

To Unmask Politics is to Destroy It

At the risk of repeating myself let me now pose this question: What is the voter expressing when he drops his ballot paper into the box?

By such an act, elector is telling candidate: I give you my freedom, unrestrictedly and unreservedly; I place at your disposal and abandon to your discretion my intellect, means of action, possessions, revenues, activity and entire fortune; I surrender to you my rights of sovereignty. Similarly and by extension, I also surrender to you the rights and sovereignty of my offspring, relatives and fellow-citizens — active and passive alike. All of this I surrender to you so that you may use them as you see fit. My only assurance is your whim.

Such is electoral control. Argue, oppose, dispute, wax poetical and sentimentalise, but you will not change a thing. Such is the deal. And it is all the same if this one is the candidate or someone else; republican or monarchist, the man who has himself elected is my master and I one of his chattels; we French are all his chattels.

The evidence, then, is that together with its own alienation, the electorate sets the seal upon that of its neighbours. From which it follows that the vote is, on the one hand, a swindle, and, on the other, an evil, or, to put it more plainly, theft.

If all citizens were electors and all electors were to vote, the vote would be only a universal swindle, since in that case, all would have lost out equally through the actions of each. But let just one elector abstain or be prevented from so doing and theft comes into the picture. When more than three out of the nine or ten millions abstain — as has been happening — the numbers robbed represent too large a minority for this to be set aside. The old principle of integrity in the powers-that-be is eroded and the decadence of the powers-that-be is in direct proportion to the erosion of that principle.

Anarchy, a Journal of Order

Anselme Bellegarrigue

1850

lots. Let this be stated by way of my settling accounts over form, without compromise to my reservations with regard to substance.

But I know republicans, or people who pass for such, who are greatly afraid that the people, by abstaining, may encourage the renaissance of royal sovereignty. In vulgar language — which is my own language — we may say that the fear felt by these republicans mirrors the affliction they would feel at their personal unelectability, since if, as the talk has it, republicans have rendered significant service, I can affirm that neither you nor I have glimpsed as much as a shadow of those services in terms of cash, liberty, dignity or honour. Perhaps I am de-mystifying patriotism a tad, but what do you expect? I was not born a poet and in the mathematics of history I have discovered that, but for such republicans, the monarchy would have been dead and buried sixty years ago; that but for those republicans who have done monarchy the aforementioned service of re-establishing authority every time that the people has been disposed to shove it aside, we French — myself included — would long since have become free. Believe me, monarchists will not make much headway on the day that these republicans have the extreme courtesy of indulging in no more monarchism. I can assure you that monarchists will be stopped dead in their tracks when we abandon the electoral field to them instead of leaving them simply as a majority.

What I have been saying will seem odd, right? As indeed it is; but the situation too is an odd one, and I am not one of those people who bring old solutions to new situations, like those who, over the last half century, have been papering the walls of the shanties of revolutionary journalism.

to sacrificing your vote to rather more substantial realities. For the powers-that-be, your unhappiness is a very bad bet; but if they are going to need your ballot paper to give them courage, they would be very weak and I doubt if they could hold onto the reins.

Therefore, the important thing to achieve is not unanimity in abstention, any more than unanimity of voting is required for formation of a government. Unanimity in inertia could not be an essential prerequisite for the advent of the anarchic order which it is in the interest and to the credit of the French to achieve. There will always be enough functionaries, parvenus, aspirants, State rentiers and Treasury pensioners to make up the electorate. But the number of Chinese willing to maintain these mandarins of power at any cost is dwindling day by day, and if there are still nineteen of them left around two years hence, let me say that it will not be through any fault of mine.

Then again — since we must tell the whole story — what is this that you call universal suffrage?

One newspaper says: We must elect Citizen Gouvernard.

Another objects: No, we should elect Citizen Guidane.

“Don’t listen to my adversary” — the former responds — “Citizen Gouvernard is the man we need. And these are the reasons why.” And so on.

“Pay no heed to what my rival tells you” — the second newspaper returns — “Without Citizen Guidane, nothing can be achieved. And here are the reasons why.” Etc.- At which point, after having previously remained walled up in Olympian reserve, a third newspaper (the most heavyweight of them all) enters the lists and agisterially delivers its verdict: “We must elect Monsieur Gouvernard.”

And Monsieur Gouvernard is returned.

And you would have it that it is the people which make the choice?

That decision had as little to do with the will of the people as if power were conferred by means of a roll of the dice or drawing

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souls. It does not matter how narrow the numbers of citizens involved in the making of a government, for there is no diminution of its authority. But what I am concerned to demonstrate here is that no government could live without the acquiescence of the bulk of the nation.

Philosophy, and, following that, a much more dependable teacher — experience and the facts — have demonstrated irrefutably that the real reason for the permanence of governments resides, not in material or electoral support from the citizenry of a country, but rather in public belief or interest, because belief and interest are one and the same.

For the government we have right now, we are indebted to the electoral contests of seven or eight million, highly obedient citizens, every one which has, with every good grace, surrendered two or three days' work in order to avail of the opportunity to surrender themselves bodily and in their possessions to persons unknown to them but to whom they have pledged five five-franc coins in order to buy their friendship. Do the Legislative Assembly and Monsieur Bonaparte seem to you more solidly ensconced than the Chamber of Deputies (created by a mere two hundred thousand tax-payers) was in 1847, or than Louis Philippe, the creation of just one man? Tell me: Do you think that a government established by a million individuals could have been pettier, more unpopular or more confused than one into which eight million individuals have breathed life? Of course you do not think so. There is not a man here — and when I say 'man', I mean the opposite of functionary — who has not seen his interests or beliefs deeply wounded by the regimes that have been installed, one after another, since 1848; as a result, there is not a man who should congratulate himself upon the product of his vote and take the line that his abstention would have given rise to anything worse than what exists. So you are forced to acknowledge that you have squandered your time for the most wretched of outcomes. And unless you mean to carry on wasting your time — which I doubt — it seems to me you must be very close

government lasts, the principle of its authority will remain intact, divine right will persist among us and the people — whose suffrage is the equivalent of the old consecration — will never, ever (and no matter how it may be called) be anything other than a subject.

The move from theocracy to democracy cannot ever come to pass through the exercise of electoral rights, because such exercise is specifically designed to prevent government from dying out, which is to say, to uphold and revive the principle of government primacy. To move from one regime to another, there has to be a break with the mechanism of delegation that inevitably inculcates respect for the theocratic tradition. Its use must be discontinued and not resumed until such time as the stable exercise of self-governance — of self-government — has been enshrined in social practice. Rationally, I can trust to my neighbour to manage some aspects of my future only after I have asserted my ownership of these; if I appoint him prior to my demonstrating my entitlements, he will later refuse to acknowledge me, and he will be right.

But this is what I want to state: unanimity on any issue is not achievable in any country. However, given the manner in which every government is a product of the ballot-box, prevention of the emergence of a government would require nothing less than unanimous abstention. Because, supposing that nine out of ten million voters were to abstain, that would still leave one million voters to install a government which the nation as a whole would be required to obey. And in France there will always be at least a million individuals who will have an interest in setting up a government; which makes a nonsense of the proposition.

And furthermore: it need not be a million men that set up the government; a hundred thousand, ten thousand, five hundred, a hundred or even five individuals can do it and one single citizen can do it. In 1830, Lafayette, acting alone, made a king of Louis Philippe; and over the eighteen years that followed that accession, the parliamentary authority has been formed with the involvement of a mere 200 thousand tax-payers, out of a country of 35 million

Issue One

The World's First Anarchist Manifesto

Anarchy Is Order

If I were to heed the meaning vulgarly attributed to certain words then, since vulgar error has taken “anarchy” to be synonymous with “civil war”, I should be horrified by the title with which I have headed this publication, in that I have a horror of civil strife.

At the same time I account it a pleasure and an honour that I have never been party to a band of conspirators nor any revolutionary battalion; a pleasure and an honour because it furnishes the basis upon which I can establish, for one thing, that I have been enough of an honest man not to pull the wool over the people's eyes, and, for another, that I have been astute enough not to let the wool be pulled over my own eyes by the ambitious. I have watched — I cannot claim unmoved but at any rate with the utmost serenity — the passage of fanatics and charlatans, moved to pity for some and to utter contempt for the rest. And when, in the wake of these bloody struggles — having forced my enthusiasm not to overstep the narrow confines of syllogism — I have sought to draw up a balance-sheet of the benefits that each corpse has bought, the sum has added up to zero, and zero means nothing. That nothing horrifies me; civil war horrifies me also.

Consequently, if I have inscribed ANARCHY on the mast-head of this newspaper, it cannot have been because I take that word in the sense attributed to it — much mistakenly, as I shall be explaining anon — by the governmentalist factions, but rather

have him give? Have you handed him a bill for what you gave him? Are your accounts in deficit? Well: you have no claim against him. The bill that you would submit is worthless. He owes you nothing.

Now you shout and kick up a fuss and threaten! The brouhaha is pointless. Your debtor is your master: bow your heads and move along.

The Bible states that Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. The French go one better; they make a gift of their birthright and of their mess of pottage along with it.

What Conjures Governments into Existence is Not What Keeps Them Alive

Let me say again that I am not discussing rights; what I am discussing, rather inopportunistly, is how rights are presently used. Before making use of my right to appoint delegates, it is important that I start by carrying out an act of sovereignty, then flesh this out in deeds, so that I may understand what I, personally, must do and what should be the parameters of the powers of my delegates. In short, I must consolidate myself before initiating anything else. Institutions ought not to be created by means of the law. Instead, they ought to be the promulgators of laws. First I establish myself and then I will make laws. We ought not to lose sight of the fact that the theory of divine right, to which we can be directly connected, is founded upon a supposed primacy that the government would have over the people. Our whole history, our whole legislation are founded upon this monumental nonsense: that government is a thing that antedates the people, that the people is a derivation from government; that there was, or may well have been, a government around before ever any people existed. This is the established view, and the annals of the world are engraved upon this aberration of the human intellect. Thus, for as long as

except through the agency of prohibitive and oppressive laws. And upon whom do these laws weigh heavily? Upon those who are neither Reds nor Whites, or who are, to their cost, as Red as they are White; upon the blameless multitude; and so the people is utterly pulverised by the cudgel blows that the parties mete out to one another.

Not that I am criticising the government. It was set up in order to govern and govern it does. It avails of its rights and, no matter what it does, in my view it is doing its duty. In affording it power, the vote has implicitly told it; the people is perverse, yours is the righteous path; it is headstrong, where you are moderation; it is stupidity where you are intelligence. The vote which said this to the current majority, to the incumbent president, will say as much again — because it can say no other — to any majority, any incumbent.

So, thanks to the vote and everything that goes with it, the people places itself bodily and in its possessions at the mercy of its elected representatives so that the latter may use and abuse the liberty and fortunes entrusted to their care; entrusted without reservation, for authority has no limits.

You may say: But what about probity? What about discretion? What about honour! Piffle. You indulge in sentiment when you ought to be indulging in calculation. If you stake your interests on conscience, you are investing in a bottomless pit; conscience is a safety valve.

Reflect for a moment upon what you are doing. You cluster around a man as if around a relic; you kiss the hem of his garment; your acclamation of him is deafening, you shower him with gifts; you fill his pockets with gold; for his benefit, you strip yourselves of all your wealth; you tell him — Be free beyond the free, rich beyond the rich, strong beyond the strong, just beyond the just. And you imagine you can then oversee the use he makes of your gifts? That you can criticise this, disapprove of that, calculate his expenditure and call him to account? What account would you

to ensure that it receives the etymological rights it deserves in a democracy. Anarchy is the negation of governments. Governments, whose pupils we are, have naturally found nothing better to devise than to school us in fear and horror of their destruction. But as governments in turn are the negations of individuals or of the people, it is reasonable that the latter, waking up to essential truths, should gradually come to feel a greater horror at its own annihilation than that of its masters.

Anarchy is an ancient word, but, for us that word articulates a modern notion, or rather, a modern interest, the idea being daughter to the interest. History has described as “anarchic” the condition of a people wherein there are several governments in contention one with another, but the condition of a people desirous of being governed but bereft of government precisely because it has too many is one thing and the condition of a people desirous of governing itself and bereft of government precisely because it wishes none quite another. In ancient times, indeed, anarchy was civil war, not because it meant absence of governments but, rather, because it meant a multiplicity of them and competition and strife among the governing classes. The modern notion of absolute social truth or pure democracy has ushered in an entire series of discoveries or interests which have turned the terms of the traditional equation upside down. Thus anarchy, which, when contrasted with the term monarchy, means civil war, is, from the vantage point of absolute or democratic truth, nothing less than the true expression of social order.

Indeed:

Who says anarchy, says negation of government;
Who says negation of government says affirmation of the people;
Who says affirmation of the people, says individual liberty;
Who says individual liberty, says sovereignty of each;

Who says sovereignty of each, says equality;
Who says equality, says solidarity or fraternity;
Who says fraternity, says social order;

By contrast:

Who says government, says negation of the people;
Who says negation of the people, says affirmation of
political authority;
Who says affirmation of political authority, says indi-
vidual dependency;
Who says individual dependency, says class
supremacy;
Who says class supremacy, says inequality;
Who says inequality, says antagonism;
Who says antagonism, says civil war,
From which it follows that who says government, says
civil war.

Whether what I have just stated is new, eccentric or frightful, I cannot tell. I do not know, nor do I care to know. What I do know is that I can boldly argue my case against all of the White and Red governmentalist prose of past, present and future. The truth is that, on this terrain — the terrain of the free man untainted by ambition, diligent in his work, contemptuous of command and refractory to submissiveness — I throw down the gauntlet to functionarism's every argument, all of the rationale of marginalisation and all the champions of taxation — be it monarchist or republican — and regardless of whether it go by the name of progressive, proportional, territorial, capitalist and whether it be on property or on consumption.

Yes, anarchy is order, whereas government is civil war.

When my intellect looks past the wretched details underpinning the day to day dialectic, I discover that the intestinal strifes which, throughout the ages, have decimated humankind, are bound up

will have to ask everything of them; which means that you will never recover possession of anything.

Moreover, understand this — and it is not absolute science, merely pure and simple fact — that had the ill emanated solely from the reactionaries, or had the revolutionaries been in a position to look after your fortunes, you would not be rolling in wealth. Because all governments, from Robespierre to Marat — God rest their souls — were revolutionary; this Assembly that stands before you, before your very eyes, is also made up entirely of revolutionaries. No one was more revolutionary than Monsieur Thiers, the administrator of Our Lady of Loreto. Monsieur de Montalembert has uttered such speeches on liberty that no one could improve upon. Monsieur Berryer was a conspirator from 1830 to 1848. Monsieur Bonaparte has made revolutions in writing, by word of mouth and through his actions; and I am not even going to speak of the Mountain's Convention, a gathering which for months on end held in its possession all of the trappings of government with which it could have wrapped you in opulence. All men have been revolutionaries until they joined the government; but all men too, once they have become part of it, have suffocated the revolution. Should I myself someday find that you have handed the government over to me, and if in a moment of forgetfulness and dizziness, instead of feeling pity and contempt for your stupidity, I were to accept the title of sponsor of the theft you perpetrate against yourselves, then, by God, I swear that I would make the outlook bleak for you! Haven't your past experiences been enough for you? You really are slow on the uptake.

