

The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte

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Preface to the Second Edition (1869)

My friend Joseph Weydemeyer, whose death was so untimely, intended to publish a political weekly in New York starting from January 1, 1852. He invited me to provide this weekly with a history of the coup d'état. Down to the middle of February, I accordingly wrote him weekly articles under the title *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. Meanwhile, Weydemeyer's original plan had fallen through. Instead, in the spring of 1852 he began to publish a monthly, *Die Revolution*, whose first number consists of my *Eighteenth Brumaire*. A few hundred copies of this found their way into Germany at that time, without, however, getting into the actual book market. A German bookseller of extremely radical pretensions to whom I offered the sale of my book was most virtuously horrified at a "presumption" so "contrary to the times."

From the above facts it will be seen that the present work took shape under the immediate pressure of events and its historical material does not extend beyond the month of February, 1852. Its republication now is due in part to the demand of the book trade, in part to the urgent requests of my friends in Germany.

Of the writings dealing with the same subject at approximately the same time as mine, only two deserve notice: Victor Hugo's *Napoleon le Petit* and Proudhon's *Coup d'Etat*. Victor Hugo confines himself to bitter and witty invective against the responsible producer of the coup d'état. The event itself appears in his work like a bolt from the blue. He sees in it only the violent act of a single individual. He does not notice that he makes this individual great instead of little by ascribing to him a personal power of initiative unparalleled in world history. Proudhon, for his part, seeks to represent the coup d'état as the result of an antecedent historical development. Inadvertently, however, his historical construction of the coup d'état becomes a historical apologia for its hero. Thus he falls into the error of our so-called objective historians. I, on the contrary, demonstrate how the class struggle in France created circumstances and relationships that made it possible for a grotesque mediocrity to play a hero's part.

A revision of the present work would have robbed it of its particular coloring. Accordingly, I have confined myself to mere correction of printer's errors and to striking out allusions now no longer intelligible.

The concluding words of my work: "But when the imperial mantle finally falls on the shoulders of Louis Bonaparte, the bronze statue of Napoleon will come crashing down from the top of the Vendôme Column," have already been fulfilled. Colonel Charras opened the attack on the Napoleon cult in his work on the campaign of 1815. Subsequently, and especially in the past few years, French literature has made an end of the Napoleon legend with the weapons of historical research, criticism, satire, and wit. Outside France, this violent breach with the traditional popular belief, this tremendous mental revolution, has been little noticed and still less understood.

Lastly, I hope that my work will contribute toward eliminating the school-taught phrase now current, particularly in Germany, of so-called Caesarism. In this superficial historical analogy the main point is forgotten, namely, that in ancient Rome the class struggle took place only within a privileged minority, between the free rich and the free poor, while the great productive mass of the population, the slaves, formed the purely passive pedestal for these combatants. People forget Sismondi's significant saying: The Roman proletariat lived at the expense of society, while modern society lives at the expense of the proletariat. With so complete a difference between the material, economic conditions of the ancient and the modern class struggles, the political figures produced by them can likewise have no more in common with one another than the Archbishop of Canterbury has with the High Priest Samuel.

Karl Marx,

London, June 25, 1869

Preface to the Third German Edition (Engels, 1885)

The fact that a new edition of *The Eighteenth Brumaire*¹ has become necessary, thirty-three years after its first appearance, proves that even today this little book has lost none of its value.

It was in truth a work of genius. Immediately after the event that struck the whole political world like a thunderbolt from the blue, that was condemned by some with loud cries of moral indignation and accepted by others as salvation from the revolution and as punishment for its errors, but was only wondered at by all and understood by none-immediately after this event Marx came out with a concise, epigrammatic exposition that laid bare the whole course of French history since the February days in its inner interconnection, reduced the miracle of December 2² to a natural, necessary result of this interconnection and in so doing did not even need to treat the hero of the coup d'état otherwise than with the contempt he so well deserved. And the picture was drawn with such a master hand that every fresh disclosure since made has only provided fresh proofs of how faithfully it reflected reality. This eminent understanding of the living history of the day, this clear-sighted appreciation of events at the moment of happening, is indeed without parallel.

But for this, Marx's thorough knowledge of French history was needed. France is the land where, more than anywhere else, the historical class struggles were each time fought out to a decision, and where, consequently, the changing political forms within which they move and in which their results are summarised have been stamped in the sharpest outlines. The centre of feudalism in the Middle Ages, the model country of unified monarchy, resting on estates, since the Renaissance,³ France demolished feudalism in the Great Revolution and established the unalloyed rule of the bourgeoisie in a classical purity unequalled by any other European land. And the struggle of the upward-striving proletariat against the ruling bourgeoisie appeared here in an acute form unknown elsewhere. This was the reason why Marx not only studied the past history of France with particular predilection, but also followed her current history in every detail, stored up the material for future use and, consequently, events never took him by surprise.

In addition, however, there was still another circumstance. It was precisely Marx who had first discovered the great law of motion of history, the law according to which all historical struggles, whether they proceed in the political, religious, philosophical or some other ideological domain, are in fact only the more or less clear expression of struggles of social classes, and that the existence and thereby the collisions, too, between these classes are in turn conditioned by the degree of development of their economic position, by the mode of their production and of their exchange determined by it. This law, which has the same significance for history as the law of the transformation of energy has for natural science - this law gave him here, too, the key to an understanding of the history of the Second French Republic.⁴ He put his law to the test on these historical events, and even after thirty-three years we must still say that it has stood the test brilliantly.

¹ This work, written on the basis of a concrete analysis of the revolutionary events in France from 1848 to 1851, is one of the most important Marxist writings. In it Marx gives a further elaboration of all the basic tenets of historical materialism—the theory of the class struggle and proletarian revolution, the state and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Of extremely great importance is the conclusion which Marx arrived at on the question of the attitude of the proletariat to the bourgeois state. He says, “All revolutions perfected this machine instead of smashing it.”. Lenin described it as one of the most important propositions in the Marxist teaching on the state.

In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* Marx continued his analysis of the question of the peasantry, as a potential ally of the working class in the imminent revolution, outlined the role of the political parties in the life of society and exposed for what they were the essential features of Bonapartism.

² On December 2, 1851 a counter-revolutionary coup d’état in France was carried out by Louis Bonaparte and his adherents.

³ Renaissance—a period in the cultural and ideological development of a number of countries in Western and Central Europe called forth by the emergence of capitalist relations, which covers the second half of the fifteenth and the sixteenth century. This period is usually associated with a rapid development in the arts and sciences and the revival of interest in the culture of classical Greece and Rome (hence the name of the period). For Engels’s description of the Renaissance see his “Introduction to Dialectics of Nature.”

⁴ The Second Republic existed in France from 1848 to 1852. For Marx’s description of this period see *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850* and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

I

Hegel remarks somewhere¹ that all great world-historic facts and personages appear, so to speak, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce. Caussidière for Danton, Louis Blanc for Robespierre, the Montagne of 1848 to 1851² for the Montagne of 1793 to 1795, the nephew for the uncle. And the same caricature occurs in the circumstances of the second edition of the Eighteenth Brumaire.

Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living. And just as they seem to be occupied with revolutionizing themselves and things, creating something that did not exist before, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service, borrowing from them names, battle slogans, and costumes in order to present this new scene in world history in time-honored disguise and borrowed language. Thus Luther put on the mask of the Apostle Paul, the Revolution of 1789-1814 draped itself alternately in the guise of the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire, and the Revolution of 1848 knew nothing better to do than to parody, now 1789, now the revolutionary tradition of 1793-95. In like manner, the beginner who has learned a new language always translates it back into his mother tongue, but he assimilates the spirit of the new language and expresses himself freely in it only when he moves in it without recalling the old and when he forgets his native tongue.

When we think about this conjuring up of the dead of world history, a salient difference reveals itself. Camille Desmoulins, Danton, Robespierre, St. Just, Napoleon, the heroes as well as the parties and the masses of the old French Revolution, performed the task of their time – that of unchaining and establishing modern bourgeois society – in Roman costumes and with Roman phrases. The first one destroyed the feudal foundation and cut off the feudal heads that had grown on it. The other created inside France the only conditions under which free competition could be developed, parceled-out land properly used, and the unfettered productive power of the nation employed; and beyond the French borders it swept away feudal institutions everywhere, to provide, as far as necessary, bourgeois society in France with an appropriate up-to-date environment on the European continent. Once the new social formation was established, the antediluvian colossi disappeared and with them also the resurrected Romanism – the Brutuses, the Gracchi, the publicolas, the tribunes, the senators, and Caesar himself. Bourgeois society in its sober reality bred its own true interpreters and spokesmen in the Says, Cousins, Royer-Collards, Benjamin Constants, and Guizots; its real military leaders sat behind the office desk and the hog-headed Louis XVIII was its political chief. Entirely absorbed in the production of wealth and in peaceful competitive struggle, it no longer remembered that the ghosts of the Roman period had watched over its cradle.

But unheroic though bourgeois society is, it nevertheless needed heroism, sacrifice, terror, civil war, and national wars to bring it into being. And in the austere classical traditions of the Roman Republic the bourgeois gladiators found the ideals and the art forms, the self-deceptions, that they needed to conceal from themselves the bourgeois-limited content of their struggles and to keep their passion on the high plane of great historic tragedy. Similarly, at another stage of development a century earlier, Cromwell and the English people had borrowed from the Old Testament the speech, emotions, and illusions for their bourgeois revolution. When the real goal had been achieved and the bourgeois transformation of English society had been accomplished, Locke supplanted Habakkuk.

Thus the awakening of the dead in those revolutions served the purpose of glorifying the new struggles, not of parodying the old; of magnifying the given task in the imagination, not recoiling from its solution in reality; of finding once more the spirit of revolution, not making its ghost walk again.

From 1848 to 1851, only the ghost of the old revolution circulated - from Marrast, the *républicain en gants jaunes* [Republican in yellow gloves], who disguised himself as old Bailly, down to the adventurer who hides his trivial and repulsive features behind the iron death mask of Napoleon. A whole nation, which thought it had acquired an accelerated power of motion by means of a revolution, suddenly finds itself set back into a defunct epoch, and to remove any doubt about the relapse, the old dates arise again – the old chronology, the old names, the old edicts, which had long since become a subject of antiquarian scholarship, and the old minions of the law who had seemed long dead. The nation feels like the mad Englishman in Bedlam³ who thinks he is living in the time of the old Pharaohs and daily bewails the hard labor he must perform in the Ethiopian gold mines, immured in this subterranean prison, a pale lamp fastened to his head, the overseer of the slaves behind him with a long whip, and at the exits a confused welter of barbarian war slaves who understand neither the forced laborers nor each other, since they speak no common language. “And all this,” sighs the mad Englishman, “is expected of me, a freeborn Briton, in order to make gold for the Pharaohs.” “In order to pay the debts of the Bonaparte family,” sighs the French nation. The Englishman, so long as he was not in his right mind, could not get rid of his *idée fixe* of mining gold. The French, so long as they were engaged in revolution, could not get rid of the memory of Napoleon, as the election of December 10 [1848, when Louis Bonaparte was elected President of the French Republic by plebiscite.] was proved. They longed to return from the perils of revolution to the fleshpots of Egypt⁴, and December 2, 1851 [The date of the coup d’état by Louis Bonaparte], was the answer. Now they have not only a caricature of the old Napoleon, but the old Napoleon himself, caricatured as he would have to be in the middle of the nineteenth century.

The social revolution of the nineteenth century cannot take its poetry from the past but only from the future. It cannot begin with itself before it has stripped away all superstition about the past. The former revolutions required recollections of past world history in order to smother their own content. The revolution of the nineteenth century must let the dead bury their dead in order to arrive at its own content. There the phrase went beyond the content – here the content goes beyond the phrase.

