *coups d'état* of the power, in order to spare the blood of the people.

3. Tax protest or tax refusal: this is the means provided for by all the constitutions that, since 1789, have successively served as the basis for our public law. — By refusing to pay taxes, society is divided and government impossible...

We challenge anyone to escape from this triple alternative.

We are told that tax refusal is impractical. We maintain that nothing could be easier. And we offer, in this regard, to lecture not only the workers and peasants, but our colleagues themselves, if they need it.

Moreover, it is not about the solution we have proposed, and which we continue to believe is acceptable; it is about finding a solution.

What do the representatives of the Mountain propose to do to stop the counter-revolution? What does the democratic and socialist press itself advise? We have no advice to give our representatives; but perhaps we have the right to summon our colleagues. What advice do they offer?

For, let there be no mistake: if the socialist opposition, which, whether it likes it or not, we persist in calling the constitutional opposition, shrinks from the imperative necessity of its duties, there will first be a retreat, then a decline of the socialist party; but, as the Revolution cannot perish, what happened to the opposition of 1847 will happen to this opposition, public opinion will turn away from it, and, for the second time, the revolution will be accomplished outside of parliamentary channels, which could bring about the fulfillment of the famous prophecy of M. Odilon Barrot on the revolution of 1830: *The last man and the last coin!*

(No. 196. — June 3.)

Paris, June 2.

A party that refuses to profit from the advantages that the law guarantees it, because it does not want to submit to the law, and claims to be subject only to its own pleasure, is a party struck with disgrace, which proclaims its own unworthiness.

For the past two weeks we have been saying to the new Mountain:

We accepted the battle on legal grounds; you have triumphed in the name of the Constitution; you are a product of this Constitution: strive to assert your constitutionality. Seize the Constitution, which the government disregards; seize power; for he who has the Constitution on his side will soon have power. Become, if necessary, despite your reluctance, President of the Republic and ministers; govern for three years in accordance with your inclinations and with the full powers guaranteed to you by the Constitution; after which, you will convene a new Constituent Assembly, and you will amend the Constitution according to the experience you have gained and the needs of the situation.

Certainly, if politics is anything at all, we believe we have demonstrated sound political judgment on this occasion. Six months ago, we were criticized for knowing nothing about politics because we were only concerned with socialism, which some people, now more fervent than we, were trying to set aside. Now that the aim is to leverage socialism's political successes, we are criticized for not being socialists.

We greatly fear one thing: that those who accuse us now, and those who accused us in the past, are themselves nothing, neither socialists nor politicians.

To an entirely practical question, what do our eternal adversaries oppose? A question of theory.

“The Constitution is bad,” says one, “and we don't want it.” — “Good or bad,” replies the other, “we don't want a Constitution; we will never be constitutional; we are and will remain what we have always been: revolutionaries!”

Of course, they would be hard-pressed to define what they mean by *revolution*... But let's leave that aside.

The *Republic* first confronts us with the authority of Citizen Proudhon, one of the *sixteen* members of the Mountain who voted against the Constitution. As if there were nothing in common between a legislative act and a political act. As if we intended to perpetuate this Constitution!

“Yes,” adds this otherwise easygoing newspaper, “we are willing to use the Constitution, but only insofar as it serves to dismantle the government: otherwise, we don't want it. We don't take it as a rule. Apart from the needs of our polemic, the Constitution means nothing to us.”

These people, as you can see, have never done any business: they don't know what an *obligation* is. They believe a debtor is free to renege on their debt simply because they are paying exorbitant interest. They readily invoke the contract when it benefits them; they reject it as soon as someone tries to use it against them. For them, the Constitution is nothing more than a weapon of war, all the more useful if their adversaries are simple enough to submit to it. Let them become the masters, and the Constitution will be nothing more than their own whim. Give them ten thousand men from the Paris garrison and one hundred thousand rifles with cartridges to arm the people, and after shouting “*Long live the Constitution!*” on January 29th, they will shout “*Down with the Constitution!*” on June 29th.

Undoubtedly, there are serious reasons for such strange behavior. What are these reasons? We have searched with all our might, and this is what we have discovered:

“There are,” says the *Vraie République*, “principles that precede and are superior to the Constitution, and which this Constitution has disregarded.”

Note that by arguing from these principles, the *Vraie République* is doing nothing more than invoking an article of the Constitution, which it nevertheless refuses to recognize.

So be it: there are principles that predate and supersede the Constitution but are not written into it. The question is how to incorporate them, which cannot be done without discussion, and which will not be achieved on the first attempt; for there is no one in the world — we exclude neither Saint-Simon, nor Fourier, nor Pierre Leroux, nor the Mountain itself — who is capable of recognizing, classifying, organizing and gaining universal acceptance for the principles that predate and supersede the Constitution, and which have remained outside its purview.

We are thus inevitably placed either in a state of perpetual insurrection — what our friends, apparently untruthfully, call a *revolutionary state* — or on a path of endless, successive compromises. There is no middle ground, unless one still maintains that progress and insurrection are one and the same.

Well! The Constitution has emerged from this dilemma, and, for our part, we agree with it, we accept the solution.