It is only a short while since you enthroned a White government the sole object of which — and you can scarcely take it to task for this — was to get rid of the Reds. If, tomorrow, you were to set up a Red government, its sole object — and you would do well to find fault in this! — will be to dispose of the Whites. But the Whites take no revenge on the Reds and the Reds take none on the Whites

How comes it that these poor wretches of yesterday are my masters today? How is it that these gentlemen hold power and have transferred all liberty, all wealth and all justice to it? Whom are we to hold responsible for the harassment, impositions and iniquities that we are all suffering today? Why, the voters of course.

The Constituent Assembly, which started to draw us into the dance; Monsieur Louis Bonaparte who carried on with the manipulation; and the Legislative Assembly, which added its voice to the chorus. None of this was achieved unaided. No, it is all the product of voting. The responsibility for what has happened and for what is to follow lies with all who voted. We democrats who labour and abstain accept none of this responsibility. Do not look to us for solidarity with oppressive laws, inquisitorial regulations, murders, military executions, imprisonments, transfers and deportations — the immediate crisis by which the country is being ground down. Beat your own breast and prepare yourselves for the judgment of history, you maniacs for government! Our consciences are clear. It is enough that, through a phenomenon that defies all reason, we must endure a yoke that you manufactured alone; it is enough that you have placed in pawn, along with your own possessions, that which was not your own — what ought to have been inviolable and sacred — the liberty and fortunes of the rest of us.

Birthright and the French People's Mess of Pottage

Do not think, ye deluded bourgeois, ruined gentlemen and sacrificed proletarians; do not think that what happened might not have happened had you appointed Peter instead of Paul, had your votes been cast for John and not for Francis. No matter how your vote is cast you yield yourselves up and no matter who emerges as the winner, his victory damages you. No matter who it may be, you

with a single cause, to wit: the destruction or preservation of government.

In the realm of politics, sacrifice of self for the purpose of the maintenance or installation of a government has always meant having one's throat cut and one's entrails torn out. Point me to a place where men openly slaughter one another and I will show you a government behind all the carnage. If you try to explain civil war away as other than the manner of a government's trying to ensconce itself or a government's refusal to quit the stage, you are wasting your time; you will not be able to come up with anything.

And the reason is simple.

A government is set up. In the very instant of its creation, it has its servants and, as a result, its supporters; and the moment that it has its supporters it has its adversaries too. That very fact alone quickens the seed of civil war, because the government, resplendent in its authority, cannot possibly act with regard to its adversaries the way it does with regard to its supporters. There is no possibility of the former's not feeling its favour, nor of the latter's not being persecuted. From which it follows that there is likewise no possibility of conflict between the favoured faction and the oppressed faction not arising from this disparity, sooner or later. In other words, once the government is in place, the favouritism that is the basis of privilege and which provokes division, spawns antagonism and civil strife becomes inevitable.

From which it follows that government is civil war.

There need only be a government supporter on the one hand and an adversary of the government on the other for strife to erupt among the citizenry: it is plain that, outside of the love or hatred borne towards the government, civil war has no *raison d'être*, which means to say that for peace to be established, the citizenry need merely refrain from being, on the one hand, supporters and, on the other, adversaries of the government.

But refraining from attacking or defending the government so as to render civil war impossible is nothing short of paying it no

heed, tossing it on to the dung heap and dispensing with it in order to lay the foundations of social order.

Now, if dispensing with government is, on the one hand, the establishment of order, and, on the other, the enshrinement of anarchy, then order and anarchy go hand in hand.

From which it follows that anarchy is order.

Before I proceed any further, I would ask the reader to beware of the bad impression that may be made by the personal format which I have adopted for the purpose of facilitating argument and refining thought. In this exposition, I represent, not so much the author, as the reader and listener: I stand for man.

Traditional Collective Interest a Fiction

Posed in these terms, the matter — rising above socialism and the unfathomable chaos into which it has been plunged by the petty chieftains of its several tendencies — enjoys the merit of clarity and precision. I am an anarchist, a political and social Huguenot; I deny everything and affirm naught but myself: because the sole truth of which I have material and moral proof and tangible, comprehensible and intelligible evidence, the only real, startling, non-arbitrary truth not susceptible to interpretation, is myself I am. There I have a positive fact. Everything else is abstraction and, in mathematics, would be designated as “x”, an unknown quantity; and I need not trouble myself with it.

In essence, society consists of a vast combination of material and personal interests. The collective or State interest — by virtue of which dogma, philosophy and politics together have thus far demanded wholesale or partial forswearing of individuals and their assets — is a sheer figment which, in its priestly garb, has furnished the basis for the fortunes of all the clergy, from Aaron right up to Monsieur Bonaparte. This imagined interest has no existence outside of legislation.

So, by going along to vote and by the very act of voting, the voter acknowledges that he is not free and awards the person for whom he is voting the power to set him free; he is admitting that he is oppressed and agreeing that the authorities have power to raise him up again; he makes a declaration of his desire to see justice instituted and surrenders to his delegates all authority to judge in the matter.

Very well. But is not the granting of such powers to one or more men tantamount to my forswearing my liberty, my fortune and my rights? Is it not a formal admission that that man or those men — who may set me free, raise me up again, sit in judgement of me — also have the capacity to oppress, ruin and judge me ill? Indeed, it is impossible for them do anything else, given that, having transferred all my rights to them, I now possess none and in clinging to those rights they are merely looking to their own protection.

If I ask something of someone, I am admitting that he possesses what I ask for, it would be an absurdity for me to request that which is already mine. Had I the use of my liberty, fortune and rights, I should not be asking the authorities for them. If I do ask them of the authorities, it is probably because they possess these things and, if that is the case, I fail to see what lessons they need to take from me regarding the use they see fit to make of them.

But, how come the authorities find themselves in possession of what belongs to me? How did they pull it off? The powers-that-be, to take our example from the present, comprise of Monsieur Bonaparte who, only yesterday, was a poor outlaw with not too much liberty, and no more money than he had liberty; the seven hundred and fifty thundering Jupiters who — dressed like everybody else and certainly no more handsome — it is only months since they were chatting with us — and who are in no wise our betters, I venture to say, seven or eight ministers and their acolytes, most of whom, before they held the purse strings, held the devil by the tail with as much obstinacy as any secretary.

though the number of abstentions this time around was smaller than in preceding elections. And, what with Paris being a more active seat of politics than the rest and therefore host to fewer indifferent persons than the provinces, it is true to say that the political authorities are returned without upwards of one third of the country's citizens playing any part in the process. It is to that third that I address myself. Because among them, it will be agreed, there is none of the fear that casts its vote with an eye to maintaining the status quo, none of the ambition that casts its vote in order to gain ground, none of the slavish ignorance that votes for the sake of voting; there one finds the philosophical serenity that implants useful toil, uninterrupted productivity, hidden merit and modest courage in a peaceable conscience.

The parties have hung the label of bad citizens on these wise and serious philosophers of material interests who have no truck with the Saturnalia of intrigue. The parties are horrified by political indifference, that non-porous metal that withstands corruption by any rule. It is high time that we paid attention to these legionaries of abstention, because it is among them that democracy is to be found; it is among them that liberty resides so exclusive and so absolute that such liberty will not be achieved by the nation except on the day when the entire populace apes their example.

In order to clarify the proof I am offering, I must examine two things: first, what is the object of the political vote? And second, what must be its inevitable outcome?

The political vote has a dual purpose, the direct and the indirect. The first is to establish an authority; the second — once that authority has been established — to set the citizens free and reduce the burdens by which they are heavily laden; and also to render them justice.

This, if I am not mistaken, is the acknowledged purpose of political voting, as far as the domestic scene is concerned. External affairs are not the issue here.

It has assuredly never been the case, never will be the case and cannot be the case that upon this earth there exists an interest higher than mine, an interest to which I am obliged to make even a partial sacrifice of my interest. If there are men upon this earth and if I am a man, my interest is the equal of any other's. I cannot owe more than is owed to me; and cannot receive more than the measure which I give. But I owe no debt to him that gives me nothing; so I owe no debt to that collective rationale (or indeed government) because the government gives me nothing and never could give me the equal of what it takes from me (and which, by the way, it itself does not have). In every instance, the best judge of the appropriateness of a choice and the one who ought to determine if it ought to be repeated is myself; and in this regard I have no advice nor lessons nor, above all, orders to await from anyone else. It is the duty and not just the entitlement of every individual to apply this line of argument to himself and not to forget it. That is the true, intuitive, unchallengeable and indestructible basis of the only human interest that should be taken into consideration: the personal interest and individual prerogative. Does this mean that I wish utterly to deny the collective interest? Certainly not. Except that, having no taste for talking to no purpose, I have nothing to say. Having laid down the basis for the personal interest, I operate with regard to the collective interest just as I ought to operate with regard to society when I introduced the individual. Society is the inescapable consequence of the aggregation of individuals; likewise the collective interest a providential and inevitable consequence of the aggregation of personal interests. The collective interest will only be fully realised to the extent that it leaves personal interest untouched; because, if the collective interest is understood to be the interest of all, in any society it requires only trespass against the interest of one single individual for the collective interest to cease immediately from being in everyone's interest and, as a result, for it to cease to exist.

In the inevitable course of things, the collective interest is a natural consequence of the individual's interest. So true is this that the community will not seize my field so as to lay out a thoroughfare or will not ask me to retain my trees for the improvement of the air without offering me compensation. But, just as it is in its interest to compensate me, so it is in mine to defer to it. So much for the collective interest which grows out of the nature of things. There is another which is accidental and abnormal — war. It is not susceptible to this rule. It conjures up another rule and always does a good job of that. We need concern ourselves only with that which is constant. — But when the name of collective interest is bestowed upon the one in light of which they shut down my workshop, prevent me from pursuing such and such an activity, impound my newspaper or my book, trespass against my liberty, ban me from becoming a lawyer or doctor on the basis of my personal study and clientele, issue me with the order not to sell this or purchase that, when, in short, they dub collective interest that which they invoke in order to prevent me from earning my living openly, in the manner of my choosing and under everyone's gaze, I declare that I cannot understand it, or rather, that I understand only too well.

In order to keep the collective interest safe, a man who has cured his neighbour unlawfully — it is an offence to do good unlawfully — is condemned on the pretext that he has no qualification; a man is prevented from championing the cause of a (free) citizen who has placed his trust in him; a writer is arrested; a publisher ruined; a propagandist thrown into prison; a man who cried out or behaved in a certain fashion is sent before the criminal assizes.

What do all these outrages profit me? What do they profit you? From the Pyrenees to the Channel and from the Ocean to the Alps I race, asking each and every one of the thirty six million Frenchmen what they have profited from these inane acts of cruelty perpetrated in their name against wretches whose families moan, whose creditors fret, whose affairs are on the road to ruin and who, once they manage to struggle free of the rigours visited upon them, may

The parties will greet this newspaper with contempt; to my mind, that is the wisest course they can adopt. They would be compelled to show it too much respect were they not to disdain it. This newspaper is not one man's newspaper; it is the newspaper of MAN or it is nothing.

In These Times Elections Are Not and Cannot Be Anything But a Fraud and a Robbery

That said, I will tackle the situation without heeding the feelings of fear or dreams of hope that are evoked, from time to time, in those who look to the monarchy and in the prophets of dictatorship. Availing of the inalienable right afforded me by my status as a citizen and my interest as a man, and reasoning dispassionately as well as without weakness; as austere as my rights and as serene as my thinking, I will say:

Every individual who, in the current state of affairs, drops a paper into the ballot box to choose a legislative authority or an executive authority is — perhaps not wittingly but at least out of ignorance, maybe not directly, but at least indirectly — a bad citizen. I repeat what I have been saying and recant not a single syllable of it. In presenting the matter in this way, I shrug off the monarchists once and for all who chase after their goal of electoral monopoly, and the republican governmentalists who turn the formation of political authorities into a common law product; in reality I plump, not for isolation — which would in any event matter little to me — but for the vast democratic body — upwards of a third of registered electors — whose ongoing abstention registers a protest against the unworthy and wretched fate which, for the past two years and more has left them to endure the foul ambition and no less foul plunder of parties and parasites.

Out of the 353,000 electors registered in the Seine department, only 260,000 participated in the voting on 10 March last, even

this and agree freely but crazily to place themselves at the disposal of their mandatories — I fail to see why their alienation ought to commit their neighbours. I cannot see, for instance, how or why the three million French who never vote are targeted for the lawful or arbitrary oppression visited upon the country by a government returned by the seven million electors who do vote. In short, I fail to see why it should be that a government that I had no hand in making, nor had any desire to make, nor would ever agree to make, should come along and demand my obedience and my money, on the grounds that it has the authority from its makers. Obviously there is trickery at work here and on this count we must explain ourselves, which is what I am about to do. But first allow me to set out the following consideration, prompted by the elections on the 28th of this month.

When the notion occurred to me to bring out this newspaper I did not choose the right day, nor did I even think about the elections in preparation; moreover my ideas are too lofty for them ever to be tailored to circumstances and eventuality. Also, even supposing that the impact of this present exposition were to prove damaging to any party — which is certainly a gratuitous assumption — one voice more or less on right or left is not going to alter the make-up of parliament. And after all, there is no need for alarm even should the parliamentary system in its entirety fall under the blows from my arguments. Given that it is that very system that I am fighting against, that will at least prevent me from going any further.

Moreover, it is a lot more important than knowing if I am discomfiting the enthusiasts of universal suffrage or those who exploit it, that I make sure that my teachings are founded upon reason; and, on this latter score, my mind is perfectly at ease. I venture to say that, but for the absolute assurances that the obscurity of my name offers against attack from those who feed off electioneering, I might yet discover in the sturdiness of my case a haven where prudence would counsel them against seeking me out.

well commit suicide out of disgust or turn to crime out of hatred. And, faced with that question, not one knows what I meant to say, every single one disclaims responsibility for what has occurred and the wretchedness has drawn no response from anybody. Tears have been shed and interests damaged in vain. Yet this is the savage monstrosity that goes by the name of the collective interest! As for myself, let me state that if this collective interest is not some dismal mistake, I would describe it as the vilest mischief!

But let us cease to be this irate and bloody figment and let us say that, since the only way of arriving at the collective interest is through safeguarding of personal interests, it is apparent and sufficiently demonstrated that, in terms of sociability and economics, the most important thing is to foster the personal interest above anything else. On which grounds I am correct in saying that the only social fact is the natural fact, the individual, the self.