The February Revolution was a surprise attack, a seizing of the old society unaware, and the people proclaimed this unexpected stroke a deed of world importance, ushering in a new epoch. On December 2 the February Revolution is conjured away as a cardsharp’s trick, and what seems overthrown is no longer the monarchy but the liberal concessions that had been wrung from it through centuries of struggle. Instead of society having conquered a new content for itself, it seems that the state has only returned to its oldest form, to a shamelessly simple rule by the sword and the monk’s cowl. This is the answer to the *coup de main* [unexpected stroke] of February, 1848, given by the *coup de tête* [rash act] of December, 1851. Easy come, easy go. Meantime, the interval did not pass unused. During 1848-51 French society, by an abbreviated revolutionary method, caught up with the studies and experiences which in a regular, so to speak, textbook course of development would have preceded the February Revolution, if the latter were to be more than a mere ruffling of the surface. Society seems now to have retreated to behind its starting point; in truth, it has first to create for itself the revolutionary point of departure – the situation, the relations, the conditions under which alone modern revolution becomes serious.

Bourgeois revolutions, like those of the eighteenth century, storm more swiftly from success to success, their dramatic effects outdo each other, men and things seem set in sparkling diamonds, ecstasy is the order of the day – but they are short-lived, soon they have reached their zenith, and a long Katzenjammer [cat’s winge] takes hold of society before it learns to assimilate the results

of its storm-and-stress period soberly. On the other hand, proletarian revolutions, like those of the nineteenth century, constantly criticize themselves, constantly interrupt themselves in their own course, return to the apparently accomplished, in order to begin anew; they deride with cruel thoroughness the half-measures, weaknesses, and paltriness of their first attempts, seem to throw down their opponents only so the latter may draw new strength from the earth and rise before them again more gigantic than ever, recoil constantly from the indefinite colossalness of their own goals – until a situation is created which makes all turning back impossible, and the conditions themselves call out:

Hic Rhodus, hic salta!

[Here is the rose, here dance!] ⁵

For the rest, every fair observer, even if he had not followed the course of French developments step by step, must have had a presentiment of the imminence of an unheard-of disgrace for the revolution. It was enough to hear the complacent yelps of victory with which the democrats congratulated each other on the expectedly gracious consequences of the second Sunday in May, 1852. [day of elections – Louis Bonaparte's term was expired] In their minds that second Sunday of May had become a certain idea, a dogma, like the day of Christ's reappearance and the beginning of the millennium in the minds of the Chiliasts⁶. As always, weakness had taken refuge in a belief in miracles, believed the enemy to be overcome when he was only conjured away in imagination, and lost all understanding of the present in an inactive glorification of the future that was in store for it and the deeds it had in mind but did not want to carry out yet. Those heroes who seek to disprove their demonstrated incapacity – by offering each other their sympathy and getting together in a crowd – had tied up their bundles, collected their laurel wreaths in advance, and occupied themselves with discounting on the exchange market the republics *in partibus* [i.e., in name only] for which they had already providently organized the government personnel with all the calm of their unassuming disposition. December 2 struck them like a thunderbolt from a clear sky, and those who in periods of petty depression gladly let their inner fears be drowned by the loudest renters will perhaps have convinced themselves that the times are past when the cackle of geese could save the Capitol.⁷

The constitution, the National Assembly, the dynastic parties, the blue and red republicans, the heroes of Africa, the thunder from the platform, the sheet lightning of the daily press, the entire literature, the political names and the intellectual reputations, the civil law and the penal code, *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, and the second Sunday in May, 1852 – all have vanished like a phantasmagoria before the spell of a man whom even his enemies do not make out to be a sorcerer. Universal suffrage seems to have survived only for the moment, so that with its own hand it may make its last will and testament before the eyes of all the world and declare in the name of the people itself: "All that exists deserves to perish." [From Goethe's *Faust*, Part One.]

It is not enough to say, as the French do, that their nation was taken unawares. Nations and women are not forgiven the unguarded hour in which the first adventurer who came along could violate them. Such turns of speech do not solve the riddle but only formulate it differently. It remains to be explained how a nation of thirty-six millions can be surprised and delivered without resistance into captivity by three knights of industry.

Let us recapitulate in general outline the phases that the French Revolution went through from February 24, 1848, to December, 1851.

Three main periods are unmistakable: the February period; the period of the constitution of the republic or the Constituent National Assembly - May 1848 to May 28 1849; and the period of the constitutional republic or the Legislative National Assembly – May 28 1849 to December 2 1851.

The first period – from February 24, the overthrow of Louis Philippe, to May 4, 1848, the meeting of the Constituent Assembly – the February period proper, may be designated as the prologue of the revolution. Its character was officially expressed in the fact that the government it

improvised itself declared that it was provisional, and like the government, everything that was mentioned, attempted, or enunciated during this period proclaimed itself to be only provisional. Nobody and nothing ventured to lay any claim to the right of existence and of real action. All the elements that had prepared or determined the revolution – the dynastic opposition, the republican bourgeoisie, the democratic-republican petty bourgeoisie, and the social-democratic workers, provisionally found their place in the February government.

It could not be otherwise. The February days originally intended an electoral reform by which the circle of the politically privileged among the possessing class itself was to be widened and the exclusive domination of the aristocracy of finance overthrown. When it came to the actual conflict, however – when the people mounted the barricades, the National Guard maintained a passive attitude, the army offered no serious resistance, and the monarchy ran away – the republic appeared to be a matter of course. Every party construed it in its own way. Having secured its arms in hand, the proletariat impressed its stamp upon it and proclaimed it to be a social republic. There was thus indicated the general content of the modern revolution, a content which was in most singular contradiction to everything that, with the material available, with the degree of education attained by the masses, under the given circumstances and relations, could be immediately realized in practice. On the other hand, the claims of all the remaining elements that had collaborated in the February Revolution were recognized by the lion's share they obtained in the government. In no period, therefore, do we find a more confused mixture of high-flown phrases and actual uncertainty and clumsiness, of more enthusiastic striving for innovation and more deeply rooted domination of the old routine, of more apparent harmony of the whole of society; and more profound estrangement of its elements. While the Paris proletariat still reveled in the vision of the wide prospects that had opened before it and indulged in seriously meant discussions of social problems, the old powers of society had grouped themselves, assembled, reflected, and found unexpected support in the mass of the nation, the peasants and petty bourgeois, who all at once stormed onto the political stage after the barriers of the July Monarchy had fallen.

The second period, from May 4, 1848, to the end of May, 1849, is the period of the constitution, the foundation, of the bourgeois republic. Immediately after the February days not only had the dynastic opposition been surprised by the republicans and the republicans by the socialists, but all France by Paris. The National Assembly, which met on May 4, 1848, had emerged from the national elections and represented the nation. It was a living protest against the pretensions of the February days and was to reduce the results of the revolution to the bourgeois scale. In vain the Paris proletariat, which immediately grasped the character of this National Assembly, attempted on May 15, a few days after it met, to negate its existence forcibly, to dissolve it, to disintegrate again into its constituent parts the organic form in which the proletariat was threatened by the reacting spirit of the nation. As is known, May 15 had no other result but that of removing Blanqui and his comrades – that is, the real leaders of the proletarian party – from the public stage for the entire duration of the cycle we are considering.

The bourgeois monarchy of Louis Philippe can be followed only by a bourgeois republic; that is to say, whereas a limited section of the bourgeoisie ruled in the name of the king, the whole of the bourgeoisie will now rule in the name of the people. The demands of the Paris proletariat are utopian nonsense, to which an end must be put. To this declaration of the Constituent National Assembly the Paris proletariat replied with the June insurrection, the most colossal event in the history of European civil wars. The bourgeois republic triumphed. On its side stood the aristocracy of finance, the industrial bourgeoisie, the middle class, the petty bourgeois, the army, the lumpen proletariat organized as the Mobile Guard, the intellectual lights, the clergy, and the rural population. On the side of the Paris proletariat stood none but itself. More than three thousand insurgents were butchered after the victory, and fifteen thousand were deported without trial. With this defeat the proletariat passes into the background on the revolutionary stage. It

attempts to press forward again on every occasion, as soon as the movement appears to make a fresh start, but with ever decreased expenditure of strength and always slighter results. As soon as one of the social strata above it gets into revolutionary ferment, the proletariat enters into an alliance with it and so shares all the defeats that the different parties suffer, one after another. But these subsequent blows become the weaker, the greater the surface of society over which they are distributed. The more important leaders of the proletariat in the Assembly and in the press successively fall victim to the courts, and ever more equivocal figures come to head it. In part it throws itself into doctrinaire experiments, exchange banks and workers' associations, hence into a movement in which it renounces the revolutionizing of the old world by means of the latter's own great, combined resources, and seeks, rather, to achieve its salvation behind society's back, in private fashion, within its limited conditions of existence, and hence necessarily suffers shipwreck. It seems to be unable either to rediscover revolutionary greatness in itself or to win new energy from the connections newly entered into, until all classes with which it contended in June themselves lie prostrate beside it. But at least it succumbs with the honors of the great, world-historic struggle; not only France, but all Europe trembles at the June earthquake, while the ensuing defeats of the upper classes are so cheaply bought that they require barefaced exaggeration by the victorious party to be able to pass for events at all, and become the more ignominious the further the defeated party is removed from the proletarian party.

The defeat of the June insurgents, to be sure, had now prepared, had leveled the ground on which the bourgeois republic could be founded and built, but it had shown at the same time that in Europe the questions at issue are other than that of "republic or monarchy." It had revealed that here "bourgeois republic" signifies the unlimited despotism of one class over other classes. It had proved that in countries with an old civilization, with a developed formation of classes, with modern conditions of production, and with an intellectual consciousness in which all traditional ideas have been dissolved by the work of centuries, the republic signifies in general only the political form of revolution of bourgeois society and not its conservative form of life – as, for example, in the United States of North America, where, though classes already exist, they have not yet become fixed, but continually change and interchange their elements in constant flux, where the modern means of production, instead of coinciding with a stagnant surplus population, rather compensate for the relative deficiency of heads and hands, and where, finally, the feverish, youthful movement of material production, which has to make a new world of its own, has neither time nor opportunity left for abolishing the old world of ghosts.

During the June days all classes and parties had united in the party of Order against the proletarian class as the party of anarchy, of socialism, of communism. They had "saved" society from "the enemies of society." They had given out the watchwords of the old society, "property, family, religion, order," to their army as passwords and had proclaimed to the counterrevolutionary crusaders: "In this sign thou shalt conquer!" From that moment, as soon as one of the numerous parties which gathered under this sign against the June insurgents seeks to hold the revolutionary battlefield in its own class interest, it goes down before the cry: "property, family, religion, order." Society is saved just as often as the circle of its rulers contracts, as a more exclusive interest is maintained against a wider one. Every demand of the simplest bourgeois financial reform, of the most ordinary liberalism, of the most formal republicanism, of the most shallow democracy, is simultaneously castigated as an "attempt on society" and stigmatized as "socialism." And finally the high priests of "religion and order" themselves are driven with kicks from their Pythian tripods, hauled out of their beds in the darkness of night, put in prison vans, thrown into dungeons or sent into exile; their temple is razed to the ground, their mouths are sealed, their pens broken, their law torn to pieces in the name of religion, of property, of the family, of order. Bourgeois fanatics for order are shot down on their balconies by mobs of drunken soldiers, their domestic sanctuaries profaned, their houses bombarded for amusement – in the name of property, of the family, of religion, and of order. Finally, the scum of bourgeois

society forms the holy phalanx of order and the hero Crapulinski [a character from Heine's poem "The Two Knights," a dissolute aristocrat.] installs himself in the Tuileries as the "savior of society."

¹ Marx never believed that "history repeats itself," but in a famous quote he said:

"Hegel remarks somewhere that all great world-historic facts and personages appear, so to speak, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce." [Marx, 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, Chapter 1.]

This seems to come from Engels' letter to Marx of 3 December 1851:

"it really seems as though old Hegel, in the guise of the World Spirit, were directing history from the grave and, with the greatest conscientiousness, causing everything to be re-enacted twice over, once as grand tragedy and the second time as rotten farce, Caussidière for Danton, L. Blanc for Robespierre, Barthélemy for Saint-Just, Flocon for Carnot, and the moon-calf together with the first available dozen debt-encumbered lieutenants for the little corporal and his band of marshals. Thus the 18th Brumaire would already be upon us."