It is a principle prior to and superior to myself, says the Constitution, article 1 of the preamble, that progress must be rational and peaceful.

It is another, says the Civil Code, interpreting ancient wisdom, that "legally formed agreements have the force of law for those who made them; that they can only be revoked by their mutual consent, or for the reasons authorized by law; that they must be executed in good faith." (Art. 1134.)

From this it follows that the first of the principles prior to and superior to the Constitution is to take it itself as law, and to execute it in good faith, until the time marked for its revision.

Have we ever seen revolutionaries resist the Revolution, because the Revolution is not about pleasure, but progress; — ambitious people refuse power, because instead of taking it they would have to accept it; — conspirators reject the fruits of the conspiracy, because that would mean ceasing to conspire?

Yet this is where we stand with the great revolutionaries of the *République*, the *Vraie République*, and the *Révolution démocratique et sociale*. We were wrong the other day with regard to the *Constitutionnel*, and we offer them our sincere apologies. We had overestimated the good sense of our younger colleagues; our elder had judged them better than we did.

What will they say, one of these mornings, to Louis Bonaparte and the *Constitutionnel*, when they present them with this argument supported by a hundred thousand bayonets?

"We are willing to accept the Constitution, but only provisionally, and only against socialism, and insofar as it is useful to us in demolishing the Republic. Beyond that, we do not want it. We do not accept the Constitution as a rule; we use it, it is true, for the purposes of our polemic, and as an *ad hominem* argument, to demonstrate that socialists are beggars, who recognize neither faith nor law, and with whom one must reason only with gunpowder and lead. Apart from that, the Constitution is nothing to us, and our reason is that there are principles superior to and prior to the Constitution, which the Constitution does not recognize and without which no society can subsist. Among these are the mutual subordination of men to one another, according to the scale of talents and fortunes, and the unity of power, manifested throughout history by the monarchy."

We would like to know what the revolutionaries of the *République*, of the *Vraie République* and of the *Révolution démocratique et sociale* would respond to this way of arguing.

If Louis Bonaparte, suspected of harboring unconstitutional ambitions, has thus far been thwarted in his coups d'état, it is because the Constitution kept him in check. Who will be able to restrain him now that the social democrats themselves declare that they reject the Constitution!

And, in truth, Louis Bonaparte and M. Barrot are great fools to bargain so much with their scruples. There is no longer, at this point, a Constitution.

What exists are two parties arranged in battle formation; — one, which comprises two-thirds of the people, which has the majority in the National Assembly; which controls the administration, the budget, the army, and which only wants the Constitution to preside; — the other, which forms about a third of the nation, which is generally composed of the poorest citizens; which has neither police, nor finances, nor soldiers, nor weapons, and which only accepts the Constitution only in order to conspire.

We have sometimes spoken of the dissolution of society: now it has come to pass. The democratic and socialist press has just denounced it. There is no longer a Constitution: we are forced to rely on the most ancient and superior laws, on force. It is force that governs us; the strongest will rule.

So, Louis Bonaparte should hesitate no longer. His declaration to the democratic and socialist press has just created new rights and new duties for him. He has the power, and the Constitution is nothing: it is up to him to decide. *Dictatorship or despotism, we wouldn't give a hair's breadth for the choice.*

Paris, June 3.

MORE QUESTIONS

If the primary virtue of a republican journalist were to remain silent while awaiting instructions from his superiors; if it were not, on the contrary, a prerogative of the free press to raise issues and engage the public before they were even brought to the floor, we would have refrained from raising this question of the socialist party's *constitutionality*, a question that must have so terrified those of our fellow believers who, having conspired so much in their lives, are quite surprised that their conspiracies have led them... to the Constitution!

But we would consider ourselves unworthy of wielding a pen, as well as of living in a Republic, if we were to maintain a complacent silence on anything. Before truth and justice, we know neither friends nor enemies. To those whom this puritanical writerly stance would scandalize, we would have only one thing to say: that, despite our poverty, we make our pen neither an instrument of conspiracy nor a commodity.

We will therefore continue to ask questions: and whether they are answered or not, our readers will know where they stand.

Yesterday, therefore, M. Odilon Barrot came to announce to the National Assembly the formation of a new ministry: at the same time, the telegraph carried the news to the far reaches of the Republic.

If this ministry consisted only of men like Messrs. Barrot, Passy, Dufaure, Tocqueville and Lanjuinais, we would simply call it a ministry of the extreme right-wing republican movement. Note that we do not say extreme right-wing, because the extreme right wing of the Legislative Assembly is not at all republican; it came to destroy the Constitution, as is easily seen from its newspapers, the *Courrier de la Gironde*, the *Assemblée nationale*, etc., and as certain socialist newspapers would have the Mountain do as well... Messrs. Barrot, Passy, Dufaure, Tocqueville and Lanjuinais are republicans of the future, moderate, timid, resigned, who accept the Republic with all sorts of monarchical reservations, and who will do, or allow to be done, whatever Messrs. Rulhières and Falloux please to the development of republican ideas, provided that at least the letter of the Constitution is respected.