Individualist Dogma the Only Fraternal Dogma

I do not wish to hear tell of revelation, tradition or Chinese, Phoenician, Egyptian, Hebrew, Greek, Roman, German or French philosophies; outside of my faith or my religion, for which I am answerable to none, I do not know what use to make of the ramblings of ancestors; I have no ancestors. As far as I am concerned, the creation of the world dates from the day I was born; as far as I am concerned, the world must end on the day when my body and the breath which go together to make up my individual existence are returned to the earth. I am first man and I will be last man. My history is a summary of the history of humankind; I know nothing else and wish to know nothing else. When I am suffering, what comfort can I derive from someone else's good fortune? When I am enjoying myself; what does my enjoyment profit those who are suffering? What do I care for what was done before me? How

can what will be done after me affect me? I need be neither a burnt offering to dead generations nor an example to posterity. I am encapsulated within the span of my existence, and the only problem I must resolve is the problem of my well-being. I have but one doctrine and that doctrine has but a single formula, and that formula but a single word: ENJOYMENT.

Whoever recognises that is honest; whoever denies it an impostor.

It is the formula of a crude individualism, of an innate selfishness; I do not at all deny that; I confess it, place it on record and exult in it. If there is anyone who might feel himself harmed by it and would chastise me for it, bring him before me so that I may question him. Does my selfishness do you some harm? If you say no, you have no grounds for objection, because I am at liberty in respect of anything not likely to do you harm. If you say yes, you are cheats, because my selfishness is nothing more than my assertion of self-ownership, an appeal to my identity, a protest against all overlordship. If you feel harmed by the carrying out of this act of self-possession, by my assertion of rights over my own person — which is to say, over the least questionable of my assets — you are acknowledging that I am your possession, or, at the very least, that you have designs upon me. You are exploiters (or are becoming such), monopolists, lusting after other men's goods, so many thieves.

There is no middle ground. Selfishness is either righteousness or robbery; I must either be my own property or be counted among someone else's assets. It is unthinkable that I should be asked to abjure myself for the benefit of others, because if everyone were to abjure themselves as I do, nobody would gain anything more than he had lost by this inane game and as a result would be left the same, which is to say, would derive no profit from it. Plainly, that would render the initial sacrifice a nonsense. And if the self-sacrifice of all cannot bring benefit to all, it must of necessity profit only some. In which case the latter will be masters of everything,

The people has thanked those responsible for its enslavement; by means of its votes, it has awarded them the right to hunt it down with snare and bait, to stalk and harry, snipe and trap, with the law for a weapon and its neighbours for hunting hounds.

I believe that it is licit for me not to embrace uncritically this supposed "panacea" of democracy that goes by the names of electorate or universal suffrage, when I observe that it destroys those to whom it owes its birth and affords omnipotence to those who have tortured it right from its birth. Likewise, let me declare that I fight it the way one would an evil demon, an overweening monstrosity.

The reader will have grasped by now that the point here is not to challenge an entitlement of the people but rather to correct a fatal mistake. The people has all rights imaginable. For myself, I claim all rights, including the right to blow out my brains or throw myself in the river. However — apart from the fact that the right to suicide, being a breach of natural law, can scarcely be termed a right and becomes instead an anomalous prerogative, into a form of desperation — even that overheated departure from the norm (which I too shall treat as a right for the purposes of argument) could in no wise entitle me to inflict upon my neighbours the fate appointed for myself. Can the same be said of the right to vote? No. In this instance, the voter's commitment has implications for the abstainer as well.

I persist in the belief that electors are unaware that in going to the ballot box they are committing civil and social suicide; an old prejudice alienates them from themselves and their habit of accepting government blinds them to the fact that it would suit them better to look out for themselves. But even supposing, to take the argument to extreme lengths, that the electors who set aside their own affairs and neglect their most pressing interests in order to go out and cast their votes, are indeed cognizant of this fact — namely, that in voting they divest themselves of their liberty, sovereignty and fortune, for the benefit of their elected representatives who will henceforth dispose of them — even supposing that they accept

On Electorate or Universal Suffrage

What I have just been saying brings me on naturally to scrutiny of the root causes of all such vices. As far as I am concerned, those causes must be sought in elections.

For the past two years and for sordid reasons of which — I should like to believe — the parties are unaware, the people has been nurtured in the belief that it will not achieve sovereignty and well-being other than through the assistance and intervention of regularly elected representatives.

The vote — excepting in a municipal context — can lead the people on to freedom, sovereignty and well-being about as much as wholesale surrender of all one owns can lead a man on to a fortune. By which I mean to say that the exercise of universal suffrage, far from copper-fastening it, amounts to pure and simple surrender of sovereignty.

Elections, concerning which the sophists of the last revolution could prate so much and with such gravity; elections, if afforded priority over freedom, are like the fruit before the flower, like the consequence before the principle, the right before the act; the most po-faced stupidity that could ever have been devised in any age or place. Those who have ventured, those who have dared to summon the people to the ballot box before allowing them to consolidate their freedom have not only grossly abused the people's inexperience and the frightful docility inculcated into its character through protracted dependency; they have also, by issuing orders and by that very act declaring themselves its betters, ignored the fundamental rules of logic — which ignorance must lead them on to falling victim to their hellish claptrap, leading to their sad wanderings in exile under the lash of the outcome of universal suffrage.

It is a curious fact — one to which I must call the reader's attention, especially with an eye to the proof which is to follow — that universal suffrage has worked to the benefit of its declared enemies, which is to say, to the advantage of the servants of monarchy.

as will, in all likelihood, those who will be hurt by my selfishness. So let them grit and bear it.

Every man is an egoist; anyone ceasing to be such becomes an object. Anyone claiming that he need not be so, is a thief.

Ah! but of course I understand! The word is jarring to the ear; thus far you have used it for those who are not content with their own assets, those who lay hands upon other men's goods; but such people belong to the human race whereas you do not. Do you know what you are doing when you bemoan their rapaciousness? Registering your own imbecile status. Up to now you have believed in the existence of tyrants. Well, you were mistaken. There are only slaves. Where none obeys, none commands.

Listen well to this: the dogma of resignation, of self-sacrifice, of self-renunciation has always been preached at peoples.

And the upshot of it? Papacy and sovereignty by the grace of God. Oh, but the people has been resigned, has annihilated itself and has long denied itself.

What do you think? Is this right?

True, the greatest pleasure in which those somewhat befuddled bishops, the assemblies which have replaced the kings, the ministers who have replaced the princes, the prefects who have replaced the dukes — those greater vassals — the prefects who have replaced the barons — those lesser vassals — and that entire retinue of subordinate officials who stand in for feudalism's knights and petty nobles, can indulge; the greatest pleasure, I say, in which this entire financial nobility, can indulge, is to retreat as quickly as they can into the traditional dogma of resignation, self-sacrifice and self-denial. Among their number you will still find protectors who will counsel you to scorn riches — and you will be in danger of their stripping them from you — and you will find among them fanatics who, in order to salvage your soul, will preach continence to you — reserving for themselves the right to offer consolation to your wives, your daughters or your sisters. Which is fine. Thanks be to God that we do not lack for devoted friends ready to stand

condemned in our place whilst we abide by the old paths of righteousness from which they stand politely back, doubtless lest they impede our progress along them.

How come all these relayers of the old hypocrisy are no longer feeling so at home upon the seats established by their predecessors? How come? Because selflessness is on the wane and individualism on the rise, because man is finding himself a handsome enough figure to dare tear off the mask and finally show himself in his true light.

Selflessness is slavery, shabbiness, wail, abjection; it is king, government, tyranny, mourning and civil war.

Individualism, on the other hand, is redemption, greatness, chivalry; it is man, people, liberty, fraternity and order.

The Social Contract a Monstrosity

Let everyone in society look to his own self and confirm himself alone and the sovereignty of the individual is established, government bereft of its *raison d'être*, all supremacy undone and man the equal of his fellow-man.

That done, what remains? What remains is everything that governments have striven in vain to destroy: the essential and imperishable basis of nationality; the community that all authorities disrupt and disorganise so as to overthrow; the municipality, that fundamental, age-old organisation which weathers all disorganisation and destruction. The community has its administration, its juries, its judicial organs; and, if it does not, it will conjure them. Thus, France, being self-organised along municipal lines, she is also democratically self-organised. Insofar as her internal arrangements are concerned, there is nothing that needs doing; it has all been done; the individual is free and sovereign within the nation.

Now, ought the nation or the community to have some synthetic, central agency to handle certain shared concrete material inter-

achieve it with the premeditated intention of abjuring it. And since I am not so stupid as to believe that you can be so naive, I can see that it would run counter to every law of nature and society — and mainly the law of self-preservation, which none of us can sidestep — for men invested with public authority to voluntarily forswear that investiture and the princely rights that allow them to live in the midst of plenty without their having to weary themselves in its production. So go tell your fairy-tales somewhere else!

Your government can have but one purpose; to wreak revenge upon its predecessor; just as the one coming after yours can have but one purpose; to be revenged on you. Industry, production, commerce, the people's affairs and the interests of the multitude cannot flourish in the midst of this contention. Allow me to propose that you be left to your own devices to punch one another's faces in, whilst we look to our own interests.

If the French press wishes to be worthy of the people to which it addresses itself, it must cease with its sophistry in respect of the dismal affairs of politics. Leave to the rhetoricians the sport of concocting laws that interests and usages will overrun. Please, do not allow your pointless braying to interrupt the unfettered development of interests and the manifestation of practice.

Politics has never, ever, taught anyone how to go about earning his bread honestly; its precepts have served only as a spur to cowardice and an encouragement to vice. So, no more talk of politics. Fill your columns with features on economics and commerce; tell us about useful inventions; about discoveries made somewhere that may be materially or morally of service to the boosting of production and well-being, keep us abreast of the progress of industry so that, through such reports, we may find a way of earning a living and of living our lives in comfortable surroundings. All of which means a lot to us than your inane dissertations on balance of powers and infringements of a Constitution which — to be candid — even in its virgin state, did not strike me as very deserving of respect.

and I will wind up paying for priest, parson and rabbi, even though I attend neither Mass, nor service nor feast.

You will be holding on to the ministry of commerce, the agriculture ministry and the ministry of public works. And especially the ministry of the interior, because you are going to have your prefects, sub-prefects, State police, etc. And whilst you are holding on to and heading all these ministries — which are the very component parts of today's tyranny — you will carry on saying that the press, education, religion, commerce, public works and agriculture are free. But that is precisely what you are saying at present. So what will you be doing that you are not already doing today? Let me tell you: instead of attacking, you will be defending.

I cannot see that you have any option but to change the entire personnel of your administrations and offices and treat the reactionaries the way the reactionaries treat you. But is the name for that not government? And is not this system of reprisals the very essence of government? If I am to judge by what has been going on over the past sixty years, I have a clear picture of the only thing you will be doing by becoming the government... Allow me to affirm that governing is the very same as fighting, wreaking revenge and inflicting punishment. Now, if you cannot see that it is across our backs that you are scourged and that you in turn lash out at your adversaries, we for our part cannot disguise the fact and we believe that the spectacle must be brought to an end.

To sum up the entire powerlessness of a government, any government, to encompass the public good, let me state that no good can come about in the absence of reforms. But every reform of necessity represents a liberty and every liberty a morsel of strength acquired by the people and, at the same time, a trespass against the integrity of the powers-that-be. From which it follows that the road of reforms — which is the road to freedom as far as the people is concerned — is inevitably the road to ruin as far as the powers-that-be are concerned. So if you say that you crave power in order to introduce reforms, confess at the same time that you want to

ests and act as interlocutor between the community and the outside world? This is not a problem for anyone; and I cannot see that we need fret unduly about what everyone accepts is reasonable and necessary. What is at issue is the government; but a functional mechanism, a chancellery formed at the instigation of self-regulating communities, may, if need be, constitute an administrative commission, but not a government.

Do you know what makes a mayor a bully in a community? The existence of the civil governor. Do but dispense with the latter, and the former must rely solely upon the persons who appointed him and the freedom of everyone is assured.

An institution answerable to the community is not a government; a government is an institution to which the community is obedient. That upon which the influence of the individual __ can be brought to bear cannot be described as a government; government is the name reserved for that which crushes individuals beneath the weight of its influence.

In short, what is at issue is not the *civil act* — the nature and character of which I shall set out anon — but rather the *social contract*.

There is not and cannot be a social contract, for one thing because society is not an artificial construct, nor a scientific fact, nor a mechanical combination; society is a providential and indestructible phenomenon. Like all animals with social habits, men are by nature social. Man's natural condition is of itself the state of society; thus it is absurd, if not outrageous, to try to establish by contract that which is already and inevitably constituted. Secondly, because my social disposition, my pursuits, faith, feelings, affections, tastes, interests and habits alter every year or every month or daily, or several times per day and I am not disposed to enter into a commitment to anyone, by word of mouth or writing, not to change my pursuit, conviction, sentiment, affection, interest, or habit. And, since I contend that, had I entered into any such undertaking, it would only have been for the purpose of breaking it, let

me state that, had I been forced into giving it, it would have been at once the most barbarous and most odious of tyrannies.

In spite of this, the social lives of every one of us started with a contract. Rousseau' invented this question and for the last sixty years our legislation has been informed by the genius of Rousseau. It is by virtue of a contract drafted by our forebears and subsequently renewed by the leading citizens of the Constituent Assembly, that the government forbids us to see, hear, utter, write or do anything other than we are allowed to. So much for the people's prerogatives, the alienation of which gives rise to the establishment of the government. Insofar as I am concerned, I dispute it and I leave it to others to serve it, pay for it, love it and, ultimately, perish for it. But even should the French people as a whole agree to be governed in matters of education, religion, finance, industry, art, labour, affections, tastes, habits, movements and even in matters of foodstuffs, I am fully entitled to declare that its voluntary servitude in no wise commits me, any more than its stupidity places my intelligence in question. And yet, in fact, its servitude envelops me and I cannot possibly escape it. No doubt about it; it is well known that the submission of six, seven or eight million individuals to one man or more than one involves my own submission to that very same man or men. I defy anyone to characterise this act as anything other than treachery and I assert that never on this earth has the barbarism of a people been translated as such outright banditry. Indeed, the sight of a moral coalition of eight million slaves ranged against one free man is a spectacle of wickedness against the barbarousness of which one could not invoke civilisation without making it appear ridiculous or odious in the sight of the world.

But I cannot believe that all my countrymen are premeditatedly sensible of the necessity to serve. What I feel they all should feel; what I think, they all ought to think; because I am no more and no less than a man; I am on the same plain and onerous terms as any working man. I am startled and shocked that with every step I take along the way, every thought that surfaces in my head, every

France, 200 million can easily be found. Are we not perhaps squandering a hundred by smoking bad cigars?