– words quoted almost verbatim by Marx in Eighteenth of Louis Bonaparte.

Marx makes similar points in Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, Introduction.

Possible sources in Hegel are The Philosophy of Right, §347 and The Philosophy of History, §32-33 though another version of this work published as Introduction to The Philosophy of History, published in 1837, said:

"A coup d'état is sanctioned as it were in the opinion of the people if it is repeated. Thus, Napoleon was defeated twice and twice the Bourbons were driven out. Through repetition, what at the beginning seemed to be merely accidental and possible, becomes real and established."

but this is hardly the point being made by Marx. See The Philosophy of History, where Hegel contrasts Nature, where "there is nothing new under the Sun," with History where there is always Development.

² Montagne (the Mountain) – representatives in the Constituent and subsequently in the Legislative Assembly of a bloc of democrats and petty-bourgeois socialists grouped round the newspaper La Réforme. They called themselves Montagnards or the Mountain by analogy with the Montagnards in the Convention of 1792-94.

³ Bedlam was an infamous lunatic asylum in England.

⁴ The expression, "to sigh for the flesh-pots of Egypt" is taken from the biblical legend, according to which during the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt the faint-hearted among them wished that they had died when they sat by the flesh-pots of Egypt, rather than undergo their present trials through the desert.

⁵ Latin, usually translated: "Rhodes is here, here is where you jump!"

The well-known but little understood maxim originates from the traditional Latin translation of the punchline from Aesop's fable The Boastful Athlete which has been the subject of some mistranslations.

In Greek, the maxim reads:

“ἰδοὺ ἡ ρόδος,
ἰδοὺ καὶ τὸ πηδῆμα”

The story is that an athlete boasts that when in Rhodes, he performed a stupendous jump, and that there were witnesses who could back up his story. A bystander then remarked, 'Alright! Let's say this is Rhodes, demonstrate the jump here and now.' The fable shows that people must be known by their

deeds, not by their own claims for themselves. In the context in which Hegel uses it, this could be taken to mean that the philosophy of right must have to do with the actuality of modern society (“What is rational is real; what is real is rational”), not the theories and ideals that societies create for themselves, or some ideal counterposed to existing conditions: “To apprehend what is is the task of philosophy,” as Hegel goes on to say, rather than to “teach the world what it ought to be.”

The epigram is given by Hegel first in Greek, then in Latin (in the form “Hic Rhodus, hic saltus”), in the Preface to the Philosophy of Right, and he then says: “With little change, the above saying would read (in German): “Hier ist die Rose, hier tanze”:
“Here is the rose, dance here”

This is taken to be an allusion to the ‘rose in the cross’ of the Rosicrucians (who claimed to possess esoteric knowledge with which they could transform social life), implying that the material for understanding and changing society is given in society itself, not in some other-worldly theory, punning first on the Greek (Rhodos = Rhodes, rhodon = rose), then on the Latin (saltus = jump [noun], salta = dance [imperative]).

In 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, Marx quotes the maxim, first giving the Latin, in the form:

“Hic Rhodus, hic salta!”,

— a garbled mixture of Hegel’s two versions (salta = dance! instead of saltus = jump), and then immediately adds: “Hier ist die Rose, hier tanze!”, as if it were a translation, which it cannot be, since Greek Rhodos, let alone Latin Rhodus, does not mean “rose”. But Marx does seem to have retained Hegel’s meaning, as it is used in the observation that, overawed by the enormity of their task, people do not act until:

“a situation is created which makes all turning back impossible,
and the conditions themselves call out: Here is the rose, here dance!”

and one is reminded of Marx’s maxim in the Preface to the Critique of Political Economy:

“Mankind thus inevitably sets itself only such tasks as it is able to solve, since closer examination will always show that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the course of formation!”

So Marx evidently supports Hegel’s advice that we should not “teach the world what it ought to be”, but he is giving a more active spin than Hegel would when he closes the Preface observing:

“For such a purpose philosophy at least always comes too late. ...

The owl of Minerva, takes its flight only when the shades of night are gathering.”

Marx also uses the phrase, but with salta instead of saltus, but with more or less the meaning intended by Aesop in Chapter 5 of Capital.

⁶ Chiliasts (from the Greek word chilia – a thousand): preachers of a mystical religious doctrine concerning the second coming of Christ and the establishment of the millennium when justice, universal equality and prosperity would be triumphant.

⁷ Capitol: A hill in Rome, a fortified citadel where the temples of Jupiter, Juno and other gods were built. According to a legend, Rome was saved in 390 B.C.E. from an invasion of the Gauls, due to the cackling of geese from Juno’s temple which awakened the sleeping guards of the Capitol.

II

Let us pick up the threads of the development once more.

The history of the *Constituent National Assembly* since the June days is the *history of the domination and the disintegration of the republican faction of the bourgeoisie*, of the faction known by the names of tricolor republicans, pure republicans, political republicans, formalist republicans, etc.

Under the bourgeois monarchy of Louis Philippe it had formed the *official* republican *opposition* and consequently a recognized component part of the political world of the day. It had its representatives in the Chambers and a considerable sphere of influence in the press. Its Paris organ, the *National*, was considered just as respectable in its way as the *Journal des Débats*. Its character corresponded to this position under the constitutional monarchy. It was not a faction of the bourgeoisie held together by great common interests and marked off by specific conditions of production. It was a clique of republican-minded bourgeois, writers, lawyers, officers, and officials that owed its influence to the personal antipathies of the country to Louis Philippe, to memories of the old republic, to the republican faith of a number of enthusiasts, above all, however, to French nationalism, whose hatred of the Vienna treaties¹ and of the alliance with England it stirred up perpetually. A large part of the following the *National* had under Louis Philippe was due to this concealed imperialism, which could consequently confront it later, under the republic, as a deadly rival in the person of Louis Bonaparte. It fought the aristocracy of finance, as did all the rest of the bourgeois opposition. Polemics against the budget, which in France were closely connected with fighting the aristocracy of finance, procured popularity too cheaply and material for puritanical leading articles too plentifully not to be exploited. The industrial bourgeoisie was grateful to it for its slavish defense of the French protectionist system, which it accepted, however, more on national grounds than on grounds of national economy; the bourgeoisie as a whole, for its vicious denunciation of communism and socialism. For the rest, the party of the *National* was purely republican; that is, it demanded a republican instead of a monarchist form of bourgeois rule and, above all, the lion's share of this rule. About the conditions of this transformation it was by no means clear in its own mind. On the other hand, what was clear as daylight to it, and was publicly acknowledged at the reform banquets in the last days of Louis Philippe, was its unpopularity with the democratic petty bourgeois, and in particular with the revolutionary proletariat. These pure republicans, as is indeed the way with pure republicans, were already at the point of contenting themselves in the first instance with a regency of the Duchess of Orleans² when the February Revolution broke out and assigned their best-known representatives a place in the Provisional Government. From the start they naturally had the confidence of the bourgeoisie and a majority in the Constituent National Assembly. The socialist elements of the Provisional Government were excluded forthwith from the Executive Commission which the National Assembly formed when it met, and the party of the *National* took advantage of the outbreak of the June insurrection to discharge the Executive Commission³ also, and therewith to get rid of its closest rivals, the petty-bourgeois, or democratic, republicans (Ledru-Rollin, etc.). Cavaignac, the general of the bourgeois-republican part who commanded the June massacre, took the place of the Executive Commission with a sort of dictatorial power. Marrast, former editor in chief of the *National*, became the perpetual president of the Constituent National Assembly, and the ministries, as well as all other important posts, fell to the portion of the pure republicans.

The republican bourgeois faction, which had long regarded itself as the legitimate heir of the July Monarchy, thus found its fondest hopes exceeded; it attained power, however, not as it had dreamed under Louis Philippe, through a liberal revolt of the bourgeoisie against the throne, but through a rising of the proletariat against capital, a rising laid low with grapeshot. What it had

conceived as the most revolutionary event turned out in reality to be the most counterrevolutionary. The fruit fell into its lap, but it fell from the tree of knowledge, not from the tree of life.

The exclusive rule of the bourgeois republicans lasted only from June 24 to December 10, 1848. It is summed up in the drafting of a republican constitution and in the state of siege of Paris.

The new constitution was at bottom only the republicanized edition of the constitutional Charter of 1830.⁴ The narrow electoral qualification of the July Monarchy, which excluded even a large part of the bourgeoisie from political rule, was incompatible with the existence of the bourgeois republic. In lieu of this qualification, the February Revolution had at once proclaimed direct universal suffrage. The bourgeois republicans could not undo this event. They had to content themselves with adding the limiting proviso of a six months' residence in the constituency. The old organization of the administration, the municipal system, the judicial system, the army, etc., continued to exist inviolate, or, where the constitution changed them, the change concerned the table of contents, not the contents; the name, not the subject matter.

The inevitable general staff of the liberties of 1848, personal liberty, liberty of the press, of speech, of association, of assembly, of education and religion, etc., received a constitutional uniform which made them invulnerable. For each of these liberties is proclaimed as the absolute right of the French *citoyen*, but always with the marginal note that it is unlimited so far as it is not limited by the "equal rights of others and the public safety" or by "laws" which are intended to mediate just this harmony of the individual liberties with one another and with the public safety. For example:

"The citizens have the right of association, of peaceful and unarmed assembly, of petition and of expressing their opinions, whether in the press or in any other way. The enjoyment of these rights has no limit save the equal rights of others and the public safety."

"Education is free. Freedom of education shall be enjoyed under the conditions fixed by law and under the supreme control of the state."

"The home of every citizen is inviolable except in the forms prescribed by law."

The constitution, therefore, constantly refers to future organic laws which are to put into effect those marginal notes and regulate the enjoyment of these unrestricted liberties in such manner that they will collide neither with one another nor with the public safety. And later these organic laws were brought into being by the friends of order and all those liberties regulated in such manner that the bourgeoisie in its enjoyment of them finds itself unhindered by the equal rights of the other classes. Where it forbids these liberties entirely to "the others," or permits enjoyment of them under conditions that are just so many police traps, this always happens solely in the interest of "public safety" – that is, the safety of the bourgeoisie – as the constitution prescribes. In the sequel, both sides accordingly appeal with complete justice to the constitution: the friends of order, who abrogated all these liberties, as well as the democrats, who demanded all of them. For each paragraph of the constitution contains its own antithesis, its own upper and lower house, namely, liberty in the general phrase, abrogation of liberty in the marginal note. Thus so long as the name of freedom was respected and only its actual realization prevented, of course in a legal way, the constitutional existence of liberty remained intact, inviolate, however mortal the blows dealt to its existence in actual life.

This constitution, made inviolable in so ingenious a manner, was nevertheless, like Achilles, vulnerable in one point – not in the heel, but in the head, or rather in the two heads it wound up with: the Legislative Assembly on the one hand, the President on the other. Glance through the constitution and you will find that only the paragraphs in which the relationship of the President to the Legislative Assembly is defined are absolute, positive, noncontradictory, and cannot be distorted. For here it was a question of the bourgeois republicans safeguarding themselves.