Thus, the ministry, lacking cohesion and having, like the rainbow, one foot in the Constitution and one foot out, is merely a compromise ministry, and consequently a transitional one. May all our enemies pass away, and pass quickly; that is all we can wish for them.

What will be the policy of this ministry?

There's no need to eavesdrop at the Élysée Palace to know this: a simple inspection of the names suffices. Messrs. Falloux and Changarnier on one side, Barrot and Dufaure on the other — this is reaction under the guise of equality. Whatever the leanings of the government, trust these two legal experts to clothe their arguments in legal and constitutional justifications. We will therefore have a policy of formalism, this policy

of so-called honest people, who wouldn't arrest a parricide without proper authorization, and who would hold a republican incommunicado for eighteen months. This is how they will find a way to abolish the Roman Republic without a fight, and to come to the aid of the coalition, while simultaneously arming against it.

And therein lies precisely, in our opinion, the greatest danger to the Republic. Now, faced with this system of ambiguous politics, of which Messrs. Falloux and Changarnier will be the instigators and Messrs. Barrot and Dufaure the casuists, what will be the attitude of the Mountain?

Will it place its outside the Constitution, as he does, and give advice? With men like Messrs. Dufaure and Barrot, it would mean losing everything. The government already has the power: to grant it further legality is to legitimize all its usurpations in advance.

The Montagne will therefore place itself within the Constitution: but then there will be no mental reservations. It must declare loudly that its opposition is aimed not at the Constitution, which predates and is superior to the Legislative Assembly and the President of the Republic, but at the personal policy of Louis Bonaparte, adopted by the majority of the Assembly.

We eagerly await, and the entire country awaits with us, the Mountain's expression of its views. The Crown's speech was once followed by the discussion of the address; the President of the Republic's message must now be answered by a declaration from the Mountain.

That's not all.

Messrs. Pascal Duprat, Charras and Latrade, members of the former center left, have just submitted a proposal for amnesty.

However, amnesty must have a completely different meaning today than it did six months ago. It is no longer the pardon granted to a few thousand citizens who groan on the pontoons, in prisons or in exile: it is, so to speak, the disavowal, the retraction of everything that has been done, for a year, against socialism.

To give amnesty another meaning would be to misunderstand public opinion; it would distort the result of the May elections, and deceive the people's expectations.

It is therefore necessary that this restorative character of the amnesty be clearly established; this is what we meant when we asserted that the amnesty must be demanded, not be begged for. The amnesty is a right of socialism and a duty of the government. Whether orators present it in parliamentary form is not our concern. What we want is for the amnesty to put an end to socialist persecution, to usher in an era of discussion and tolerance, and to satisfy our party by recognizing its political rights.

What will be the attitude of the Mountain here again!

After having demonstrated, through all the arguments of humanity, sound politics, etc., the necessity of the amnesty, will it dare to defend the party it represents? Will it dare to say that everything done against socialism for the past year has been done against right? That the Bourges convictions, by which they intended to strike socialism far more than the riot, were unjust; that the brutal dissolution of the national workshops, while the decree of the provisional government guaranteeing the right to

work was still in effect, was unjust; that the executions after the battle, the courts-martial, the deportations without trial, were unjust; that the harassment of soldiers for socialism, the disarmament of the National Guard carried out out of hatred for socialism, the relentless prosecutions by the public prosecutor's office against the socialist press, etc., etc.; that all of this has been unjust; that right has been constantly violated, for reasons of opinion, against us personally? But, finally, having been freed by universal suffrage from the condemnation pronounced against us by the authorities, we demand that the authorities cease to treat us any longer as martyrs and outcasts!

Thus, it is not rehabilitation we seek: our rehabilitation lies in our consciences, and our ideas stem solely from our free will. We desire only justice. The amnesty will be for us what the revocation of the edicts of persecution was for the Christian Church after the rise of Constantine. Certainly, the Church did not need an edict from the emperor to be holy; nevertheless, it sought it for the safety of its children.

Will the Mountain dare, once again, to make these truths heard in front of the representatives of the reaction?

If it does so, it will recognize, by the very reasons it will have to put forward, that the political situation of socialism has changed since May 13; that before the elections it was considered an enemy of the Republic and of society, therefore unconstitutional, illegal, immoral; that this was the cause of its suffering; but that the suffrage of 3 million voters, having erased the slander, must at the same time put an end to the persecution.

If, on the contrary, the Mountain refuses to raise the question of the amnesty in this way, it implicitly acknowledges that socialism was rightly persecuted, and justly condemned and vilified. It is not pleading for an innocent person, but seeking pardon for a guilty one. By doing so, it aligns itself with the enemies of socialism, denies its origins and sacrifices its constituents.

Would the Mountain perhaps claim that the amnesty is premature; that obtaining it through adherence to the Constitution would be too costly; that it is better to leave the condemned of socialism in their exile, prisons and penal colonies; that this is essential to the dignity of the party; that the freedom of a few thousand citizens cannot be weighed against the abolition of any Constitution, the sovereign goal of the Republic and of socialism?

If that were the policy of the Mountain, we would appeal to the people!

[Working translations by Shawn P. Wilbur; last revised September 2, 2026.]