But in order to accomplish this all that would be required would be administration; you, however, wish to govern; which is a quite different kettle of fish. Lash out at the rich, therefore, after which you can settle your scores with the poor.

Already financial reforms are producing a goodly number of malcontents (these matters of money are very delicate, you see). Anyway, let us move on.

You proclaim unfettered freedom of the press? This you cannot do. If you tinker with the basis of taxation and tinker with the public purse, you will be setting yourself up for a debate from which you will not come off the best. Personally, I feel disposed to set out your lack of expertise on this count in great detail, even if your need for self-preservation will compel you to have me silenced (in which you will be very well advised).

Consequently, on account of finances, the press will not be free. No government that tampers with great interests can proclaim freedom of the press; this it is expressly forbidden from doing. You will not be short on promises; but promising is not the same as delivering. Ask Monsieur Bonaparte.

Obviously, you will be holding on to the education ministry and the University monopoly; except that you will be steering education in a philosophical direction only, declaring outright war on the clergy and the Jesuits — which will turn me into a Jesuit in opposition to you, just as I became a philosopher in opposition to M. Montalembertts, for the sake of my liberty, which consists of my being whatsoever I please, without either you or the Jesuits having any say in the matter.

And what of religion? Are you going to do away with the ministry of religion? I doubt it I imagine that, in the interest of government, you will be setting up ministries rather than doing away with them. There will be a ministry of religion just as there is today

Let's say that I am a capitalist and you ask me to hand over a percentage. Damn! How am I to recover it? Now that I think about it, I am not the one who uses my capital; I lend it to industry. The industrialist is in sore need of it and will not balk at an increase in the lending rate; so I will be passing the levy on to him. Taxation on capital plainly falls upon labour's shoulders.

I live off my income and you add to the public debt. That is a worrying thing and no mistake. However, there is a way of wriggling out of it. To whom am I in debt? The State. That being the case, there is no great shame involved. The levy imposed on bonds subtracts something from their value right away, and since the loss of value is to the disadvantage of the debtor, to wit, the State, and to the advantage of the Treasury, to wit, the State, the latter dips into its pockets in order to fill its coffers and is no worse off than before (as am I). This is very adroit sleight of hand and I have to admit that it does have class.

Say I own houses in town and you tax my apartments; I have nothing, absolutely nothing to say about this. You will be settling accounts with my tenants; because you will surely not think me so stupid as not to tack the costs of the tax on to their rents.

The most meaningless words uttered since the February revolution are these: "Tax the rich!" These are words which are, if not perverse, then at least profoundly witless. I do not know who the rich are in a country like this one where we are all in debt and where the practice is for most landlords, owners and capitalists to spend more per year than they earn. In any event, even accepting that the rich man exists, I defy you to snare him; your efforts to do so are indicative only of a tremendous ignorance of the elementary laws of social economics and fellowship of interests. The blow that you wish to deal the rich will be deflected on to the manufacturer, the proletarian, the pauper. You have no wish to do the poor any harm? Then impose taxes on no one. Run France on 180 or 200 million, the way the United States are run. And in a country such as

venture that I would embark upon, every wage that I need earn, there is some law or regulation telling me: So far and no further; Perish that thought; Steer clear of that venture; Leave half your wage here. Confronted by the many obstacles looming on every side, my cowed spirit sinks into brutishness: I know not where to turn; I know not what to do, I know not what to become.

Who to the scourge of atmospheric disasters, air pollution, insalubrious climate, the lightning that science has mastered has added this occult and savage power, this evil genius laying in wait for humankind from birth, to see it devoured by humankind itself? Who? Men themselves. Not content with having to contend with the hostile elements, they have made enemies of men.

The masses, as yet all too docile, are innocent of all the brutality committed in their name and to their detriment. They are innocents, but not ignorant; I believe that, like myself, they are sensible of it and outraged; I believe that, like me, they would make haste to halt it; except that, unable to distinguish the cause properly, they do not know how to act. I am trying to enlighten them on both counts.

Let us start by pointing a finger at the guilty.

Of the Attitude of the Parties and their Newspapers

The sovereignty of the people has no mouthpiece among the French press. Bourgeois or noble, clerical, republican or socialist, the newspapers are all servitude and sheer domesticity; they polish and buff and dust the trappings of some political war-horse in preparation for the tournament in which the prize is power — in which, consequently, the prize is my servitude and the servitude of the people.

With the exception of La Presse which occasionally (when its editors grow forgetful enough of their pride to remain aloof) displays some elevated sentiments and with the exception of La Voix

du Peuple which, from time to time, breaks with the old routine in order to cast a little light on the general interest, there is not one French newspaper that I can read without being moved either to great pity or profound contempt for the writer.

On the one hand I watch the man whose head is swathed in the aura of supreme power and whose hands clutch the sceptre consecrated by that investiture, turning to governmental journalism, to a journalism that owes its might to the gold raised by taxation and to the army's steel. I watch him approach with fire in his eye and foam on his lips, his fists clenched like some king of the ring, some boxing hero, whimsically and with brutal perversity challenging an unarmed adversary utterly defenceless against him and from whom he need fear absolutely nothing, and labelling the latter thief, murderer and incendiary. He stalks him like a wild animal, denying him food and tossing him into prison without a word of explanation and revelling in the act, wallowing in the glory thus won, as if a fight with unarmed people implied some risk and as if he were braving some danger.

I find such cowardice instructive.

On the other hand, we have opposition journalism, that grotesque, ill-educated slave; which squanders its time on complaints, whining and begging for mercy; which says, with every gob of spit and blow it receives: you treat me ill, you are unjust, I have done nothing to offend you. And answers the charges levelled against it as if they had some legitimacy. I am no thief, no murderer and no incendiary; I have the utmost regard for religion, I love the family, I respect property; it is, rather, yourselves who hold these things in contempt. I am better than you and yet you oppress me. You are unjust.

Such baseness revolts me!

Faced with polemicists such as these among the opposition, I can understand the authorities' brutality; I can understand it because, after all, when the weakling is abject, it is easy to overlook his weakness and see only the abject condition. This is an irritant, something

I want to ignore your internal differences; I refuse to see you as a Girardine, Proudhon, Louis Blanc or a Pierre Leroux, Considérant, Cabet, Raspail or their disciples; I am going to pretend that perfect unity prevails in your ranks (and if I am taking the impossible as read in this instance it is because my primary concern is to facilitate argument).

Anyway, here we have you, all in accord. What are you going to do?

Release all the political prisoners; a general amnesty. Fine. No doubt you will be making an exception for the princes. Thereby demonstrating that you are afraid of the power of their supporters — and such fear will highlight a weakness of yours, the weakness of acknowledging that they might very well be preferred over you, an acknowledgment that would imply that there is some uncertainty on your part as to whether you are carrying out the general will.

Even after injustices in the political order have been set right, the economy and the life of society carry on deteriorating.

Naturally, you are not going to confess your bankruptcy, since you are the very ones who took M. Fould to task. The nation's honour, which you mean, Gamier-style, to sell for 45 centimes, will require that you respect the Bourse, to the cost of 35 million taxpayers, since the debt run up by the monarchies is of too noble a character for the entire French people not to have to be bled of 450 millions a year for the benefit of a handful of speculators. So you would begin by settling the public debt: poor, but honest. Those two adjectives do not particularly suit the times we live in; but, ultimately, you are still operating in the same way as in the old days and the people, as deep in debt as ever, can think what they like about it.

But now that I think of it, you must above all make the poor, the workers, the proletarians your overarching concern; here you come with a bill on taxation of the rich. About time too! Let us analyse who precisely will be paying for it.

fending itself and which, if it were to relent in its defence, would cease to exist — the government, I say, would putrefy like a dead body; it would moulder unaided and freedom would be assured.

The People Need Expect Nothing from Any Party

But the disappearance of government, the annihilation of the governmental institution, the triumph of freedom about which all the parties talk would really not serve their interests. I have given abundant proof that every party, by its very nature, is essentially governmental (this being a feature kept from the people with the utmost care). In fact, in their day to day polemics, we are given to understand that the government is doing a bad job, that its policy is wrong but that things might be done better and that its policy could be better. When all is said and done, through the articles of every single journalist, this thought shines through: If only I were there, then you would see some REAL government!

Very well! Let us see if there really is an even-handed way of governing; let us see if it really is possible to set up a government offering leadership and with a will of its own, a power and authority founded upon the democratic foundations of respect for the individual.

I am concerned to make a thorough examination of this matter, because I stated a short while ago that the people need expect nothing from any government nor from any party and so I am keen to demonstrate this. Let us say that the year is 1852; the power that you Montagnard, socialist and moderate gentlemen — it makes no difference to me — hope to win, you have. I am pleased to find that the majority has tilted towards the left. You are a welcome sight! Please, would you explain to me your thinking on what must be done?

to be plucked up and trampled underfoot the way one would tread on an earthworm. And abjection is something that I cannot comprehend in a group of men who style themselves democrats and speak in the name of the people, the font of all greatness and all dignity.

Anyone who speaks in the people's name is speaking up for righteousness; now I fail to understand how righteousness should bristle, I cannot understand how it should deign to bandy words with injustice, much less that it should stoop to lamentation and supplication. Oppression may be endured, but when its demise is the object, one does not bandy words with it, because to bandy words is to compromise.

The authorities have been established; you have given yourselves a master, you have placed yourselves (and, thanks to your adorable counsel and initiatives, the entire country has placed itself) at the disposal of a few men. Those men use the force that you have bestowed upon them; and they use it against you. And you are reconciled with them? What were you thinking? That they would use it against themselves? You could not have thought that; so, what is the basis of your complaint? Power must, of necessity, be deployed for the advantage of those who possess it and to the detriment of those bereft of it, it cannot be deployed without detriment to one faction and advantage to the other.

What would you yourselves do if you were so invested? You would either not use it for anything (which would be purely and simply tantamount to forswearing your investiture) or you would employ it to your own advantage and to the detriment of those now in possession of it and who would no longer have it. Whereupon you would cease your lamentation, whining and pleading for mercy, in order to step into the shoes of those who insult you and to place them in yours. But what does the reversal matter to me? I, who never have any power and who yet make it; I who pay out money to the oppressor, whomsoever he may be and from where-soever he may come; I, come what may, am always the oppressed.

What matter to me this see-saw alternatively humbling and exalting cowardice and abjection? What have I to say about government and opposition, except that the latter is tyranny in the making and the former tyranny ready-made? Why should I hold this champion in deeper contempt than the other, when neither cares for anything except the building of his pleasures and his fortunes upon my pain and my ruination?

Power the Enemy

In France there is not a single newspaper that does not support a party, no party that does not aspire to power, no power that is not the enemy of the people.

There is no newspaper that does not support a party because there is no newspaper on a par with that level of popular dignity where blithe, supreme contempt for sovereignty prevails. The people is as impassive as righteousness, as overbearing as strength, as noble as liberty; parties are as turbulent as error, as irascible as impotence, as base as servility.

There is no party without aspiration to power, because a party is essentially political and, as a result, is composed of the very essence of power, the root of all politics. If a party were to cease to be political, it would cease being a party and would melt back into the people, which is to say, into the realm of interests, production, industrial pursuits and intercourse.

There is no power that is not the enemy of the people, because, no matter what the attendant conditions, no matter who the man invested with it, no matter how it may be described, power is always power, that is to say, the irrefutable badge of abdication of the people's sovereignty and consecration of supreme overlordship. La Fontaine said it before me: the master is the enemy.

Power is the enemy in social terms and in political terms.

In the social realm:

and accustom to a life made up of nothing but lamentations. No store should be placed by the parties. The people ought to rely on none but itself.

Without harking too far back into our history, and looking only to the pages covering the past two years, it can readily be seen that the turbulence of the parties has been the number one cause of all the repressive laws which have been passed. It would be a protracted and irksome thing to list them here, but, out of respect for the integrity of the historical record, I ought to say that since 1848 there has been only one tyrannical measure that did not spring from partisan provocations, but was spawned by the lust for power alone; I mean the one that M. Ledru-Rollin has required his prefects to enforce.

Ever since then, the people's prerogatives have been disappearing one after another, due to the way in which they have been abused by the impatience of the ambitious as expressed in agitational manoeuvres. Power being incapable of discriminating, the law inflicts upon everyone blows that only the provocateurs should be feeling; the people is oppressed and the blame lies solely with the parties.

If, at the least, the parties did not feel that they had the people's backing; if only the latter, occupied solely with its material interests, industrial pursuits, commerce and business were to blunt the squalid stratagem called politics with its indifference and indeed its scorn; if only it would adopt towards this psychological excitation the same attitude as it adopted on 13 June' vis a vis material agitation, then the parties, suddenly isolated, would cease their agitation; a feeling of powerlessness would put a damper on their daring; and they would promptly peter out and gradually melt back into the ranks of the people and eventually disappear. And the government — which only exists because it is opposed, whose sole nourishment is drawn from the problems that the parties create for it and which has no *raison d'être* beyond those parties and which, in short, has, for the past fifty years been doing nothing except de-

Just as a party is geared to capturing posts or power, so the government, which controls these, is geared to holding on to them. But a government is surrounded by a panoply of forces that allow it to harass, persecute and oppress those who would wrest them from its control. And the people, which, as an indirect consequence, suffers the oppressive measures inspired by the agitation of the ambitious — and whose unselfish soul soaks up the tribulations of the oppressed — sets aside its affairs, pauses in its progress, takes an interest in what is being said and done, gets heated and annoyed and finally throws its weight behind bringing about the downfall of the oppressor.

But, not having been fighting for its own interests, the people win to no advantage — especially since, as I shall explain anon, righteousness need not fight in order to emerge triumphant. Placed in the service of the ambitious, its might has catapulted a fresh clique into power in place of the preceding one. Within a short while, as the erstwhile oppressed in turn become oppressors, the people — who, as ever, suffer the aftermath of the measures provoked by the agitation of the defeated faction, and whose warm heart, as ever, soaks up the tribulations of the victims — again turns away from its own interests and winds up throwing its weight behind the ambitious yet again.

In short, in this brutal and cruel game, the people is merely wasting its time and exacerbating its condition; it is impoverished and it suffers. And advances by not so much as a single step.

I will readily admit that the popular elements (all sentiment and passion) find it hard to restrain themselves when the goad of tyranny wounds them too intensely; but it has been shown that allowing themselves to be swept along by the covetous impatience of the parties simply makes things worse. It has been demonstrated also that the scourge of which the people must complain comes from groups which, merely because they do not operate as it does, work against it. The parties ought to cease their iniquity in the name of the very people that they oppress, impoverish, brutalise

Because agricultural industry, the lynchpin of all the nation's industries, is crushed by the taxes imposed upon it by the authorities and devoured by usury (the inescapable result of financial monopoly), the practice of which by its disciples or agents is guaranteed by the powers-that-be.