Articles 45-70 of the Constitution are so worded that the National Assembly can remove the President constitutionally, whereas the President can remove the National Assembly only unconstitutionally, only by setting aside the constitution itself. Here, therefore, it challenges its forcible destruction. It not only sanctifies the division of powers, like the Charter of 1830, it widens it into an intolerable contradiction. The play of the constitutional powers, as Guizot termed the parliamentary squabble between the legislative and executive power, is in the constitution of 1848 continually played *va-banque* [staking all]. On one side are seven hundred and fifty representatives of the people, elected by universal suffrage and eligible for re-election; they form an uncontrollable, indissoluble, indivisible National Assembly, a National Assembly that enjoys legislative omnipotence, decides in the last instance on war, peace, and commercial treaties, alone possesses the right of amnesty, and, by its permanence, perpetually holds the front of the stage. On the other side is the President, with all the attributes of royal power, with authority to appoint and dismiss his ministers independently of the National Assembly, with all the resources of the executive power in his hands, bestowing all posts and disposing thereby in France of the livelihoods of at least a million and a half people, for so many depend on the five hundred thousand officials and officers of every rank. He has the whole of the armed forces behind him. He enjoys the privilege of pardoning individual criminals, of suspending National Guards, of discharging, with the concurrence of the Council of State, general, cantonal, and municipal councils elected by the citizens themselves. Initiative and direction are reserved to him in all treaties with foreign countries. While the Assembly constantly performs on the boards and is exposed to daily public criticism, he leads a secluded life in the Elysian Fields, and that with Article 45 of the constitution before his eyes and in his heart, crying to him daily: "*Frere, il faut mourir!*" ['Brother, one must die!']⁵ Your power ceases on the second Sunday of the lovely month of May in the fourth year after your election! Then your glory is at an end, the piece is not played twice, and if you have debts, look to it quickly that you pay them off with the 600,000 francs granted you by the constitution, unless, perchance, you prefer to go to Clichy⁶ on the second Monday of the lovely month of May! Thus, whereas the constitution assigns power to the President, it seeks to secure moral power for the National Assembly. Apart from the fact that it is impossible to create a moral power by paragraphs of law, the constitution here abrogates itself once more by having the President elected by all Frenchmen through direct suffrage. While the votes of France are split up among the seven hundred and fifty members of the National Assembly, they are here, on the contrary, concentrated on a single individual. While each separate representative of the people represents only this or that party, this or that town, this or that bridgehead, or even only the mere necessity of electing someone as the seven hundred and fiftieth, without examining too closely either the cause or the man, he is the elect of the nation and the act of his election is the trump that the sovereign people plays once every four years. The elected National Assembly stands in a metaphysical relation, but the elected President in a personal relation, to the nation. The National Assembly, indeed, exhibits in its individual representatives the manifold aspects of the national spirit, but in the President this national spirit finds its incarnation. As against the Assembly, he possesses a sort of divine right; he is President by the grace of the people.

Thetis, the sea goddess, prophesied to Achilles that he would die in the bloom of youth. The constitution, which, like Achilles, had its weak spot, also had, like Achilles, a presentiment that it must go to an early death. It was sufficient for the constitution-making pure republicans to cast a glance from the lofty heaven of their ideal republic at the profane world to perceive how the arrogance of the royalists, the Bonapartists, the democrats, the communists, as well as their own discredit, grew daily in the same measure as they approached the completion of their great legislative work of art, without Thetis on this account having to leave the sea and communicate the secret to them. They sought to cheat destiny by a catch in the constitution, through Article III according to which every motion for a revision of the constitution must be supported by at least

three-quarters of the votes, cast in three successive debates with an entire month between each, with the added proviso that not less than five hundred members of the National Assembly must vote. Thereby they merely made the impotent attempt to continue exercising a power – when only a parliamentary minority, as which they already saw themselves prophetically in their mind’s eye – a power which at that time, when they commanded a parliamentary majority and all the resources of governmental authority, was daily slipping more and more from their feeble hands.

Finally the constitution, in a melodramatic paragraph, entrusts itself “to the vigilance and the patriotism of the whole French people and every single Frenchman,” after it has previously entrusted in another paragraph the “vigilant” and “patriotic” to the tender, most painstaking care of the High Court of Justice, the *haute cour* it invented for the purpose.

Such was the Constitution of 1848, which on December 2, 1851, was not overthrown by a head, but fell down at the touch of a mere hat; this hat, to be sure, was a three-cornered Napoleonic hat.

While the bourgeois republicans in the Assembly were busy devising, discussing, and voting this constitution, Cavaignac outside the Assembly maintained the state of siege of Paris. The state of siege of Paris was the midwife of the Constituent Assembly in its travail of republican creation. If the constitution is subsequently put out of existence by bayonets, it must not be forgotten that it was likewise by bayonets, and these turned against the people, that it had to be protected in its mother’s womb and by bayonets that it had to be brought into existence. The forefathers of the “respectable republicans” had sent their symbol, the tricolor, on a tour around Europe. They themselves in turn produced an invention that of itself made its way over the whole Continent, but returned to France with ever renewed love until it has now become naturalized in half her departments – the state of siege. A splendid invention, periodically employed in every ensuing crisis in the course of the French Revolution. But barrack and bivouac, which were thus periodically laid on French society’s head to compress its brain and render it quiet; saber and musket, which were periodically allowed to act as judges and administrators, as guardians and censors, to play policeman and do night watchman’s duty; mustache and uniform, which were periodically trumpeted forth as the highest wisdom of society and as its rector – were not barrack and bivouac, saber and musket, mustache and uniform finally bound to hit upon the idea of instead saving society once and for all by proclaiming their own regime as the highest and freeing civil society completely from the trouble of governing itself? Barrack and bivouac, saber and musket, mustache and uniform were bound to hit upon this idea all the more as they might then also expect better cash payment for their higher services, whereas from the merely periodic state of siege and the transient rescues of society at the bidding of this or that bourgeois faction, little of substance was gleaned save some killed and wounded and some friendly bourgeois grimaces. Should not the military at last one day play state of siege in their own interest and for their own benefit, and at the same time besiege the citizens’ purses? Moreover, be it noted in passing, one must not forget that Colonel Bernard, the same military commission president who under Cavaignac had fifteen thousand insurgents deported without trial, is at this moment again at the head of the military commissions active in Paris.

Whereas with the state of siege in Paris, the respectable, the pure republicans planted the nursery in which the praetorians of December 2, 1851, were to grow up, they on the other hand deserve praise for the reason that, instead of exaggerating the national sentiment as under Louis Philippe, they now, when they had command of the national power, crawled before foreign countries, and instead of setting Italy free, let her be reconquered by Austrians and Neapolitans.⁷ Louis Bonaparte’s election as President on December 10, 1848, put an end to the dictatorship of Cavaignac and to the Constituent Assembly.

In Article 44 of the Constitution it is stated:

“The President of the French Republic must never have lost his status of French citizen.”

The first President of the French Republic, L. N. Bonaparte, had not merely lost his status of French citizen, had not only been an English special constable, he was even a naturalized Swiss.⁸

I have worked out elsewhere the significance of the election of December 10. I will not revert to it here. It is sufficient to remark here that it was a *reaction of the peasants*, who had had to pay the costs of the February Revolution, against the remaining classes of the nation; a *reaction of the country against the town*. It met with great approval in the army, for which the republicans of the *National* had provided neither glory nor additional pay; among the big bourgeoisie, which hailed Bonaparte as a bridge to monarchy, among the proletarians and petty bourgeois, who hailed him as a scourge for Cavaignac. I shall have an opportunity later of going more closely into the relationship of the peasants to the French Revolution.

The period from December 20, 1848, until the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly in May, 1849, comprises the history of the downfall of the bourgeois republicans. After having founded a republic for the bourgeoisie, driven the revolutionary proletariat out of the field, and reduced the democratic petty bourgeoisie to silence for the time being, they are themselves thrust aside by the mass of the bourgeoisie, which justly impounds this republic as *its property*. This bourgeois mass was, however, royalist. One section of it, the large landowners, had ruled during the Restoration and was accordingly Legitimist. The other, the aristocrats of finance and big industrialists, had ruled during the July Monarchy and was consequently Orleanist. The high dignitaries of the army, the university, the church, the bar, the academy, and the press were to be found on either side, though in various proportions. Here, in the bourgeois republic, which bore neither the name Bourbon nor the name Orleans, but the name capital, they had found the form of state in which they could rule conjointly. The June insurrection had already united them in the party of Order. Now it was necessary, in the first place, to remove the coterie of bourgeois republicans who still occupied the seats of the National Assembly. Just as brutal as these pure republicans had been in their misuse of physical force against the people, just as cowardly, mealy-mouthed, broken-spirited, and incapable of fighting were they now in their retreat, when it was a question of maintaining their republicanism and their legislative rights against the executive power and the royalists. I need not relate here the ignominious history of their dissolution. They did not succumb; they passed out of existence. Their history has come to an end forever, and, both inside and outside the Assembly, they figure in the following period only as memories, memories that seem to regain life whenever the mere name republic is once more the issue and as often as the revolutionary conflict threatens to sink down to the lowest level. I may remark in passing that the journal which gave its name to this party, the *National*, was converted to socialism in the following period.

Before we finish with this period we must still cast a retrospective glance at the two powers, one of which annihilated the other on December 2, 1851, whereas from December 20, 1848, until the exit of the Constituent Assembly, they had lived in conjugal relations. We mean Louis Bonaparte, on the one hand, and the part of the coalesced royalists, the party of Order, of the big bourgeoisie, on the other. On acceding to the presidency, Bonaparte at once formed a ministry of the party of Order, at the head of which he placed Odilon Barrot, the old leader, nota bene, of the most liberal faction of the parliamentary bourgeoisie. M. Barrot had at last secured the ministerial portfolio whose image had haunted him since 1830, and what is more, the premiership in the ministry; but not, as he had imagined under Louis Philippe, as the most advanced leader of the parliamentary opposition, but with the task of putting a parliament to death, and as the confederate of all his archenemies, Jesuits and Legitimists. He brought the bride home at last, but only after she had been prostituted. Bonaparte seemed to efface himself completely. This party acted for him.

The very first meeting of the council of ministers resolved on the expedition to Rome, which, it was agreed, should be undertaken behind the back of the National Assembly and the means for which were to be wrested from it under false pretenses. Thus they began by swindling the

National Assembly and secretly conspiring with the absolutist powers abroad against the revolutionary Roman republic.

In the same manner and with the same maneuvers Bonaparte prepared his coup of December 2 against the royalist Legislative Assembly and its constitutional republic. Let us not forget that the same party which formed Bonaparte's ministry on December 20, 1848, formed the majority of the Legislative National Assembly on December 2, 1851.

In August the Constituent Assembly had decided to dissolve only after it had worked out and promulgated a whole series of organic laws that were to supplement the constitution. On January 6, 1849, the party of Order had a deputy named Râteau move that the Assembly should let the organic laws go and rather decide on its own dissolution. Not only the ministry, with Odilon Barrot at its head, but all the royalist members of the National Assembly told it in bullying accents then that its dissolution was necessary for the restoration of credit, for the consolidation of order, for putting an end to the indefinite provisional arrangements and establishing a definitive state of affairs; that it hampered the productivity of the new government and sought to prolong its existence merely out of malice; that the country was tired of it. Bonaparte took note of all this invective against the legislative power, learned it by heart, and proved to the parliamentary royalists, on December 2, 1851, that he had learned from them. He repeated their own catchwords against them.

The Barrot Ministry and the party of Order went further. They caused petitions to the National Assembly to be made throughout France, in which this body was politely requested to decamp. They thus led the unorganized popular masses into the fire of battle against the National Assembly, the constitutionally organized expression of the people. They taught Bonaparte to appeal against the parliamentary assemblies to the people. At length, on January 29, 1849, the day had come on which the Constituent Assembly was to decide concerning its own dissolution. The National Assembly found the building where its sessions were held occupied by the military; Changarnier, the general of the party of Order, in whose hands the supreme command of the National Guard and troops of the line had been united, held a great military review in Paris, as if a battle were impending, and the royalists in coalition threateningly declared to the Constituent Assembly that force would be employed if it should prove unwilling. It was willing, and only bargained for a very short extra term of life. What was January 29 but the coup d'état of December 2, 1851, only carried out by the royalists with Bonaparte against the republican National Assembly? The gentlemen did not observe, or did not wish to observe, that Bonaparte availed himself of January 29, 1849, to have a portion of the troops march past him in front of the Tuileries, and seized with avidity on just this first public summoning of the military power against the parliamentary power to foreshadow Caligula. They, to be sure, saw only their Changarnier.

A motive that particularly actuated the party of Order in forcibly cutting short the duration of the Constituent Assembly's life was the organic laws supplementing the constitution, such as the law on education, the law on religious worship, etc. To the royalists in coalition it was most important that they themselves should make these laws and not let them be made by the republicans, who had grown mistrustful. Among these organic laws, however, was also a law on the responsibility of the President of the Republic. In 1851 the Legislative Assembly was occupied with the drafting of just such a law, when Bonaparte anticipated this coup with the coup of December 2. What would the royalists in coalition not have given in their winter election campaign of 1851 to have found the Responsibility Law ready to hand, and drawn up, at that, by a mistrustful, hostile, republican Assembly!

After the Constituent Assembly had itself shattered its last weapon on January 29, 1849, the Barrot Ministry and the friends of order hounded it to death, left nothing undone that could humiliate it, and wrested from the impotent, self-despairing Assembly laws that cost it the last remnant of respect in the eyes of the public. Bonaparte, occupied with his fixed Napoleonic idea⁹,

was brazen enough to exploit publicly this degradation of the parliamentary power. For when on May 8, 1849, the National Assembly passed a vote of censure of the ministry because of the occupation of Civitavecchia by Oudinot, and ordered it to bring back the Roman expedition to its alleged purpose,¹⁰ Bonaparte published the same evening in the *Moniteur* a letter to Oudinot in which he congratulated him on his heroic exploits and, in contrast to the ink-slinging parliamentarians, already posed as the generous protector of the army. The royalists smiled at this. They regarded him simply as their dupe. Finally, when Marrast, the President of the Constituent Assembly, believed for a moment that the safety of the National Assembly was endangered and, relying on the constitution, requisitioned a colonel and his regiment, the colonel declined, cited discipline in his support, and referred Marrast to Changarnier, who scornfully refused him with the remark that he did not like *baionnettes intelligentes* [intellectual bayonets]. In November, 1851, when the royalists in coalition wanted to begin the decisive struggle with Bonaparte, they sought to put through in their notorious Quaestors' Bill the principle of the direct requisition of troops by the President of the National Assembly.¹¹ One of their generals, Le Flo, had signed the bill. In vain did Changarnier vote for it and Thiers pay homage to the farsighted wisdom of the former Constituent Assembly. The War Minister, Saint-Arnaud, answered him as Changarnier had answered Marrast – and to the acclamation of the Montagne!

Thus the party of Order, when it was not yet the National Assembly, when it was still only the ministry, had itself stigmatized the parliamentary regime. And it makes an outcry when December 2, 1851, banishes this regime from France!

We wish it a happy journey.

¹ The Vienna treaties—the treaties and agreements concluded at the Congress of Vienna held by European monarchs and their Ministers in 1814-15. They established the borders and status of European states after the victory, over Napoleonic France and sanctioned, contrary to the national interests and will of the peoples, the reshaping of Europe's political map and the restoration of the "legitimate" dynasties overthrown as a result of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. The Vienna treaties confirmed France's territory within the borders of 1790 and the restoration of the Bourbons in France.

² On February 24, 1848 Louis Philippe abdicated in favour of his grandson, the Count of Paris. In view of the latter's minority, his mother, the Duchess of Orleans, was to assume the regency. But the King's abdication failed to halt the development of the revolution. Under pressure from the insurgent masses a Provisional Government was set up which proclaimed a republic the next day.

³ The Executive Commission (Commission du pouvoir exécutif) – the Government of the French Republic set up by the Constituent Assembly on May 10, 1848 to replace the Provisional Government, which had resigned. It existed until June 24, 1848, when Cavaignac's dictatorship was established during the June proletarian uprising. Composed mostly of moderate republicans, the commission included Ledru-Rollin as a representative of the Left.

⁴ The text of the Constitution of the French Republic was originally published in *Le Moniteur universel*, No. 312, November 7, 1848, and the same year it appeared as a pamphlet. Marx examined this document in 1851 in a special article entitled "The Constitution of the French Republic". In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* Marx often designates articles of this Constitution as paragraphs (§§).

The constitutional Charter, adopted after the bourgeois revolution of 1830, was the fundamental law of the July monarchy. Nominally the Charter proclaimed the sovereign rights of the nation and restricted somewhat the king's power. But the bureaucratic and police apparatus remained intact, as did the severe laws against the working-class and democratic movement.

⁵ “Frere, il faut mourir!” (“Brother, one must die!”) – this is how Trappists, monks of a Catholic order, greeted each other. The order was founded in 1664 and was noted for its strict rules and the ascetic life of its members.

⁶ Clichy – a debtors’ prison in Paris from 1826 to 1867.

⁷ This refers to the Cavaignac Government’s attitude towards the new revolutionary upsurge in Italy that began in the autumn of 1848. Though Cavaignac declared a policy of non-interference, he actually rendered diplomatic aid to the ruling circles of the Kingdom of Naples and Austria in their struggle against the Italian national liberation movement. When Pius IX fled to the Neapolitan fortress of Gaeta after the popular uprising in Rome on November 16, which started a series of events that resulted in the proclamation of the Roman Republic on February 9, 1849, Cavaignac offered him asylum in France. Incited by the French Government, Pius IX called on all Catholic states on December 4, 1848 to intervene against the Roman revolutionaries, and Naples and Austria immediately responded to this call. By his policy Cavaignac in effect prepared for the dispatch of a French expeditionary corps against the Roman Republic undertaken later by President Louis Bonaparte.

⁸ In 1832 Louis Bonaparte became a Swiss citizen in the canton of Thurgau

⁹ An ironical allusion to Louis Bonaparte’s book *Des Idées apoleoniennes*, which he wrote in England and published in Paris and Brussels in 1839.

¹⁰ The French Government managed to get allocations from the Constituent Assembly for the dispatch to Italy of an expeditionary corps under General Oudinot in April 1849 on the pretext of defending Piedmont in its struggle against Austria, and of protecting the Roman Republic. The true aim of the expedition was intervention against the Roman Republic and restoration of the Pope’s temporal power. (On this subject see also Marx’s *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850*).

¹¹ The reference is to the Bill introduced on November 6, 1851 by the royalists Lt. Flô, Baze and Panat, questors of the Legislative Assembly (deputies of the Assembly charged with economic and financial matters and safeguarding its security). It was rejected on November 17 after a heated debate, in which Thiers supported the Bill and the Bonapartist Saint-Arnaud opposed it. When the vote was taken, the Montagne supported the Bonapartists because it saw the main danger in the royalists.

III

On May 28, 1849, the Legislative National Assembly met. On December 2, 1851, it was dispersed. This period covers the span of life of the constitutional, or parliamentary, republic.

In the first French Revolution the rule of the *Constitutionalists* is followed by the rule of the *Girondists* and the rule of the Girondists by the rule of the *Jacobins*. Each of these parties relies on the more progressive party for support. As soon as it has brought the revolution far enough to be unable to follow it further, still less to go ahead of it, it is thrust aside by the bolder ally that stands behind it and sent to the guillotine. The revolution thus moves along an ascending line.

It is the reverse with the Revolution of 1848. The proletarian party appears as an appendage of the petty-bourgeois-democratic party. It is betrayed and dropped by the latter on April 16, May 15,¹ and in the June days. The democratic party, in its turn, leans on the shoulders of the bourgeois-republican party. The bourgeois republicans no sooner believe themselves well established than they shake off the troublesome comrade and support themselves on the shoulders of the party of Order. The party of Order hunches its shoulders, lets the bourgeois republicans tumble, and throws itself on the shoulders of armed force. It fancies it is still sitting on those shoulders when one fine morning it perceives that the shoulders have transformed themselves into bayonets. Each party kicks from behind at the one driving forward, and leans over in front toward the party which presses backward. No wonder that in this ridiculous posture it loses its balance and, having made the inevitable grimaces, collapses with curious gyrations. The revolution thus moves in a descending line. It finds itself in this state of retrogressive motion before the last February barricade has been cleared away and the first revolutionary authority constituted.

The period that we have before us comprises the most motley mixture of crying contradictions: constitutionalists who conspire openly against the constitution; revolutionists who are confessedly constitutional; a National Assembly that wants to be omnipotent and always remains parliamentary; a Montagne that finds its vocation in patience and counters its present defeats by prophesying future victories; royalists who form the *patres conscripti* [elders] of the republic and are forced by the situation to keep the hostile royal houses they adhere to abroad, and the republic, which they hate, in France; an executive power that finds its strength in its very weakness and its respectability in the contempt that it calls forth; a republic that is nothing but the combined infamy of two monarchies, the Restoration and the July Monarchy, with an imperial label – alliances whose first proviso is separation; struggles whose first law is indecision; wild, inane agitation in the name of tranquillity, most solemn preaching of tranquillity in the name of revolution – passions without truth, truths without passion; heroes without heroic deeds, history without events; development, whose sole driving force seems to be the calendar, wearying with constant repetition of the same tensions and relaxations; antagonisms that periodically seem to work themselves up to a climax only to lose their sharpness and fall away without being able to resolve themselves; pretentiously paraded exertions and philistine terror at the danger of the world's coming to an end, and at the same time the pettiest intrigues and court comedies played by the world redeemers, who in their *laissez aller* [letting things go] remind us less of the Day of Judgment than of the times of the Fronde [An anti-royalist movement of 1648-53]² – the official collective genius of France brought to naught by the artful stupidity of a single individual; the collective will of the nation, as often as it speaks through universal suffrage, seeking its appropriate expression through the inveterate enemies of the interests of the masses, until at length it finds it in the self-will of a filibuster. If any section of history has been painted gray on gray, it is this. Men and events appear as reverse Schlemihls, as shadows that have lost their bodies.³ The revolution itself paralyzes its own bearers and endows only its adversaries with passionate forcefulness. When the “red specter,” continually conjured up and exercised by the

counterrevolutionaries⁴ finally appears, it appears not with the Phrygian cap of anarchy on its head, but in the uniform of order, in *red breeches*.

We have seen that the ministry which Bonaparte installed on December 20, 1848, on his Ascension Day, was a ministry of the party of Order, of the Legitimist and Orleanist coalition. This Barrot-Falloux Ministry had outlived the republican Constituent Assembly, whose term of life it had more or less violently cut short, and found itself still at the helm. Changarnier, the general of the allied royalists, continued to unite in his person the general command of the First Army Division and of the National Guard of Paris. Finally, the general elections had secured the party of Order a large majority in the National Assembly. Here the deputies and peers of Louis Philippe encountered a hallowed host of Legitimists, for whom many of the nation's ballots had become transformed into admission cards to the political stage. The Bonapartist representatives of the people were too sparse to be able to form an independent parliamentary party. They appeared merely as the *mauvaise queue* [evil appendage] of the party of Order. Thus the party of Order was in possession of the governmental power, the army and the legislative body, in short, of the whole of the state power; it had been morally strengthened by the general elections, which made its rule appear as the will of the people, and by the simultaneous triumph of the counterrevolution on the whole continent of Europe.

Never did a party open its campaign with greater resources or under more favorable auspices.

The shipwrecked pure republicans found that they had melted down to a clique of about fifty men in the Legislative National Assembly, the African generals Cavaignac, Lamoriciere, and Bedeau at their head. The great opposition party, however, was formed by the Montagne. The social-democratic party had given itself this parliamentary baptismal name. It commanded more than two hundred of the seven hundred and fifty votes of the National Assembly and was consequently at least as powerful as any one of the three factions of the party of Order taken by itself. Its numerical inferiority compared with the entire royalist coalition seemed compensated by special circumstances. Not only did the elections in the departments show that it had gained a considerable following among the rural population. It counted in its ranks almost all the deputies from Paris; the army had made a confession of democratic faith by the election of three noncommissioned officers; and the leader of the Montagne, Ledru-Rollin, in contradistinction to all the representatives of the party of Order, had been raised to the parliamentary peerage by five departments, which had pooled their votes for him. In view of the inevitable clashes of the royalists among themselves and of the whole party of Order with Bonaparte, the Montagne thus seemed to have all the elements of success before it on May 28, 1849. A fortnight later it had lost everything, honor included.