Because labour, which is to say, intelligence, is expropriated by power at bayonet point, for the benefit of capital (an element inherently coarse and dull-witted), which would logically be industry's lever were it not that the powers-that-be thwart direct partnership between capital and labour. And it turns from lever to coffin, all because of the powers-that-be, which keep them apart, the powers-that-be which pay out only half of what they owe and which, when they pay out nothing at all, have — through their manipulation of the laws and the courts — some government institution standing by to postpone by many a long year the satisfaction of the appetite of the wronged working man.

Because commerce is stunted by the banks' monopoly — to which the powers-that-be hold the key — and tightly restricted by the slip knot of stultifying regulation — more of the handiwork of the powers-that-be. And commerce has to grow rich indirectly, fraudulently, over the heads of women and children, whilst it is forbidden to go bankrupt on pain of disgrace (this is a contradiction that would be proof indeed of idiocy, were it not that it is to be found among the most spiritual people on this earth).

Because education is inscribed, truncated and reduced to the narrow dimensions of the model devised by the powers-that-be, in such a way that any intelligence not bearing its seal of approval might as well not exist.

Because, although he attends neither chapel, church nor synagogue, the non-attender must, thanks to the meddling of the powers-that-be, bear the costs of chapel, church and synagogue.

Because — to make a long story short — anyone who does not hear, see, speak, write, think and act as the powers-that-be require him to hear, see, speak, write, feel, think and act, is criminalised.

In the political realm:

Because the parties only exist and bleed the country with and for power.

It is not Jacobinism that the Legitimists, Orleanists, Bonapartists and moderates fear: it is the power of the Jacobins.

It is not Legitimism that the Jacobins, Orleanists, Bonapartists and moderates fight against: it is the power of the Legitimists.

Likewise, all of these parties which can be seen swarming over the surface of the country the way that foam floats upon a boiling liquid have not declared war on one another because of any doctrinal differences, but precisely because of their common aspiration to power. If each and every one of those parties could know for sure that it would not feel the weight of the power of some one of its enemies, their antagonism would be banished in an instant, the way it was on 24 February 1848, when the people, having overthrown the powers-that-be, swept the parties aside.

From which it follows that a party, any party, exists and is feared only because of its aspiration to power. And if somebody bereft of power represents no danger, it must consequently be true that anybody possessing power is automatically a danger; from which it must be abundantly proven that there is no other public enemy but power.

Consequently, in social and political terms, power is the enemy. And, as I shall be demonstrating anon that all parties crave power, it follows that each and every party is, premeditatedly, an enemy of the people.

The People Merely Wasting its Time and Prolonging its Suffering by Espousing the Struggles of Governments and Parties

This accounts for the absence of every popular virtue from the ranks of governments and parties; which explains how, in these

swollen bands of petty hatreds, wretched resentments and squalid ambitions, attack has deteriorated into low cunning and defence into abjection.

Corrupt journalism must be eradicated. These ignoble masters who are afraid of becoming slaves must be deposed and these faint-hearted slaves who would fain be masters must be driven out.

If it is to grasp the urgent necessity of ridding itself of journalism, the people must have clear sight of two things:

In the first place, that in taking a hand in the strife between governments and parties and directing its energies into politics instead of devoting them to its material interests, all it is doing is neglecting its affairs and prolonging its suffering.

Secondly, that it can expect nothing from any government, from any party.

Indeed — as I shall demonstrate later in greater detail — it can be argued that a party, divested of the patriotic veneer and cachet in which it dresses itself up in order to entrap the stupid, is merely a motley crew of the vulgarly ambitious in hot pursuit of places.

So true is this that the Republic only looked tolerable to monarchists once they could be assured of public offices and I am certain that they will never press for restoration of the Monarchy if they are left in peace to hold all the offices in the Republic. So true is this that the republicans only found the monarchy bearable once they could operate and administer it under the designation of Republic. Finally, so true is it that the bourgeois party made war on the nobles from 1815 to 1830 because the bourgeois were being kept at arm's length from important posts; that the nobles and republicans waged war on the bourgeois from 1830 to 1848 because both of them were being kept out of those same posts and, once the monarchists came to power, the greatest reproach that republicans could articulate against them was that they had dismissed officials of their persuasion, thereby recognising, in a telling fashion, that as far as they are concerned the matter of the Republic is a marginal concern.

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Anselme Bellegarrigue
Anarchy, a Journal of Order
1850

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Suppose that half of the registered electorate abstains. Things take a serious turn for the voters and for the government established by them. Without question, the political skepticism of fully one half of the body of society will cause a crisis in the unchallenged convictions of the other half. And if we consider that such skepticism will be the product of a calculated, well-founded, considered indifference, and that it will be the fruit of intellect or liberty .. which amount to the same thing — whereas among voters all that will be found is the herd instinct and a clinging to tradition, ignorance or self-denial — which likewise amount to the same thing — you can readily appreciate the defeat that such a state of affairs will inflict upon governmentalism. These days we may take that supposition as valid, since, if there are not yet four million abstaining electors, it is not precisely because voting is anything to feel smug about. And implicit in all repentance is the acknowledgment of error.

Let us labour this point: let us suppose that all of the opponents of monarchy, converted to the modern precept that power cannot be honest, refrain from voting and take as the basis for their stance this unchallengeable truth: that voting is at once a swindle and a theft. Automatically, the abolition of universal suffrage, by now deemed a crime in the public's enlightened outlook, will bring about the direct and massive downfall of the monarchists, in that these will no longer have any accomplices. Given that, outside of their own ranks, you will find only men who have suffered prejudice — and whose non-intervention will have a rational basis to it — the thieves will be left unmasked. Or rather, for the sake of common sense, let us say that there will be no thieves any more. Because if the issue is boiled down to these hard — but simple and above all authentic — terms; if politics, stepping down from its former sham exaltation, is reduced to the level of common crime — of which it has always been the hidden but real inspiration — the governmental fiction is dispelled and humankind freed of all the

misunderstandings which have thus far lain behind all strife and the dismal occurrences it has brought in its wake.

This is revolution. This is the calm, wise, rational transformation of the traditional principle! Here we have the democratic supremacy of individual over State, of interest over idea. No upset, no commotion can occur in this majestic clearing of history's cloud cover; the sun of liberty shines, with no storms in sight and, enjoying his share of the generous rays, everyone operates in the clear light of day and busies himself in discovering the place in society for which his aptitudes or intelligence equip him.

See: In order to be free, one need only wish it, Liberty, which we have stupidly learned to expect as a gift from men, lies within and we are in liberty. For it to be attained neither rifle nor barricade nor riot, nor zealotry, nor factionalism nor voting is required, since none of these is anything but licence. And as liberty is honest, it can be attained only with reserve, serenity and decency.

When you ask the government for freedom, the stupidity of your petition is instant proof to the latter that you have no grasp of your rights. Your petitioning is the act of a subaltern and you declare yourselves inferiors. Registering its supremacy, the government capitalises upon your ignorance and conducts itself with you the way it might with blind men, for blind you are.

Those who plead daily with the government through their newspapers for immunities and try to peddle the view that they are undermining it and weakening it, are in reality underpinning its might and fortunes — might and fortunes which it is in their interest to maintain because they hope someday to attain them with the support of the people, of a befuddled, deceived, tricked, robbed, ridiculed, swindled, subjugated, oppressed people, lashed by schemers and cretins who make it stoop with their adulation, sapping its potential, bedecking it with pompous titles like some comic opera king and presenting it, to the world's amusement, as prince of hovel and dungeon, monarch of fatigue and sovereign of wretchedness.

For my own part, I need not idolise it; because I seek nothing from it, not even that portion of its wretchedness and disgrace that is reserved for me. But I have to ask you — you, mark you, and not the government, which I do not know, nor have T any wish to know — I have to ask you for my liberty, for you have wrapped it up along with your own in order to bestow it as a gift. I ask it not as an undertaking that you must give me; in reality, if I am to be free, you too must be free. Know how to be free. All that it requires is that you raise no one above you. Shun the politics that consumes peoples and devote your efforts to the wherewithal of their sustenance and enrichment. Remember that wealth and liberty go together as slavery and idleness do. Turn your backs on government and on the parties which are merely its lackeys. Contempt kills governments, because only, strife can sustain them. Depose at last the sovereign who fails to consult with his people and laugh at the guiles of White monarchism and Red government. No obstacle will be able to withstand tranquil manifestation of your needs and interests.

There is a Gascon legend according to which the king of Tillac forgot who he was; his steward mistreated him harshly, but when the Lady Jeanne, his wet-nurse, told them of his titles and his estate, the folk from the castle, with the steward at their head, came to prostrate themselves before him.

Let the people demonstrate to its stewards that it will no longer deny itself; that it will have no more truck with disputes in the ante-room, and its stewards will be silenced and will adopt a respectful attitude towards it. Liberty is a debt that we owe ourselves, owe to the world still waiting for it and owe to children yet unborn.

The new politics lies partly in the negative, in abstention and civic non-cooperation, and on the other hand, in industrial activity. In other words, it is the very negation of politics. I shall expand further upon this argument. For now, suffice to say that had republicans not voted in the last general elections, there would have been no opposition in the assembly. To tell the truth, there would not even have been an assembly. There would have been

only chaos between the Legitimists, Orleanists and Bonapartists, who would have brought about one another's downfall with a great scandal and by now, they would all have been felled to the amused whistling of liberty.

Conclusion

From everything that I have said — and to which I shall be returning on another occasion, both to whatever I have forgotten and to expand upon what I have not been able to explore fully in this exposition — it follows that the political vote is the framing of a government. I have shown how the framing of a government — and of the opposition which serves the former as an essential guarantee — implies consecration of an inevitable tyranny, the order of which must be sought in the spontaneous surrender which the voters make of their persons and their assets — as well as of the persons and assets of the non-voters — for the benefit of those whom they elect. It follows from all of this that alienation of one's own sovereignty might not be an act of stupidity but a fully-fledged entitlement when the maker of the gift through the vote is disposing of his own morsel. However, that act ceases to be an act of stupidity or an entitlement and becomes an act of theft when, having recourse to the brutal numbers game, the voter foists his sovereignty upon the sovereignty of the minorities.

And let me add that as every government is of necessity a source of antagonism, discord, murder and ruination, anyone helping by means of his vote to form a government is a provoker of civil strife, a promoter of crisis and, thus, a bad citizen.

I can hear the republicans of the functionary school screeching: Treachery! They leave me cold, because I know them better than they know themselves. I have a sixty year old score to settle with them and their bankruptcy, of which I am the receiver, will be no laughing matter.

I can also hear the monarchists and imperialists wondering if there is nothing in my harvest that might not serve as grist to their mills; they do not bother me because I have the precise measure of their old tricks.

The future belongs neither to the former nor to the latter. Thanks be to God! And monarchy is only waiting for dictatorship to lose its last remaining claw before it sinks its own last fang.

I mean to pluck them out, claw and root!

Watch out!

April 1850

Issue Two

the content, which is nothing but the people themselves, and their own business.

So let come, after the electoral law, the decennial presidency, the presidency for life, the empire—the devil come, provided that the good-for-nothings are condemned to silence by the prudence of the workers. The governmental form, however lofty it may be, will be overcome by the content; the people will devour the government.

The government is not a fact; it is only a fiction. The immutable and eternal fact is the people. We are, for our part, with the fact, and a time is coming which seems bad for those who do not want to separate from the fiction.

Foreward

The editor of *Anarchy*, tackling head-on a word which the politicians have used to intimidate the population and hold it for ransom, has proposed two things:

First, to prove that order is a popular and anti-governmental element. The best argument that can be furnished in support of this thesis is that the monarchist papers openly greet the civil war as a Providence. Second, to establish that the Revolution is purely and simply a matter of business. The indifference and political skepticism to which the people abandon themselves more and more, the disgust that they show for the quibbles and the contempt they profess for the men who want to command them, come to corroborate that opinion and show that the editor of *Anarchy* is in agreement with public sentiment.

The royalist parties being historically and materially ruined, it is not necessary to combat them. What it is important to destroy is the pretension of the new parties who, under the pretext of burying royalty, wish to inherit its power. *Anarchy* has then to unmask the revolutionaries, for the benefit of the Revolution.

The old journalism is on its way out, hated by the interests that it has compromised, loaded with curses by the people, about whom it has understood nothing, damned by the civilization that it has fouled.

The old journalism understands nothing of finance, nor of industry, nor of commerce, nor practical philosophy; as the positive sciences are established, its dull ignorance is revealed and, in a few months, it will disappear in its own shame.

When the fictions are overwhelmed by the facts, the controversialists no longer have anything to say.

population, and, the calm having taken place, they are pleased at having been obeyed. To hear them tell it, the wisdom of the people is their work; without them, the agitation would have torn up the paving stones and disturbed the city, which is pitiful.

The calm is in the force of things. The people have become deeply skeptical. They do not believe the troubadours or sellers of specifics. However much one professes a deep and tender love for them, however much one wants to assure them, they do not get more tenderness, nor more assurance, and they ask who are these bold or crazy sorts who dare put themselves high enough to love them, and who is the sovereign or schemer who has separated from them enough to promise them security.

The times of exploitation by big words have already passed. The labels no longer fool anyone. The devotion has delivered its bill. It is too costly. We no longer believe in chivalrous selflessness, so that from the very moment when a man separates himself from others in order to command them, some legitimate suspicions arise about him. In that state, the people no longer have leaders, and equality begins. When the people no longer have leaders, no movement is possible any more, and calm inevitably descends. Now, that calm is the Revolution, no longer the Revolution of the schemers, everyone's Revolution, that of the interest and wealth.

The politicians do not want to abandon questions of form, but it is the question of content which is debated in the heart of society. The government, the men of the government, the manner of constituting the government, the antecedents and doctrines of various individuals, the preeminence this system or that one: all that is of little importance to the people. What matters to them is well-being, and it is clear that no one can realize well-being except for themselves; it is proven that it cannot be obtained by delegation, and it is established in fact that it is independent of the form. It is thus with full and complete reason that people become indifferent with regard to the form, with the government, and they pay attention to

to take fixed quantities; they no longer let themselves be led, they speculate; they no longer agitate, they amass; they no longer shout, they seek to enjoy.

Do you know, from the popular point of view, what is signified by the debates which have taken place in the Assembly between the majority and minority on the subject of the electoral law? They debates signify that the members of the majority believe that they can only be reelected by neutering universal suffrage, and that the members of the minority are convinced that universal suffrage is essential to them to remain where they are. That is the true sense of the discussion; but, in fact, what can the people expect from the majority or from the minority? Nothing. Both have well proven it, and, even when they have not proven it in practice, we believe we have, in this publication, furnished some very clear arguments on this point.

Have we so much to gladden us from the electoral regime that there would be cause for us to act to defend it? What has it produced? Some volumes of laws that, for my part, I would gladly pass on,—and you?