Before we pursue parliamentary history further, some remarks are necessary to avoid common misconceptions regarding the whole character of the epoch that lies before us. Looked at with the eyes of democrats, the period of the Legislative National Assembly is concerned with what the period of the Constituent Assembly was concerned with: the simple struggle between republicans and royalists. The movement itself, however, they sum up in the one shibboleth: "reaction" – night, in which all cats are gray and which permits them to reel off their night watchman's commonplaces. And to be sure, at first sight the party of Order reveals a maze of different royalist factions which not only intrigue against each other – each seeking to elevate its own pretender to the throne and exclude the pretender of the opposing faction – but also all unite in common hatred of, and common onslaughts on, the "republic." In opposition to this royalist conspiracy the Montagne, for its part, appears as the representative of the "republic." The party of Order appears to be perpetually engaged in a "reaction," directed against press, association, and the like, neither more nor less than in Prussia, and, as in Prussia, carried out in the form of brutal police intervention by the bureaucracy, the gendarmerie, and the law courts. The Montagne, for its part, is just as continually occupied in warding off these attacks and thus defending the "eternal rights of man" as every so-called people's party has done, more or less, for a century and a half. If one

looks at the situation and the parties more closely, however, this superficial appearance, which veils the class struggle and the peculiar physiognomy of this period, disappears.

Legitimists and Orleanists, as we have said, formed the two great factions of the party of Order. Was what held these factions fast to their pretenders and kept them apart from each other nothing but fleur-de-lis and tricolor, House of Bourbon and House of Orleans, different shades of royalism – was it at all the confession of faith of royalism? Under the Bourbons, big landed property had governed, with its priests and lackeys; under Orleans, high finance, large-scale industry, large-scale trade, that is, capital, with its retinue of lawyers, professors, and smooth-tongued orators. The Legitimate Monarchy was merely the political expression of the hereditary rule of the lords of the soil, as the July Monarchy was only the political expression of the usurped rule of the bourgeois parvenus. What kept the two factions apart, therefore, was not any so-called principles, it was their material conditions of existence, two different kinds of property; it was the old contrast between town and country, the rivalry between capital and landed property. That at the same time old memories, personal enmities, fears and hopes, prejudices and illusions, sympathies and antipathies, convictions, articles of faith and principles bound them to one or the other royal house, who denies this? Upon the different forms of property, upon the social conditions of existence, rises an entire superstructure of distinct and peculiarly formed sentiments, illusions, modes of thought, and views of life. The entire class creates and forms them out of its material foundations and out of the corresponding social relations. The single individual, who derives them through tradition and upbringing, may imagine that they form the real motives and the starting point of his activity. While each faction, Orleanists and Legitimists, sought to make itself and the other believe that it was loyalty to the two royal houses which separated them, facts later proved that it was rather their divided interests which forbade the uniting of the two royal houses. And as in private life one differentiates between what a man thinks and says of himself and what he really is and does, so in historical struggles one must distinguish still more the phrases and fancies of parties from their real organism and their real interests, their conception of themselves from their reality. Orleanists and Legitimists found themselves side by side in the republic, with equal claims. If each side wished to effect the restoration of its own royal house against the other, that merely signified that each of the two great interests into which the bourgeoisie is split – landed property and capital – sought to restore its own supremacy and the subordination of the other. We speak of two interests of the bourgeoisie, for large landed property, despite its feudal coquetry and pride of race, has been rendered thoroughly bourgeois by the development of modern society. Thus the Tories in England long imagined that they were enthusiastic about monarchy, the church, and the beauties of the old English Constitution, until the day of danger wrung from them the confession that they are enthusiastic only about ground rent.

The royalists in coalition carried on their intrigues against one another in the press, in Ems, in Claremont,⁵ outside parliament. Behind the scenes they donned their old Orleanist and Legitimist liveries again and once more engaged in their old tourneys. But on the public stage, in their grand performances of state⁶ as a great parliamentary party, they put off their respective royal houses with mere obeisances and adjourn the restoration of the monarchy in infinitum. They do their real business as the party of Order, that is, under a social, not under a political title; as representatives of the bourgeois world order, not as knights of errant princesses; as the bourgeois class against other classes, not as royalists against the republicans. And as the party of Order they exercised more unrestricted and sterner domination over the other classes of society than ever previously under the Restoration or under the July Monarchy, a domination which, in general, was possible only under the form of the parliamentary republic, for only under this form could the two great divisions of the French bourgeoisie unite, and thus put the rule of their class instead of the regime of a privileged faction of it on the order of the day. If they nevertheless, as the party of Order, also insulted the republic and expressed their repugnance to it, this happened not merely from

royalist memories. Instinct taught them that the republic, true enough, makes their political rule complete, but at the same time undermines its social foundation, since they must now confront the subjugated classes and contend against them without mediation, without the concealment afforded by the crown, without being able to divert the national interest by their subordinate struggles among themselves and with the monarchy. It was a feeling of weakness that caused them to recoil from the pure conditions of their own class rule and to yearn for the former more incomplete, more undeveloped, and precisely on that account less dangerous forms of this rule. On the other hand, every time the royalists in coalition come in conflict with the pretender who confronts them, with Bonaparte, every time they believe their parliamentary omnipotence endangered by the executive power – every time, therefore, that they must produce their political title to their rule – they come forward as republicans and not as royalists, from the Orleanist Thiers, who warns the National Assembly that the republic divides them least, to the Legitimist Berryer, who on December 2, 1851, as a tribune swathed in a tricolored sash, harangues the people assembled before the town hall of the Tenth Arrondissement in the name of the republic. To be sure, a mocking echo calls back to him: Henry V! Henry V!

As against the coalesced bourgeoisie, a coalition between petty bourgeois and workers had been formed, the so-called Social-Democratic party. The petty bourgeois saw that they were badly rewarded after the June days of 1848, that their material interests were imperiled, and that the democratic guarantees which were to insure the effectuation of these interests were called in question by the counterrevolution. Accordingly they came closer to the workers. On the other hand, their parliamentary representation, the Montagne, thrust aside during the dictatorship of the bourgeois republicans, had in the last half of the life of the Constituent Assembly reconquered its lost popularity through the struggle with Bonaparte and the royalist ministers. It had concluded an alliance with the socialist leaders. In February, 1849, banquets celebrated the reconciliation. A joint program was drafted, joint election committees were set up and joint candidates put forward. The revolutionary point was broken off and a democratic turn given to the social demands of the proletariat; the purely political form was stripped off the democratic claims of the petty bourgeoisie and their socialist point thrust forward. Thus arose social-democracy. The new Montagne, the result of this combination, contained, apart from some supernumeraries from the working class and some socialist sectarians, the same elements as the old Montagne, but numerically stronger. However, in the course of development it had changed with the class that it represented. The peculiar character of social-democracy is epitomized in the fact that democratic-republican institutions are demanded as a means, not of doing away with two extremes, capital and wage labor, but of weakening their antagonism and transforming it into harmony. However different the means proposed for the attainment of this end may be, however much it may be trimmed with more or less revolutionary notions, the content remains the same. This content is the transformation of society in a democratic way, but a transformation within the bounds of the petty bourgeoisie. Only one must not get the narrow-minded notion that the petty bourgeoisie, on principle, wishes to enforce an egoistic class interest. Rather, it believes that the special conditions of its emancipation are the general conditions within whose frame alone modern society can be saved and the class struggle avoided. Just as little must one imagine that the democratic representatives are indeed all shopkeepers or enthusiastic champions of shopkeepers. According to their education and their individual position they may be as far apart as heaven and earth. What makes them representatives of the petty bourgeoisie is the fact that in their minds they do not get beyond the limits which the latter do not get beyond in life, that they are consequently driven, theoretically, to the same problems and solutions to which material interest and social position drive the latter practically. This is, in general, the relationship between the political and literary representatives of a class and the class they represent.

After this analysis it is obvious that if the Montagne continually contends with the party of Order for the republic and the so-called rights of man, neither the republic nor the rights of man are its

final end, any more than an army which one wants to deprive of its weapons and which resists has taken the field in order to remain in possession of its own weapons.

Immediately, as soon as the National Assembly met, the party of Order provoked the Montagne. The bourgeoisie now felt the necessity of making an end of the democratic petty bourgeois, just as a year before it had realized the necessity of settling with the revolutionary proletariat. But the situation of the adversary was different. The strength of the proletarian party lay in the streets, that of the petty bourgeois in the National Assembly itself. It was therefore a question of decoying them out of the National Assembly into the streets and causing them to smash their parliamentary power themselves, before time and circumstances could consolidate it. The Montagne rushed headlong into the trap.

The bombardment of Rome by the French troops was the bait that was thrown. It violated Article 5 of the constitution, which forbids the French Republic to employ its military forces against the freedom of another people.⁷ In addition to this, Article 54 prohibited any declaration of war by the executive power without the assent of the National Assembly, and by its resolution of May 8 the Constituent Assembly had disapproved of the Roman expedition. On these grounds Ledru-Rollin brought in a bill of impeachment against Bonaparte and his ministers on June 11, 1849. Exasperated by the wasp stings of Thiers, he actually let himself be carried away to the point of threatening that he would defend the constitution by every means, even with arms in hand. The Montagne rose to a man and repeated this call to arms. On June 12 the National Assembly rejected the bill of impeachment, and the Montagne left the parliament. The events of June 13 are known: the proclamation issued by a section of the Montagne declaring Bonaparte and his ministers "outside the constitution"; the street procession of the democratic National Guard, who, unarmed as they were, dispersed on encountering the troops of Changarnier, etc., etc. A part of the Montagne fled abroad; another part was arraigned before the High Court at Bourges;⁸ and a parliamentary regulation subjected the remainder to the schoolmasterly surveillance of the President of the National Assembly. Paris was again declared in a state of siege and the democratic part of its National Guard dissolved. Thus the influence of the Montagne in parliament and the power of the petty bourgeois in Paris were broken.

Lyon, where June 13 had given the signal for a bloody insurrection of the workers,⁹ was, along with the five surrounding departments, likewise declared in a state of siege, a condition that has continued up to the present moment.

The bulk of the Montagne had left its vanguard in the lurch, having refused to subscribe to its proclamation. The press had deserted, only two journals having dared to publish the pronunciamiento. The petty bourgeois betrayed their representatives in that the National Guard either stayed away or, where they appeared, hindered the building of barricades. The representatives had duped the petty bourgeois in that the alleged allies from the army were nowhere to be seen. Finally, instead of gaining an accession of strength from it, the democratic party had infected the proletariat with its own weakness and, as usual with the great deeds of democrats, the leaders had the satisfaction of being able to charge their "people" with desertion, and the people the satisfaction of being able to charge its leaders with humbugging it.

Seldom had an action been announced with more noise than the impending campaign of the Montagne, seldom had an event been trumpeted with greater certainty or longer in advance than the inevitable victory of the democracy. Most assuredly the democrats believe in the trumpets before whose blasts the walls of Jericho fell down. And as often as they stand before the ramparts of despotism, they seek to imitate the miracle. If the Montagne wished to triumph in parliament it should not have called to arms. If it called to arms in parliament it should not have acted in parliamentary fashion in the streets. If the peaceful demonstration was meant seriously, then it was folly not to foresee that it would be given a warlike reception. If a real struggle was intended, then it was a queer idea to lay down the weapons with which it would have to be waged. But the revolutionary threats of the petty bourgeois and their democratic representatives are mere

attempts to intimidate the antagonist. And when they have run into a blind alley, when they have sufficiently compromised themselves to make it necessary to activate their threats, then this is done in an ambiguous fashion that avoids nothing so much as the means to the end and tries to find excuses for succumbing. The blaring overture that announced the contest dies away in a pusillanimous snarl as soon as the struggle has to begin, the actors cease to take themselves *au sérieux*, and the action collapses completely, like a pricked bubble.