Certainly, it is universal suffrage which has produced the assemblies to which we owe all the prohibitions which crush us; would limited suffrage have produced worse results? We do not assume so. From now on what is the meaning of that enthusiasm that one wants to give us for universal suffrage, when it is proven that the assemblies have only led to disturbing and ruining us?

The right is wary of one part of the population.

The left mistrusts the other part.

What do you take us for? Whose creatures are we? We mistrust the right and the left, and we reserve our votes; that is what it is best for us to do to put in agreement the whites and reds who only want our money.

That is the reason for the calm that has greeted the electoral law. The most naïve of the journals of Paris, as well as the most smug, *L'Événement* and *la Presse*, have recommended calm to the

The Revolution

I

In theory, the Revolution is the development of well-being.

In practice, it has only been the extension of malaise.

The Revolution is supposed to enrich everyone: that is the idea.

The Revolution has ruined everyone: that is the fact.

Do you know why the revolutionary fact finds itself so strongly in dissonance with the idea?

Nothing is more simple: in theory, the revolution should make itself, and each social interest should furnish to it its part of the action; in practice, the Revolution has been made by a handful of individuals and submitted to the authority of a group of rhetoricians.

The essential genius of the Revolution is the acquisition of wealth; the dominant instinct of the revolutionaries is the hatred of riches, and this is precisely why, by becoming wealthy, the revolutionaries cease to be revolutionary. While each seeks to enrich himself by labor and industry, while everyone loudly demands the calm which multiplies transactions and constantly displaces wealth by mobilizing and developing it; while, in that way, the true Revolution, that of individual needs and interests, struggles with vigor against the nuisances and barriers of the tyrannical regulations of the governments, the revolutionaries arrive, a fateful tribe who, to satisfy their sole, sordid desire—to offer themselves as replacements in power for men already pushed aside by the force of things—halt the general advance, suspend the solemn manifestation of the public interests, paralyze the

Revolution, complicate the legislative details which the social facts seek to suppress, and consolidate the governmental mastery that business was in the process of subjugating.

There are, in truth, no worse counter-revolutionaries than the revolutionaries; for there are no worse citizens than the envious.

This is not the place to examine in detail the period of ambition between 1789 and 1848. I have neither enough time nor space to give myself over to that review, from which it would follow, as it results from *faits accomplis*, that the European Revolution has been halted and the European governments consolidated by the revolutionary doctrinaires, men of the most sinister sort that ever existed. I will recount someday the history of those sixty years, and you will be surprised to see to what dark joke the western world has owed more than a half-century of ruinous troubles and bloody mystifications.

For the moment, limited by contemporary history, I will examine the event of 1848, which I would much less than a Revolution, since, from my point of view, the Revolution must be the ruin not just of a government, but of government as such, and since the evolution of 1848 has only been the consolidation of what it was a question of destroying, and which would indeed be destroyed today, if the movement of February 24 had not taken place. I would not, however, go so far as to say that that movement, accepted by all the citizens, would not have been able to turn to the profit of the Revolution; far from arguing that, I will strive on the contrary to demonstrate that it would have obliged the leaders of that movement to convert its governmental character into a character that was revolutionary, industrial or anarchic, which is all one.

II

In the last years of the reign of Louis-Philippe, the Revolution, — and by this word I mean the development of interests, — had so

The Electoral Law

In the first issue of this journal, we have clearly, even audaciously expressed our opinion regarding the present character of electoral rights. The attitude of the people in the face of the partial suppression of this right proposed by Parliament has proven to us that our doctrine was in conformity with the general sentiment. The electorate is not a principle.

The popular instinct is more sure than the reasoning of the sophists, for that instinct bears on the facts. The so-called democratic parties have cried loudly that universal suffrage is the sole guarantee of progress, the sole principle from which well-being should result. The facts respond that universal suffrage, the exercise of which has up to this day softened the position of a few elected officials, has considerably compromised the individual interests and, as a consequence, public prosperity.

Does that mean that suffrage, as it has pleased the majority to formulate it, would resolve the question? It would be foolish to suppose it. The truth is not in the election; nothing can come from the election, the election is the guarantee of the government and the government is the cause of the unrest, it is thus in abstention and not in the election we will find the solution of the difficulty.

The people will come to abstention, as they will come to the refusal of taxation; it is necessary and inevitable. They have started down the road which must lead then there by falling into political skepticism, into doctrinal indifference. It is when the people no longer believe in anything that they will believe in themselves. That last belief determines the estimation of the act, and, positivism come to this point, the people leave the domain of interpretations

wealth, which is by nature revolutionary or circulating, finds itself constantly suppressed by the governmental piston of agitation and idleness.

Public wealth sustains government, not for the good that it does—that good is always and everywhere elusive—but for the evil that it is supposed to prevent. The evil that public wealth dreads, and that government is supposed to avert, can only come from government itself, or from the initiative of men who want to bring to the government one system or another; it sustains the politics of Peter because it fears the politics of Paul. Let the Paul-opposition withdraw from politics and the Peter-government is ruined. Since the public wealth sustains Peter only because of the evil that he prevents Paul from accomplishing, as soon as Paul no longer inspires fear and can no longer do evil, as soon as he labors, wealth circulates to him by right, Peter is no longer sustained, his action becomes null, his influence is dead, and his authority evaporates.

Confidence reborn in all minds, free credit is established, the interests develop on the largest scale, well-being is generalized, prosperity becomes universal, civilization is extended to all classes, and the Revolution is accomplished. Abandon politics completely, and get seriously back to business—this then is the true revolutionary tactic; it is simple, like all that is true, easy like all that is simple, and it is simple, true and easy like all that is just.

The government of the people is neither a doctrine nor an idea, but a fact. That government does not sum itself up in a motto or a color; it has for a symbol a gold coin.

undermined the government that it split on all sides, and through its numerous fissures, badly repaired with the aid of the emergency laws, was introduced in continuous jets the free flood that should have carried it away.

Education felt itself restricted by academic regulation.

Worship balked under the yoke of the state.

Justice was ashamed of its contacts with politics.

Commerce and industry, tired of governmental supervision, already sought the means of freeing themselves from the routine of regulations and from the financial monopoly.

The arts and letters protested against a tyrannical protection which granted subsidies to favor and incapacity, while preventing true merit from producing itself.

And, in conjunction with all these other elements of public life, agriculture, their common mother, demanded a relief which could only be obtained by the suppression of various sections of the protectorate, and of the budgets allocated to that protectorate.

The manifestation of public needs has rendered the abuses of the tutelage so prominent; the social eddies caused by the administrative dikes were made so strong; the floating existences that the regulatory restrictions had created formed so formidable a log-jam, that M. Guizot, to avoid an overflow, had been forced to buy, not only the parliamentary riverbed, but also and especially the source of that political river which carried the governmental ship. The minister of Louis-Philippe purchased the voter himself: official France was his, from the censitaire to the legislator, from the base to the summit.

Having reached this ultimate point of political appropriation, the government found itself cornered; the Revolution should necessarily have made it spit it all back up; I mean that the flood of interests should have submerged and overwhelmed it; there was no escape for it in new encroachments: everything was taken, everything except the social nation, the real France, the industrial ascendancy, the appetite for comfort—in a word, the Revolution. Now

that unassailable and unconquerable adversary, which the government finally found itself facing, that natural enemy which pressed it from all sides, the Revolution, has never had,—this must be well understood,—and can never have the name of a man.

It was called Mirabeau, it protested.

It was called Danton, it was indignant.

It was called Marat, it trembled.

It was called Robespierre, it roared.

In our time, it has been given the names of Ledru-Rollin, of Louis Blanc, and of Raspail. You see what it has done about that.

Bad luck to the man who presumes to make Revolution; for the Revolution is the people, and whoever has the audacity to try to personify the people commits the greatest assault that history has ever witnessed!

The Revolution is the flux of interests: no one can represent the interests; they are represented by themselves; the strength and intensity of their persistent and calm expression is the only revolutionary force that is possible, or even thinkable. Nothing is more pathetic, nothing is more ruinous than to see in the assemblies, in journalism, or in the street a few individuals boast of representing the interests of the people, and thus confining the Revolution within a radius of a few square feet. Interest is a notion that springs from the needs, the taste and the aptitudes of each. Thus it is a purely personal act that rejects all delegation. No one is capable of realizing any interest but their own. When a man appears who says to another man, “I am going to do your business,” it is clear that from the political or unguaranteed perspective, this businessman will make the affairs of the constituent his own business.

Interest being a purely personal and individually realizable fact, its revolutionary object is to lead to liberty of action. Now, can the liberty necessary to the realization of interest be personified in a public capacity in one or more delegates? No! One is no more the representative of the liberty of others than of their interests. Liberty is not a political principle; it is an individual fact. Man is

The rhetoricians will designate as a monarchy or oligarchy, empire or republic the state in which I have coins in my pocket. I don't give a damn about their reasoning. They attract my attention only when by virtue of who knows what phantasmagoric law of balance, they want to take my coins. Then, let them call themselves monarchists, oligarchs, imperialists or republicans, I observe that my vocabulary permits me to give them another name, infinitely more intelligible and above all more conclusive: I call them crooks.

XIV

But what is it that authorizes the crimes of the State? What is it that makes the governments deduct an enormous premium from the time, industry, goods, life and blood of individuals? Fear. If no one in society was afraid, the government wouldn't have to protect anyone, and if the government didn't have to protect anyone, it would no longer have any pretext for demanding from each an account of the use of their time, the character of their industry, or the origin of their goods. It would no longer demand the sacrifice of the blood or life of anyone.

When, to speak only of our profession—and all professions are obstructed like our own—we seek the reason for the numerous hindrances which are placed in our path; when we ask why we have to consult the minister, and then the procurator of the Republic, and then again ten prefects of police in order to publish a journal, we find that the government is afraid, but we also discover that the government is stronger than us. What gives that strength to the government? Everyone's money, the public wealth. But if it is accepted that the public wealth pays the government for being afraid, it remains to be shown that it is the public wealth itself which is afraid.

Why is the public wealth afraid? Precisely because it is the stake of political or insurrectionary struggles; precisely because public

self-esteem and feels himself worthy of the confidence of others. His activity, snatched from the shadows, unfurls itself in the broad daylight. He leaves the ambush and passes on to labor.

He is poor and without credit, and the beginning will be difficult, but if he never begins, where would things drive him? His intention is good, his activity great, and his will firm. He gathers up his courage, and, there he is, seeking an issue in real society, his natural domain.

He will find that issue inevitably proportional to his merit. It is possible that while suited to watch-making, he will at first only find himself at the forge. It is possible that having knowledge of cabinet work, he will be forced for the moment to do carpentry. It is possible that although he is a lawyer, the absence of clients relegates him at first to studying as a notary, solicitor or bailiff. A journalist, it is possible that he will only find refuge for now in a boarding school or bookkeeping establishment. What does it matter! Every road leads to the goal. He creates, in whatever position he finds, some relations that it is up to him to make amicable. If he really has some aptitudes superior to those that he exercises, he must sooner or later find someone who has an interest in making use of his talent. He possesses himself, and the time, the activity, and discernment necessary to see to his ranking. For the moment, he works, so he speculates; he speculates, so he gains; he gains, so he possesses; he possesses, so he is free. He establishes himself in principled opposition to the State, by possession; for the logic of the State rigorously excludes individual possession; in that, the new apostles of the State doctrine are much more mathematical than the ancients, and Mr. Thiers is only a poor despot beside Louis Blanc. He establishes himself, then, individually by possession. His liberty begins with the first coin, and he will be more free in the future to the extent that he has more coins. That is the naïve and simple truth, the self-evident fact, which demonstrates itself like the light of day.

free in the dependency of what he loves; he sacrifices his liberty to his interests daily, and he is truly free only as long as he has the option not to be so.

In this way, no one can pose as the representative of the liberty or the interests of others without becoming in the same instant an authority, and without being, consequently, caught red-handed in the act of government.

Thus, by confining—in an assembly, or in a club, or in a journal, or on the public square, or behind a barricade—the interest and the liberty that belong essentially to the public domain, one has confined the Revolution which, as I have already said, is nothing other than the flux of interests and of liberty, and by confining the Revolution, one has gelded it, neutralized it.

Thus, I have reason to say that there are no worse counter-revolutionaries than the revolutionaries.

III

The governmentalists of the monarchy and the Republic make an admirable attempt to persuade the people that their fortune is in the hands of authority; it is exactly the opposite that is true. Power possesses only what it takes from the people, and in order for the citizens to believe that they should pursue well-being by giving up what they possess, their good sense would have to be subjected to a profound upheaval.

It is true that the combination presented inevitably blinds populations by awakening the coarser instincts and agitating the base passions.

Something must be done, say the monarchists, the people are uneasy: we will think for them. Already the monarchists are posing as the Providence for the destitute masses, and naturally provoking in those masses a ferment of envy. “The wealthy do not take care of you!” cry the republicans, addressing themselves to the subjugated

population, "we will force them to give you a part of what they have!" Now the revolutionaries agree with the monarchists, and who proclaim the latter as the Providence of the masses.

Thus, the republicans and monarchists claim with a common accord that wealth must remain immobilized in a certain class of citizens and that all the rest of the population should live on charity: a disgraceful and degrading error which has engendered the right to work and to assistance, the counterpart of which is inevitably the monopoly of capital; for it is impossible that I should have to ask anyone for the right to work, if I have not previously recognized in someone the right to possess, by an immutable title, that with which and on which I would labor. It is not necessary to have much insight in order to understand that fact. Simple good sense will suffice.

It is from this error, which has divided the French nation into privileged and mendicant parties, that we get the idea of localizing the Revolution and making it the prerogative of a sect of doctrinaires. By denying to individual initiative the ability to displace and generalize wealth by multiplication, by turning in the tight circle of existing capital, without thinking about the capital to be created, by making the social question a question of envy instead of making it a question of emulation and courage, we have made ourselves believe in the efficacy of governmental initiative in the allocation of well-being; from that arises the necessity of government. But the more the revolutionaries want government to distribute, in other words to monopolize, the more also the monarchists want the government to monopolize, that is to distribute. One cannot be the master of the distribution of wealth without first being made master of wealth; distribution is thus first monopoly; from which it follows that the citizen Barbés and Mr. Léon Faucher profess exactly the same doctrine. In this way, the consolidation of the government is due to the double action of the royalists and the revolutionaries. Now, it must be clear that government is, in whatever hands, the negation of the Revolution, for a very simple reason: govern-

the Revolution as before God, there are neither nobles, nor bourgeois, nor workers. Or rather there are only workers, only bourgeois, and only nobles. There are only individuals and these individuals, from an anarchic or free point of view, will be impoverished and enriched, raised or brought low, ennobled and degraded as conditions or their genius favors or strikes them.

XIII

Here then, insofar as we can indicate it, is the character of the revolutionary mechanism:

Convinced as we are, and as experience and the passage of time have forced us to be, that politics, the new theology, is a base intrigue, an art of scoundrels, a strategy for smoky rooms, a school for robbery and murder; persuaded that every man who makes a career of politics, by offensive or defensive title, by governing or opposing, as a director or critic, aims only to prevent some good for another by taxation or confiscation and finds himself ready to descend into the road, with his soldiers or his fanatics, in order to assassinate whomever would dispute the booty with him. We are aware, consequently, that every political man is, without knowing it, doubtless, but effectively, a robber and assassin. We are sure, as we are of the sun that shines on us, that every political question is an abstract question, every bit as insoluble and, consequently, no less idle and no less stupid than a question of theology. So we separate ourselves from politics with the same eagerness that we would show in freeing ourselves from complicity in a crime.

Once separated from the politics that teaches him to hate, to bear envy, to make war on his fellow citizens, to dream of their destruction, to annihilate himself to the point of no longer counting on himself, and to await everything from a government which can give nothing to him that it had not previously taken from others, once, we say, separated from politics, the individual recovers his

can never make anything but agitation, returns into the darkness. A positive people no longer pay attention to quibbles. The public sphere is rid of those dumb clods who only know how to speak doctrine, because doctrine is like God, like the unknown, like insolubility: the theme of the stupid and the hobbyhorse of fools.

The press, like the people, turning to positivism and industry, the legislation which disturbs and exploits it no longer has any reason to exist. It finds itself repealed in fact, or unenforceable, which comes down to the same thing.

Individual liberty, no longer guaranteed by a scrap of paper, but by the similarly eloquent fact of general security and private confidence; the liberty of industry guaranteed by the best of constitutions—that of anarchic or unregulated credit; the liberty of the press guaranteed by the most august of princes: interest: from these three fundamental liberties must inevitably, inescapably arise all the specific liberties which will be found today immured in the files of five or six ministers. The absorption of the State by individuals will be the work of a year, more or less. In a few months the government, stripped of the budget for the interior, the budget for religion, the budget for public instruction, the budget for labor, the budget for industry and commerce, the budget for agriculture and the budget of the prefecture of police, will find itself, (driven by the force of events and without thought coming to it crying “Help!”) reduced purely and simply to democratic proportions—the minister of foreign affairs and of his two adjuncts, the minister of the navy, which is a permanent position, and the minister of war, which is potential. The government will be, in the end, what it must be, no longer an internal or domestic government but an external or diplomatic government: a chancellery.

As for ourselves, we call that, with or without the permission of the gentlemen revolutionaries, the Revolution: for we are those who want, in fact and not in words, an honest, equitable and good Revolution, a Revolution which will be a great thing as well as a good deal for the noble, the bourgeois and the worker, for before

ment is forced monopoly. The greatest enthusiast for redistribution will arrive at government, which I challenge him to divide. See for yourself.

No one can govern without relying on wealth; wealth is to government as columns are to a building, what legs are to the individual. Thus as soon as an individual, under the pretext of doing good for the poor, is driven to government, that individual must, in order to maintain the balance, rely on wealth. Now, how will he be able, from now on, to deprive the rich in order to profit the poor, since his own preservation rests with the full support, if not of personal, at least of financial monopoly?

Thus we see, as soon as the Revolution has been reduced to the slender and measly proportions of a movement of individuals, a transformation of proper names, it has gone astray; it has fallen into an abyss, and the worst of abysses, that of envy, laziness and mendicancy.

If, during the period of the reign of Louis-Philippe, the revolutionaries had set themselves to glorifying the industrial initiative of individuals, instead of developing stupid theses about the munificence of the State; if they had taught individuals to count only on themselves, instead of teaching them expect everything from the lame Providence of governments; if they had sought to produce some money-makers instead of driving the people to sterile controversy and shameful begging, liberty, which, whatever the sophists say, is a question of coins, and happiness which, whatever the idlers say, is a question of morality and labor, would have been universally established in France. And the government, forgotten in its corner, would hardly concern us. A people who conduct their own business is a people who govern themselves, and a people who govern themselves repeal and render obsolete, by this act alone, all the legislative jumble of which the popular agitation, much more than the genius of the men of State, had favored the conception.

After having indicated what, in my conviction, is the truth, that is to say: that the institution of government, shabby, decrepit and

corrupt in 1848, was going, pushed by the force of things and the flux of interests, to disappear quietly and forever, if the untimely movement of the population hadn't uplifted and rejuvenated it, it remains for me to demonstrate how that movement, as governmental as it was, could only be revolutionary, industrial or anarchic.

IV

February 24, at two o'clock in the afternoon, the Tuileries, the legislative palace, the ministerial hotels, the Hôtel de Ville, and the Prefecture of police were all deserted; the official hierarchy was eclipsed. Authority had physically disappeared, and the people were free.

And understand well what that word people means, coming from my pen: when I make use of that word, I mean to designate everyone, smocks and coats, patent leather shoes and hobnailed boots.

On February 24, I say, the people were free, that is to say, that no one having more or less authority than others, each had the same authority. Now, it is when the authority of each is equal to that of all that the social balance is inevitably achieved.

This is of a mathematical exactitude and a native simplicity: everyone understands the neutralization of forces by their parity; everyone understands, consequently, how, in a group of men equally vested with the power to enslave, liberty is constituted. If I can counter you and you can counter me, our mutual respect is assured: peace is with us. Such was the state of Paris and France on February 24, 1848.

The Revolution was accomplished. And yet the revolutionary movement had been an error; an error that the people would have paid for very dearly if that movement had not succeeded; an error that the people have paid very dearly for, since that movement,

its impoverishment than the police agents have to say against their suppression.

XII

Now when, instead of a single store of money, the country possesses, for the sale of that merchandise, as many shops as there are capitalists, that metallic commodity cannot fail to be cheap. Woolen cloth is not expensive in France thanks to the expansion which free commerce has given to its sale! If it came to be monopolized, as money is at present, the frock coat would become a rare distinction.

Capital being freed, it is labor which is stimulated. Capital and labor are one and the same thing; capital comes from labor and returns there, or rather never leaves it. It moves it. If labor is halted it is because capital is paralyzed. Labor only walks on the legs of capital, but capital only thinks with the head of labor. That duality creates only one body and one aim: production.

Those who have said that there is an essential antagonism between capital and labor have only wanted to preserve the means of governing both. Now, to govern is to exploit. By defying these officious outsiders, capital and labor communicate among themselves without intermediary. As soon as they communicate, they know each other, and when they know each other, they join; for we only make war here below because we do not know one another.

Look closely at society after the suppression of the official opposition, after the working out of the political inertia and the calm which results from it, after the disappearance of the state police and the conversion of the financial system, and you will see how rapidly the transformation develops.

No more stupid declamations in the press; the abstract hair-splitting which has never proven anything, which can prove nothing, which has never made anything but unrest, and which

generally and completely calm when the opposition of party or verbiage disappears to leave the material opposition of real interests and active labor, otherwise known as the popular or individual opposition, free to act. Against the force of social needs, the laws of the State can do nothing.

We make an effective opposition to the police when, without other concerns, we get close to our material interests; for those interests being enemies of every disorderly or state agitation, it follows that to concern ourselves with them is to cease to agitate. Now, to cease to agitate is quite simply to suppress the police, unless the police has some reason to be apart from agitation, which is incomprehensible.

Once the police are absorbed by labor and the interests, the suppression of the rules of the State, the repeals of the law come fast, for the confidence which supports credit develops rapidly.

Each individual occupies themselves with their own interests, so each labors; each labors, so no one threatens; no one threatens, so no one fears; no one fears, and security is universal.

Security being universal, capital, which fear had driven into the caves of the state bank, puts its nose to the transom and, seeing the passage of industry, which promises him six, ten, fifteen, or twenty percent, naturally asks the question: What am I doing here? The question posed, capital says to itself: The fear of being robbed has imprisoned me in a privilege which gives me four percent; there is no longer agitation outside; I am no longer afraid and I can have, outside, the double benefit of liberty and of a greater profit. Let us go out.

Capital leaves the bank by instinct, and it puts itself in contact with intelligence and industry, in order to know how best to realize the largest profits. The association of money with labor takes place progressively. The financial monopoly is destroyed by the interest of finance itself: free or individual credit is established. Thus, the most beautiful jewel in the crown of the State disappears gradually and without the government having more to complain about from

which only succeeded in a false manner, was found to have consolidated the very thing the interests wanted to destroy: the tutelage.

The movement of February 1848 has been an error because, on the one hand, the public needs to pursue the repeal of the tutelage, and because, on the other hand, any movement in the street, being a mutiny, demands and, as a consequence, confirms the tutelage. I challenge anyone to accomplish a feat of arms without discipline. Now, there is no discipline without a leader, and no leader without subordinates. The movement of February, like that of 1830, was a feat of arms, so it had its leaders, its guardians, its necessary and inevitable government. But it is precisely against government, not the government of Charles X, not that of Louis-Philippe, but the government of anyone, whoever it might be, it is against the government as a principle that the interests militate and the Revolution struggles. The movement of February, which carried government in its womb, came to no agreement with the interests, nor with the Revolution, from which it follows that it was an error.

How has it happened, however, that this movement has satisfied the Revolution for a moment? It is because before that manifestation, the government, which is not at the Tuileries, nor at the Hôtel de Ville, nor the Elysée, but which is found in the interests from which public opinion takes advice, was already condemned by public opinion: because before having been accomplished by the movement, the Revolution had been made by the interests, that the doctrinaires call the faith.

But, but between the genius of the interests or of the faith, and that of the movement, there is an essential difference which should soon translate into disappointment: the industrial force aimed at institutions, and the faith separated itself from authority; the movement aimed only at men. We know in what striking manner the interests have protested against the movement and its results. Let us say what would be necessary to assimilate the movement into the Revolution.

V

The revolutionary act was accomplished.

Antagonisms, the misshapen children of governments, were wiped from the heart of the Republic, which was truly the Republic as long as it had no sponsors.

Equity, that supreme justice of the people, hung alone over the City, replacing the law that it had just repealed. The bank and the Palais des Finances had the rare good fortune to see Liberty stand sentry at their door and they did not complain about it.

Theft, forewarned by some improvised inscriptions of the hasty fate that was reserved for it, was punished immediately with death. Theft, moreover, exists only in the state of privilege; free competition blots it out completely.

The parties, vermin born in the rottenness of the high and low courts, faded with the cause that produced them.

Complete forgetfulness of the past brought all the citizens together.

Fraternity was universal.

The greatest courtesy was exchanged in the streets, and all the public places.

Joy and hope illuminated every face.

Each, no longer being forbidden anything except by themselves, sought a support in everyone and found without difficulty, in the feeling of his isolation, the reason for the respect that he owed to the others.

The most perfect order reigned everywhere, at the same times as the rabble.

No one was afraid, for everyone was king.

No one being afraid, confidence was general.

I hold as perfectly exact this picture of the public situation on February 24, 1848. I suppose that the people of Paris would have placed in the foreground of this picture a simple urban or municipal commission and a magistrate who, face turned towards the border,

The institution of the State can only be overthrown by the opposite institution. Now, the opposite of the State is the individual, as the opposite of fiction is fact. Let the individual constitute itself and the State perishes; let liberty be established and authority disappears.

But how, I am ask, should liberty be established? How will the individual be constituted?

The individual will constitute itself by applying itself to doing itself that which, thus far, has been left to the initiative of the State. Liberty establishes itself in labor, production, wealth, and not otherwise.

XI

I know nothing more obscure than the demonstration from evidence. The analysis of a simple notion demands so much care that I would lose courage if I did not feel myself aided by the attention that the public gives to these questions today.

When I speak of the substitution of the individual for the State, I mean that the regulatory legislation by means of which the State has appropriated the direction of public affairs must be repealed, and that each individual must from now on conduct their own affairs, not in conformity to the laws of the State, but by virtue of their own instinct, and directed by their own interests.

But we cannot ask the assemblies to repeal the laws. The repeal of the laws of the State cannot come from the initiative of the State. The State cannot dispossess itself. That operation comes down, as a matter of fact and right, to the initiative of the individuals who have empowered the State.

A State law is repealed as soon as we put the social facts in opposition to it. All the police laws, for example, will be repealed, and all the agents of the police will disappear on the day when society becomes generally and completely calm. Now, society will be

its caprices, art, science, education, worship, industry, commerce, and credit, without concerning itself with anything but its own security. The logic of the state, as Rousseau explained it, and as it was practiced by Robespierre, Guizot, Ledru-Rollin Thiers, and Louis Blanc, accepts this enormity, namely, that the supreme magistracy being saved, the destruction of all the French people would not compromise the salvation of the State at all. For the State is that same magistracy; whoever attacks it, attacks the State, and, provided that it remains standing, all can perish around it without the State courting any risk.

Such is the traditional State. MM. Thiers, Cabet, Berryer, Pierre Leroux, de Broglie, Louis Blanc, Laroche-Jaquelein, and Considerant know no other. Well! The object of the Revolution is to free the individual from the leads of that harness; the object of the Revolution is to substitute real, individual will for fictive, public will. From a traditional point of view, I am lead in order to profit my guide; from the Revolutionary point of view, I guide myself for my own profit. From a traditional point of view, the magistrate ceases to be an individual by becoming the State. From the Revolutionary point of view, the individual becomes magistrate; the State is the individual.

At this point in our demonstration, we can cast a decisive light on the vices of the political and insurrectional means in use up to this day.

The State being given, when I gather my fellow citizens in a hall or in a public square to ask them for the investiture of their confidence, in order to give combat to the State, whether by words or by arms, I do not propose to overthrow that institution for their profit; I simply intend to substitute my person for the person that I will combat. My only object is to seize the direction of public affairs from those who now hold it. I may believe that I will direct better than they have, but I will inevitably be mistaken; for, as it is precisely a question of not directing, the direction, whatever it is and wherever it comes from, is necessarily an evil.

would have been particularly occupied with notifying foreigners of both the new state of France and its peaceful attitude. In this case, I maintain, and I will show very soon, that the result of the movement would have remained in conformity with the demands of the Revolution, sovereignty would have remained in its place, with liberty gained and domestic peace assured.

Indeed, what more would be needed? A minister of the interior? But that would be to call individual and municipal liberty back into question and recreate a tyranny and budget which the interests have sought to abolish.

A minister of instruction? But that would be to call the liberty of education back into question and recreate a tyranny and budget which the interests have sought to abolish.

A minister of religion? But that would be to call the liberty of conscience back into question and recreate a tyranny and budget which the interests have sought to abolish.

A minister of commerce? But that would be to call the liberty of transactions back into question and recreate a tyranny and budget which the interests have sought to abolish.

A minister of agriculture? But that would be to call the liberty of land-use back into question and recreate a tyranny and budget which the interests have sought to abolish.