No party exaggerates its means more than the democratic, none deludes itself more light-mindedly over the situation. Since a section of the army had voted for it, the Montagne was now convinced that the army would revolt for it. And on what occasion? On an occasion which, from the standpoint of the troops, had no other meaning than that the revolutionists took the side of the Roman soldiers against the French soldiers. On the other hand, the recollections of June, 1848, were still too fresh to allow of anything but a profound aversion on the part of the proletariat toward the National Guard and a thoroughgoing mistrust of the democratic chiefs on the part of the chiefs of the secret societies. To iron out these differences, it was necessary for great common interests to be at stake. The violation of an abstract paragraph of the constitution could not provide these interests. Had not the constitution been repeatedly violated, according to the assurance of the democrats themselves? Had not the most popular journals branded it as counterrevolutionary botchwork? But the democrat, because he represents the petty bourgeoisie – that is, a transition class, in which the interests of two classes are simultaneously mutually blunted – imagines himself elevated above class antagonism generally. The democrats concede that a privileged class confronts them, but they, along with all the rest of the nation, form the people. What they represent is the people's rights; what interests them is the people's interests. Accordingly, when a struggle is impending they do not need to examine the interests and positions of the different classes. They do not need to weigh their own resources too critically. They have merely to give the signal and the people, with all its inexhaustible resources, will fall upon the oppressors. Now if in the performance their interests prove to be uninteresting and their potency impotence, then either the fault lies with pernicious sophists, who split the indivisible people into different hostile camps, or the army was too brutalized and blinded to comprehend that the pure aims of democracy are the best thing for it, or the whole thing has been wrecked by a detail in its execution, or else an unforeseen accident has this time spoiled the game. In any case, the democrat comes out of the most disgraceful defeat just as immaculate as he was innocent when he went into it, with the newly won conviction that he is bound to win, not that he himself and his party have to give up the old standpoint, but, on the contrary, that conditions have to ripen to suit him.

Therefore one must not imagine the Montagne, decimated and broken though it was, and humiliated by the new parliamentary regulation, as being particularly miserable. If June 13 had removed its chiefs, it made room, on the other hand, for men of lesser caliber, whom this new position flattered. If their impotence in parliament could no longer be doubted, they were entitled now to confine their actions to outbursts of moral indignation and blustering declamation. If the party of Order affected to see embodied in them, as the last official representatives of the revolution, all the terrors of anarchy, they could in reality be all the more insipid and modest. They consoled themselves, however, for June 13 with the profound utterance: but if they dare to attack universal suffrage, well then – then we'll show them what we are made of! *Nous verrons!* [We shall see!]

So far as the Montagnards who fled abroad are concerned, it is sufficient to remark here that Ledru-Rollin, because in barely a fortnight he had succeeded in ruining irretrievably the powerful party at whose head he stood, now found himself called upon to form a French government in partibus; that to the extent that the level of the revolution sank and the official bigwigs of official France became more dwarf-like, his figure in the distance, removed from the scene of action, seemed to grow in stature; that he could figure as the republican pretender for 1852, and that he

issued periodical circulars to the Wallachians and other peoples in which the despots of the Continent were threatened with the deeds of himself and his confederates. Was Proudhon altogether wrong when he cried to these gentlemen: “*Vous n’etes que des blagueurs*” [“you are nothing but windbags”]?

On June 13 the party of Order had not only broken the Montagne, it had effected the subordination of the constitution to the majority decisions of the National Assembly. And it understood the republic thus: that the bourgeoisie rules here in parliamentary forms, without, as in a monarchy, encountering any barrier such as the veto power of the executive or the right to dissolve parliament. This was a parliamentary republic, as Thiers termed it. But whereas on June 13 the bourgeoisie secured its omnipotence within the house of parliament, did it not afflict parliament itself, as against the executive authority and the people, with incurable weakness by expelling its most popular part? By surrendering numerous deputies without further ado on the demand of the courts, it abolished its own parliamentary immunity. The humiliating regulations to which it subjected the Montagne exalted the President of the Republic in the same measure as it degraded the individual representatives of the people. By branding an insurrection for the protection of the constitutional charter an anarchic act aiming at the subversion of society, it precluded the possibility of its appealing to insurrection should the executive authority violate the constitution in relation to it. And by the irony of history, the general who on Bonaparte’s instructions bombarded Rome and thus provided the immediate occasion for the constitutional revolt of June 13, that very Oudinot had to be the man offered by the party of Order imploringly and unfailingly to the people as general on behalf of the constitution against Bonaparte on December 2, 1851. Another hero of June 13, Vieyra, who was lauded from the tribune of the National Assembly for the brutalities he committed in the democratic newspaper offices at the head of a gang of National Guards belonging to high finance circles – this same Vieyra had been initiated into Bonaparte’s conspiracy and he contributed substantially to depriving the National Assembly in the hour of its death of any protection by the National Guard.

June 13 had still another meaning. The Montagne had wanted to force the impeachment of Bonaparte. Its defeat was therefore a direct victory for Bonaparte, his personal triumph over his democratic enemies. The party of Order gained the victory; Bonaparte had only to cash in on it. He did so. On June 14 a proclamation could be read on the walls of Paris in which the President, reluctantly, against his will, compelled as it were by the sheer force of events, comes forth from his cloistered seclusion and, posing as misunderstood virtue, complains of the calumnies of his opponents and, while he seems to identify his person with the cause of order, rather identifies the cause of order with his person. Moreover, the National Assembly had, it is true, subsequently approved the expedition against Rome, but Bonaparte had taken the initiative in the matter. After having reinstalled the High Priest Samuel in the Vatican, he could hope to enter the Tuileries as King David¹⁰. He had won the priests over to his side.

The revolt of June 13 was confined, as we have seen, to a peaceful street procession. No war laurels were therefore to be won against it. Nevertheless, at a time as poor as this in heroes and events, the party of Order transformed this bloodless battle into a second Austerlitz.¹¹ Platform and press praised the army as the power of order, in contrast to the popular masses representing the impotence of anarchy, and extolled Changarnier as the “bulwark of society,” a deception in which he himself finally came to believe. Surreptitiously, however, the corps that seemed doubtful were transferred from Paris, the regiments which had shown the most democratic sentiments in the elections were banished from France to Algiers; the turbulent spirits among the troops were relegated to penal detachments; and finally the isolation of the press from the barracks and of the barracks from bourgeois society was systematically carried out.

Here we have reached the decisive turning point in the history of the French National Guard. In 1830 it was decisive in the overthrow of the Restoration. Under Louis Philippe every rebellion miscarried in which the National Guard stood on the side of the troops. When in the February

days of 1848 it evinced a passive attitude toward the insurrection and an equivocal one toward Louis Philippe, he gave himself up for lost and actually was lost. Thus the conviction took root that the revolution could not be victorious without the National Guard, nor the army against it. This was the superstition of the army in regard to civilian omnipotence. The June days of 1848, when the entire National Guard, with the troops of the line, put down the insurrection, had strengthened the superstition. After Bonaparte's assumption of office, the position of the National Guard was to some extent weakened by the unconstitutional union, in the person of Changarnier, of the command of its forces with the command of the First Army Division.

Just as the command of the National Guard appeared here as an attribute of the military commander in chief, so the National Guard itself appeared as only an appendage of the troops of the line. Finally, on June 13 its power was broken, and not only by its partial disbandment, which from this time on was periodically repeated all over France, until mere fragments of it were left behind. The demonstration of June 13 was, above all, a demonstration of the democratic National Guards. They had not, to be sure, borne their arms, but had worn their uniforms against the army; precisely in this uniform, however, lay the talisman. The army convinced itself that this uniform was a piece of woolen cloth like any other. The spell was broken. In the June days of 1848, bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie had united as the National Guard with the army against the proletariat; on June 13, 1849, the bourgeoisie let the petty-bourgeois National Guard be dispersed by the army; on December 2, 1851, the National Guard of the bourgeoisie itself had vanished, and Bonaparte merely registered this fact when he subsequently signed the decree for its disbandment. Thus the bourgeoisie had itself smashed its last weapon against the army; the moment the petty bourgeoisie no longer stood behind it as a vassal, but before it as a rebel, it had to smash it as in general it was bound to destroy all its means of defense against absolutism with its own hand as soon as it had itself become absolute.

Meanwhile, the party of Order celebrated the reconquest of a power that seemed lost in 1848 only to be found again, freed from its restraints, in 1849, celebrated by means of invectives against the republic and the constitution, of curses on all future, present, and past revolutions, including that which its own leaders had made, and in laws by which the press was muzzled, association destroyed, and the state of siege regulated as an organic institution. The National Assembly then adjourned from the middle of August to the middle of October, after having appointed a permanent commission for the period of its absence. During this recess the Legitimists intrigued with Ems, the Orleanists with Claremont, Bonaparte by means of princely tours, and the Departmental Councils in deliberations on a revision of the constitution: incidents which regularly recur in the periodic recesses of the National Assembly and which I propose to discuss only when they become events. Here it may merely be remarked, in addition, that it was impolitic for the National Assembly to disappear from the stage for considerable intervals and leave only a single, albeit a sorry, figure to be seen at the head of the republic, that of Louis Bonaparte, while to the scandal of the public the party of Order fell asunder into its royalist component parts and followed its conflicting desires for restoration. As often as the confused noise of parliament grew silent during these recesses and its body dissolved into the nation, it became unmistakably clear that only one thing was still lacking to complete the true form of this republic: to make the former's recess permanent and replace the latter's inscription, *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*, with the unambiguous words: infantry, cavalry, artillery!

¹ On April 16, 1848 a peaceful procession of Paris workers marched towards the Town Hall to present a petition to the Provisional Government for "organisation of labour" and "abolition of the exploitation of man by man." The workers encountered battalions of the bourgeois national guard and were forced to retreat.

On May 15, 1848 Paris workers led by Blanqui, Barbès and others took revolutionary action against the anti-labour and anti-democratic policy of the bourgeois Constituent Assembly which had opened on May 4. The participants in the mass demonstration forced their way into the Assembly, demanded the formation of a Ministry of Labour and presented a number of other demands. An attempt was made to form a revolutionary government. National guards from the bourgeois quarters and regular troops succeeded, however, in restoring the power of the Constituent Assembly. The leaders of the movement were arrested and put on trial.

² The Fronde – a movement in France against the absolutist regime and its prop, the government of Cardinal Mazarin. It was active from 1648 to 1653 and invoked various social sections, which in many cases pursued opposite aims, from radical peasant and plebeian elements and oppositional bourgeoisie, to high-ranking officials who sought to maintain their privileges, and aristocrats seeking lucrative posts, pensions and allowances. The defeat of the Fronde led to the strengthening of absolutism.

³ Marx refers here to a Fairy Tale of Hans Christian Andersen, ‘The Shadow’, published in 1847, which was influenced by Chamisso’s ‘Peter Schlemihl’. There is a good treatment of the story on Wikipedia. In the Andersen story, the character has ‘lost’ his shadow, as in Marx’s reference; in Chamisso’s story, he has sold it to the devil.

⁴ The ruling Bonapartist circles and the counter-revolutionary press, preparing coup d’état of December 2, 1851, did everything they could to scare all timid and law-abiding citizens by the prospect of anarchy, revolutionary plots, a new Jacquerie and encroachments on property, during the presidential election, scheduled for May 1852. A special role in this campaign was played by the pamphlet *Le spectre rouge de 1852* (Brussels, 1851) by A. Romieu, a former prefect of police.

⁵ Ems – a health resort in Germany where a Legitimist conference was held in August 1849; it was attended by the Count de Chambord, pretender to the French throne under the name of Henry V.

Claremont – a house near London, residence of Louis Philippe after his flight from France.

⁶ Marx uses the term “Haupt- und Staatsaktionen” (“principal and spectacular actions”), which has several meanings. In the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth century, it denoted plays performed by, German touring companies. The plays, which were rather formless, presented tragic historical events in a bombastic and at the same time coarse and farcical way.

Secondly, this term can denote major political events. It was used in this sense by a trend in German historical science known as “objective historiography” Leopold Ranke was one of its chief representatives. He regarded Haupt- und Staatsaktionen as the main subject-matter of history.

⁷ The expeditionary corps under General Oudinot, sent to Italy by decision of President Louis Bonaparte and the French Government, was driven back from Rome by the troops of the Roman Republic on April 30, 1849. But, in violation of the terms of the armistice signed by the French, Oudinot launched a new offensive on June 3. Throughout the siege of Rome until the fall of the Republic on July 3, 1849 the city was repeatedly subjected to heavy bombardment.