A minister of public works? But that would be to call the liberty of private enterprise back into question and recreate a tyranny and budget which the interests have sought to abolish.

A minister of finances? But that would be to call the liberty of credit back into question and recreate a tyranny and budget which the interests have sought to abolish.

A minister of justice? But that would be to call the justice of the jurors back into question and recreate the political jurisdictions and a budget which the interests have sought to abolish.

A prefecture of police? But that would be to call into question the sovereignty of the communes, to substitute for their own police a State police, and recreate a tyranny and budget which the interests

have sought to abolish. A war minister and a minister of the navy? Very well. These offices are natural annexes of the foreign affairs and the men who exercise them are the subordinates of the head of the chancellery named above; the people shouldn't have more to worry them than the accounting that would have to be made to record the small receipts and small expenditures necessary for that small administration.

Thus a town council and a chancellery should have been, and would have been, the official face of the government of the people, if so many ambitious sorts, detesting the democratic condition of mere citizens, had not persisted in wanting to be ministers: prefects, sub-prefects, collectors, inspectors, etc., etc. Democracy does not consist of making all the communes subject to the government of one commune, all individuals subject to one or more individuals; it consists of leaving each commune and each individual to govern themselves under their own responsibility. Now, before a mayor and municipal council, individuals govern themselves; for it does not come to the mind of a communal assembly, not supported by a prefect, to regiment the citizens who have elected them in their individual business and industrial interests. Tyranny comes from communist or monarchic centralization, while individual liberty is in the municipality; the municipal council is essentially democratic. Nothing should be put above it, for fear of reestablishing the monarchy. Just as before the mayor individuals govern themselves, just so, faced with the chancellery or diplomatic administration, the commune, a complex individual, governs itself; for it would not occur to a body which has no mission but to represent the nation to foreigners to interfere in communal affairs.

Tyranny comes from the monopolization of the domestic elements of society by the State; communal liberty is guaranteed when the central authority has only a purely diplomatic character, and a few duties free from any infringement of the prerogative of individuals. All that is done domestically must be done by the people themselves, by the individuals. That which is materially

Insurrection is no more a Revolutionary means than politics and, here again, the facts come to the aid of my reasoning. Experience shows, indeed, that every insurrection has only served to strengthen and even, I must say, to aggravate the tutelage.

So it has become as urgent as it is rational to renounce, in order to accomplish the Revolution, the means, recognized as ineffective, of politics and insurrection.

These means, the ultimate recourse of the ambitious types improperly called revolutionaries, discarded, what remains? I will make that question the subject of a last examination.

X

I have said that the Revolution was the substitution of the individual for the traditional State; that definition will be within the reach of everyone when I explain what I mean by the traditional State.

The notion of the State, as we have inherited it, incorporates in a supreme magistracy, king, emperor, president, committee, assembly, all the elements of social life. In conformity with that notion, nothing is done, nothing is said, and nothing budes in the country except by virtue of laws emanating from that official personage; the reason of the functionary is the reason of the State and from now on, before thinking, before acting, before moving with an eye to their own good, individuals must think, act and move with an eye to the preservation of the magistrate, keystone of the public edifice. This is communism or monarchy, which amounts to the same thing.

In this strange and barbarous mechanical combination, each individual, held by a bit, directed by reins and driven with a whip, finds themselves tethered, like a beast of burden, to the wagon of the State or supremacy. The State, universal driver, halts or advances, holds back or pushes forward, at its will and according to

have not taken account, have believed, and persist in believing, that the Revolution or Liberty can be represented and localized in a legislative space. That is—I have said it above and I repeat it—a fatal mistake of the modern spirit. Liberty is not a social principle; it is only an individual fact. No one can represent any liberty but his own individual liberty. As soon as a man presents himself as representative of the liberty of others, he is already an authority. Now, the authority of liberty transforms itself and becomes at once the liberty of authority. In this case only the delegate is free. The magistrate absorbs the city.

Let us also note that by placing themselves alongside the parliamentary opposition on the terrain of the discussion of the acts of power, the writers of the opposite press engage in politics, in government, and that by imitating the government in the care that they take to name the country as guarantee for its acts, they truly displace that country which is social and not political, which makes industry and business and not controversy.

I will repeat then, after having sufficiently demonstrated it, that politics is not a Revolutionary means. The facts, moreover, come to the aid of my reasoning. The political history of the last sixty years confirms all that I have said. Thanks to politics, the question is still today what it was on the eve of the storming of the Bastille. We come to the second question, regarding insurrection.

I said, in speaking of politics, nearly all there is to say about insurrection. Insurrection is the opposition in the street. Here it no longer discusses, but acts; it is always the same combat, only it has taken some material proportions. Victorious or vanquished, its triumph or defeat is summarized in the government, in the negation of the Revolution. The insurrectional opposition is found to have exactly the same character as the parliamentary opposition, in the sense that it affirms the tutelage instead of denying it, that it denies the Revolution instead of affirming it, except that, in the confines of an assembly, the opposition only confirms the governmental principle, while in the street, it confirms the fact.

impossible for the people to carry out by themselves, by each of its members individually, is an international act, a treaty of peace or commerce. There are some cases where the need for delegation makes itself felt. That is why the only magistracy which had the Revolutionary right to spring up from the movement of February 24, 1848, was the foreign ministry.

VI

What! A town council and a chancellery, for the whole government, will appear to the great Revolutionaries, friends of the people, as institutions that are insufficiently complicated and especially too peaceful.

How would the citizen Ledru-Rollin bring back the royalists that he wanted to fight, if not by taking the place of Mr. Duchâtel? Ledru-Rollin is the author of Baroche.

How would the citizen Garnier-Pagès have stifled the newborn confidence, if he had not reopened the finance ministry and declared a new tax? Garnier-Pagès is the author of Fould.

Where would the citizen Carnot take a beating from the Jesuits, if he had not rebuilt the university? Carnot is the author of Falloux.

How would the citizen Crémieux preserve the magistracy of the monarchies, if he was not installed as a justice? Crémieux is the author of Rouher.

Would the inquisition of the State not be dead if the citizen Causidière had not become police prefect? Causidière is the author of Carlier.

Some much stranger things would have come to pass, if the citizen Louis Blanc, the Ignatius of socialism, had not daily preached the crusade of labor against capital; Louis Blanc is the author of Montalembert.

All these republicans who, as such, should have a blind confidence in the good sense of the public, will begin by mistrusting the

good sense of the people, who showed themselves to be republican that the republicans paled beside them.

In the face of universal republicanism, the National did not know what to do, and the Réforme felt itself threatened with asphyxia. Since the disappearance of authority, each citizen having an interest in dealing carefully with everyone, there was no more animosity in the country: politics having fled with the government, the question became completely economic, calculation taking the place of controversy.

But the doctrinaires did not find any profit in this; they sensed clearly that, from the moment that each was occupied with their own business, everyone's business would go very well. But, in that case, the least would do as well as them, and they would find themselves obliged to labor like everyone else. In that case, there would no longer be parties, and the agitation that gives a living to the vagabonds and the men of state would cease. In that case, there would be no more politics, and those who live without doing anything would no longer have anything to do. From this they deduced the necessity of rebuilding the Government.

But how were they to go about it? Government has no mission but to bring the people to agreement; now, everyone agreed. Thus no government was possible, and yet a government was called for; it needed one itself. The democracy had its administrative staff, just like the royalty; like the royalty, it had some men whose devotion to the homeland could go even so far as occupying the kitchens and the ministerial palaces; like the royalty, it had great citizens all ready to sacrifice their obscurity to attain a prefecture, at the risk of taking home 40 or 80 francs per day; like the royalty, it had some more modest, but no less deserving heroes, capable renouncing common labor to go sit in some sub-prefecture. There was a need, if not for France, which was then very fortunate, at least for those who wanted to do it the honor of living at its expense, of a government. It was necessary, besides, to save the governmental principle. To fail to rebuild the government, that would have been

men, as much as Guizot et Baroche, from which it follows from the Revolutionary point of view that both belong to the traditional category of public tutors that it is a question of eliminating. The men who, either in Parliament or in the press, make opposition to politics and government, are inevitably anti-Revolutionaries, for they engage in politics and government. They are involved in the heights of political and governmental complicity. They serve the cause of the tutelage and plead against emancipation.

That could appear paradoxical at first, but it is very true. When an orator of the opposition takes the floor against a piece of legislation which harms the common right or liberty, and when the writers of the opposition take up the pen to combat some governmental measure, they give to that measure, which they don't know how to stop, the ultimate sanction of a public hearing. They give it its legal reason to be. To discuss is to combat, and whoever combats subscribes in advance to the law which must result from their defeat. Now, the defeat of the opposition is never in doubt. The government cannot be wrong.

All the legal oppressions, suppressions, and prohibitions which have been accomplished since the unfortunate invention of the parliamentary regime are due much more to the opposition than to the government. I say much more, because there are two senses in which these tyrannical measures are attributable to the opposition: first, because it is the opposition which has provoked them; and second, because the opposition regularly makes itself an accomplice in their adoption by debating them.

IX

The parliamentary opposition was born of an error of logic, which the ambition of men has sadly had a great interest in propagating. The irregular minds and ardent hearts, stimulated by generosity and, too often also, by an envy of which, perhaps, they

themselves from one another. The means are brutal and their ineffectiveness is demonstrated by experience, but it is a certain fact that the desire to be emancipated is everywhere. Thus, the Revolution is universal, and it is for this reason, because it does not want to be localized, that it is the Revolution.

The Revolution being the end of tutelage, what must the Revolutionary logic be?

Will it be political opposition?

Will it be insurrectionary opposition?

It will be neither politics nor insurrection, I would respond, and I demonstrate:

Politics, in the usual meaning of the word, as a social or domestic question, is the art of governing people; it is the recognition of the minority of the public, and the code of the tutelage. It is the tutelage itself. To combat politics with politics, to battle the government with government, is to engage in politics and government. It is to confirm the tutelage, instead of abolishing it. It is to halt the Revolution, instead of accomplishing it. For, finally, what is the opposition, if it is not the critique, in other words, the government of the government?

Before the Revolution, all politics, like all governments, resemble one another and are equal, for the Revolution is, by principle, nature, character and temperament, the enemy of all politics and all government, whether social, domestic or internal. The Revolution has swallowed up the Estates-General, the Constituent Assembly, the Convention, the Directory, the Empire, the Restoration, Louis-Philippe, the provisional government and M. Cavaignac, and it will devour Louis Bonaparte and all the would-be governors who could come after him, for the Revolution, I repeat, is the negation of all political tutelage.

Thus, politics and government are not, and cannot be, Revolutionary means. Robespierre was as hostile to the Revolution as Guizot; and Ledru-Rollin has halted it no less than Mr. Baroche; for Robespierre and Ledru-Rollin were political men, government

to allow a precedent which compromised all the governments of Europe. That would have been to take from the last descendents of the dynasties all hope of return. Now, to take from the princes any hope of returning, was to take from the republicans the power to fight the princes, and the republicans cannot stop fighting the princes without ceasing to be republicans.

Thus the republicans of February were going to perish, absorbed by universal agreement, when suddenly the National, near the end of its strength, cast this challenge into the arena: To the republicans of tomorrow, from the republicans of the old order.

From that moment, the categories were created, discord sang victory and the government of the friends of the people was able to establish itself. Thus, in order to govern, the republicans, like the kings, set about dividing the population. Mr. Marrast instituted the old order and Mr. de Lamartine that of the moderates. Twenty-four hours before, there had only been brothers; twenty-four hours after, there were only enemies.

VII

If the Revolution had been understood, no one would have concerned themselves with government; for the Revolution, stranger to politics, was simply a question of economy. The people would have had to make politics submit to the fate inflicted on criminals; on the walls of Paris along with the inscription, death to robbers, we should have seen: death to politics! Sadly, the people still did not know, as they know today, that politics is the height of knavery.

Each citizen is called to resolve the economic question as it pertains to them. When politics has disappeared, it is the interests, it is business which triumphs, and no one needs a minister to watch over their own interests and business. Each is their own government.

Suppress the dictatorship of the Hotel de Ville on February 25, and the people would have had nothing to do in the street. It was only politics that kept them there. Their business would have immediately brought them home, for that is where they live.

Now, imagine to yourself the immense economic movement which would have resulted from the suppression of politics in the aftermath of the barricades? Labor, that morality par excellence, would have revealed itself in all its forms to capital, and capital, which is frightened by politics, but strongly attracted to labor, would have thrown itself with confidence into industry. Nothing is more reassuring than a population which applies its activity to production, for nothing is more worthy of interest than people occupied with earning their living. The confidence inspired by those people is general. We willingly contract obligations with them, and we even seek to extend credit to them, for those who give credit want some guarantees, and the first guarantee of a transaction is morality. Now, everyone knows that labor and morality are synonyms. The only honest people that there have been, and that there can be in the world, are the laborers.

But, if I set aside the political men and the vagabonds, there are only laborers in society. The capitalist, rid of the political protectorate which deigns to give him 4 percent, is the natural associate of the industry which can give him 10, 15 or 20 percent. When capital and labor join together without the political intermediary which exploits them both, they will get along marvelously, for they cannot live without each other. They complement one another, and if labor cannot move forward without capital, I don't know what capital means without labor.

At the point liberty had reached on February 24, 1848, there were only, as there could only be, people inclined to help each other. Each willingly made some sacrifices for his neighbor. The creditor extended due dates; the proprietor assisted the tenant; people shared their dinner with others they hardly knew; and if the restoration of the government had not left half of the population

begging in the back rooms, if, disillusioned with the space of politics, the citizens had applied themselves to useful industries, in no time at all each, by permanent or provisional title, would have found their place and their bread, and the government of all would long since have been established.

To summarize my thoughts with regard to the movement of February and the democratic outcome that it has achieved, I would say that the movement has lacked a man who, like Washington, understood the justice of public aspirations. The people have no need of people who love them. Thus far, the people have been loved far too much. What they want is for someone to let them love themselves. Philanthropy is a factory whose products have been more profitable to the entrepreneurs than to the shareholders. For proof I would require only Mr. Thiers, whose love of society has brought in fairly handsome dividends, according to those who in former times were acquainted with the sheen of his clothing and the holes in his boots.

When I see a man who is called a friend of the people, I begin by securing what I have in my pockets, and I consider myself very well warned.

That said, I return to my subject.

VIII

The Revolution is the emancipation of the individual or it is nothing; it is the end of the political and social tutelage, or it means nothing. In this I am, and indeed must be, in agreement with everyone, even with those we are accustomed to call reactionaries and who are, after all, only minors promised to the tutelage of the self-styled democrats, as the democrats are today minors under the tutelage of the so-called reactionaries. From a national point of view, the names of the parties matter little; I meet here only some people who want to take hold one another, precisely in pour order to free