Article V belongs to the introductory part of the French Constitution of 1848: the articles of the main part of the Constitution are numbered in Arabic numerals.

⁸ On August 10, 1849 the Legislative Assembly adopted a law under which “instigators and supporters of the conspiracy, and the attempt of June 13” were liable to trial by the High Court. Thirty-four deputies of the Montagne (Alexandre Ledru-Rollin, Felix Pyat and Victor Considerant among them) were deprived of their mandates and put on trial (those who had emigrated were tried by default).

On June 13 the editorial offices of democratic and socialist newspapers were raided and many of these papers were banned.

⁹ The events in Paris sparked off an armed uprising of Lyons workers and artisans on June 15, 1849. The insurgents occupied the Croix-Rousse district and erected barricades there, but were overcome by troops after several hours of stubborn fighting.

¹⁰ An ironical allusion to the plans of Louis Napoleon, who expected to receive the French Crown from the hands of Pius IX, whose temporal power he helped restore. According to the Bible, David was anointed king by the prophet Samuel in opposition to the Hebrew king Saul (1 Samuel 16 : 13).

¹¹ The battle of Austerlitz between the Russo-Austrian and the French armies on December 2, 1805 ended in victory for the French commanded by Napoleon I.

IV

In the middle of October, 1849, the National Assembly met once more. On November 1 Bonaparte surprised it with a message in which he announced the dismissal of the Barrot-Falloux Ministry and the formation of a new ministry. No one has ever sacked lackeys with less ceremony than Bonaparte his ministers. The kicks that were intended for the National Assembly were given in the meantime to Barrot & Co.

The Barrot Ministry, as we have seen, had been composed of Legitimists and Orleanists; it was a ministry of the party of Order. Bonaparte had needed it to dissolve the republican Constituent Assembly, to bring about the expedition against Rome, and to break the Democratic party. Behind this ministry he had seemingly effaced himself, surrendered governmental power into the hands of the party of Order, and donned the modest character mask that the responsible editor of a newspaper wore under Louis Philippe, the mask of the *homme de paille* [straw man]. He now threw off a mask which was no longer the light veil behind which he could hide his physiognomy, but an iron mask which prevented him from displaying a physiognomy of his own. He had appointed the Barrot Ministry in order to blast the republican National Assembly in the name of the party of Order; he dismissed it in order to declare his own name independent of the National Assembly of the party of Order.

Plausible pretexts for this dismissal were not lacking. The Barrot Ministry neglected even the decencies that would have let the President of the Republic appear as a power side by side with the National Assembly. During the recess of the National Assembly Bonaparte published a letter to Edgar Ney in which he seemed to disapprove of the illiberal attitude of the Pope, just as in opposition to the Constituent Assembly he had published a letter in which he commended Oudinot for the attack on the Roman republic. When the National Assembly now voted the budget for the Roman expedition, Victor Hugo, out of alleged liberalism, brought up this letter for discussion. The party of Order with scornfully incredulous outcries stifled the idea that Bonaparte's ideas could have any political importance. Not one of the ministers took up the gauntlet for him. On another occasion Barrot, with his well-known hollow rhetoric, let fall from the platform words of indignation concerning the "abominable intrigues" that, according to his assertion, went on in the immediate entourage of the President. Finally, while the ministry obtained from the National Assembly a widow's pension for the Duchess of Orleans it rejected any proposal to increase the Civil List of the President. And in Bonaparte the imperial pretender was so intimately bound up with the adventurer down on his luck that the one great idea, that he was called to restore the empire, was always supplemented by the other, that it was the mission of the French people to pay his debts.

The Barrot-Falloux Ministry was the first and last parliamentary ministry that Bonaparte brought into being. Its dismissal forms, accordingly, a decisive turning point. With it the party of Order lost, never to reconquer it, an indispensable position for the maintenance of the parliamentary regime, the lever of executive power. It is immediately obvious that in a country like France, where the executive power commands an army of officials numbering more than half a million individuals and therefore constantly maintains an immense mass of interests and livelihoods in the most absolute dependence; where the state enmeshes, controls, regulates, superintends, and tutors civil society from its most comprehensive manifestations of life down to its most insignificant stirrings, from its most general modes of being to the private existence of individuals; where through the most extraordinary centralization this parasitic body acquires a ubiquity, an omniscience, a capacity for accelerated mobility, and an elasticity which finds a counterpart only in the helpless dependence, the loose shapelessness of the actual body politic — it is obvious that in such a country the National Assembly forfeits all real influence when it loses command of the ministerial posts, if it does not at the same time simplify the administration of the

state, reduce the army of officials as far as possible, and, finally, let civil society and public opinion create organs of their own, independent of the governmental power. But it is precisely with the maintenance of that extensive state machine in its numerous ramifications that the material interests of the French bourgeoisie are interwoven in the closest fashion. Here it finds posts for its surplus population and makes up in the form of state salaries for what it cannot pocket in the form of profit, interest, rents, and honorariums. On the other hand, its political interests compelled it to increase daily the repressive measures and therefore the resources and the personnel of the state power, while at the same time it had to wage an uninterrupted war against public opinion and mistrustfully mutilate, cripple, the independent organs of the social movement, where it did not succeed in amputating them entirely. Thus the French bourgeoisie was compelled by its class position to annihilate, on the one hand, the vital conditions of all parliamentary power, and therefore, likewise, of its own, and to render irresistible, on the other hand, the executive power hostile to it.

The new ministry was called the Hautpoul Ministry. Not in the sense that General Hautpoul had received the rank of Prime Minister. Rather, simultaneously with Barrot's dismissal, Bonaparte abolished this dignity, which, true enough, condemned the President of the Republic to the status of the legal nonentity of a constitutional monarch, but of a constitutional monarch without throne or crown, without scepter or sword, without freedom from responsibility, without imprescriptible possession of the highest state dignity, and worst of all, without a Civil List. The Hautpoul Ministry contained only one man of parliamentary standing, the moneylender Fould, one of the most notorious of the high financiers. To his lot fell the Ministry of Finance. Look up the quotations on the Paris Bourse and you will find that from November 1, 1849, onward the French *fonds* [government securities] rise and fall with the rise and fall of Bonapartist stocks. While Bonaparte had thus found his ally in the Bourse, he at the same time took possession of the police by appointing Carlier police prefect of Paris.

Only in the course of development, however, could the consequences of the change of ministers come to light. To begin with, Bonaparte had taken a step forward only to be driven backward all the more conspicuously. His brusque message was followed by the most servile declaration of allegiance to the National Assembly. As often as the ministers dared to make a diffident attempt to introduce his personal fads as legislative proposals, they themselves seemed to carry out, against their will and compelled by their position, comical commissions whose fruitlessness they were persuaded of in advance. As often as Bonaparte blurted out his intentions behind the ministers' backs and played with his "*idees napoleoniennes*,"¹ his own ministers disavowed him from the tribune of the National Assembly. His usurpatory longings seemed to make themselves heard only in order that the malicious laughter of his opponents might not be muted. He behaved like an unrecognized genius, whom all the world takes for a simpleton. Never did he enjoy the contempt of all classes in fuller measure than during this period. Never did the bourgeoisie rule more absolutely, never did it display more ostentatiously the insignia of domination.

I need not write here the history of its legislative activity, which is summarized during this period in two laws: in the law reestablishing the wine tax and the education law abolishing unbelief.² If wine drinking was made harder for the French, they were presented all the more plentifully with the water of true life. If in the law on the wine tax the bourgeoisie declared the old, hateful French tax system to be inviolable, it sought through the education law to insure among the masses the old state of mind that put up with the tax system. One is astonished to see the Orleanists, the liberal bourgeois, these old apostles of Voltaireanism and eclectic philosophy, entrust to their hereditary enemies, the Jesuits, the superintendence of the French mind. However Orleanists and Legitimists could part company in regard to the pretenders to the throne, they understood that securing their united rule necessitated the uniting of the means of repression of two epochs, that the means of subjugation of the July Monarchy had to be supplemented and strengthened by the means of subjugation of the Restoration.

The peasants, disappointed in all their hopes, crushed more than ever by the low level of grain prices on the one hand, and by the growing burden of taxes and mortgage debts on the other, began to bestir themselves in the departments. They were answered by a drive against the schoolmasters, who were made subject to the clergy, by a drive against the mayors, made subject to the prefects, and by a system of espionage to which all were made subject. In Paris and the large towns reaction itself has the physiognomy of its epoch and challenges more than it strikes down. In the countryside it becomes dull, coarse, petty, tiresome, and vexatious, in a word, the gendarme. One comprehends how three years of the regime of the gendarme, consecrated by the regime of the priest, were bound to demoralize immature masses.

Whatever amount of passion and declamation might be employed by the party of Order against the minority from the tribune of the National Assembly, its speech remained as monosyllabic as that of the Christians, whose words were to be: Yea, yea; nay, nay! As monosyllabic on the platform as in the press. Flat as a riddle whose answer is known in advance. Whether it was a question of the right of petition or the tax on wine, freedom of the press or free trade, the clubs or the municipal charter, protection of personal liberty or regulation of the state budget, the watchword constantly recurs, the theme remains always the same, the verdict is ever ready and invariably reads: "Socialism!" Even bourgeois liberalism is declared socialistic, bourgeois enlightenment socialistic, bourgeois financial reform socialistic. It was socialistic to build a railway where a canal already existed, and it was socialistic to defend oneself with a cane when one was attacked with a rapier.

This was not merely a figure of speech, fashion, or party tactics. The bourgeoisie had a true insight into the fact that all the weapons it had forged against feudalism turned their points against itself, that all the means of education it had produced rebelled against its own civilization, that all the gods it had created had fallen away from it. It understood that all the so-called bourgeois liberties and organs of progress attacked and menaced its class rule at its social foundation and its political summit simultaneously, and had therefore become "socialistic." In this menace and this attack it rightly discerned the secret of socialism, whose import and tendency it judges more correctly than so-called socialism knows how to judge itself; the latter can, accordingly, not comprehend why the bourgeoisie callously hardens its heart against it, whether it sentimentally bewails the sufferings of mankind, or in Christian spirit prophesies the millennium and universal brotherly love, or in humanistic style twaddles about mind, education, and freedom, or in doctrinaire fashion invents a system for the conciliation and welfare of all classes. What the bourgeoisie did not grasp, however, was the logical conclusion that its own parliamentary regime, its political rule in general, was now also bound to meet with the general verdict of condemnation as being socialistic. As long as the rule of the bourgeois class had not been completely organized, as long as it had not acquired its pure political expression, the antagonism of the other classes likewise could not appear in its pure form, and where it did appear could not take the dangerous turn that transforms every struggle against the state power into a struggle against capital. If in every stirring of life in society it saw "tranquillity" imperiled, how could it want to maintain at the head of society a regime of unrest, its own regime, the parliamentary regime, this regime that, according to the expression of one of its spokesmen, lives in struggle and by struggle? The parliamentary regime lives by discussion, how shall it forbid discussion? Every interest, every social institution, is here transformed into general ideas, debated as ideas; how shall any interest, any institution, sustain itself above thought and impose itself as an article of faith? The struggle of the orators on the platform evokes the struggle of the scribblers of the press; the debating club in parliament is necessarily supplemented by debating clubs in the salons and the bistros; the representatives, who constantly appeal to public opinion, give public opinion the right to speak its real mind in petitions. The parliamentary regime leaves everything to the decision of majorities; how shall the great majorities outside parliament not want to decide? When you play the fiddle at the top of the state, what else is to be expected but that those down below dance?

Thus by now stigmatizing as “socialistic” what it had previously extolled as “liberal,” the bourgeoisie confesses that its own interests dictate that it should be delivered from the danger of its own rule; that to restore tranquillity in the country its bourgeois parliament must, first of all, be given its quietus; that to preserve its social power intact its political power must be broken; that the individual bourgeois can continue to exploit the other classes and to enjoy undisturbed property, family, religion, and order only on condition that their class be condemned along with the other classes to like political nullity; that in order to save its purse it must forfeit the crown, and the sword that is to safeguard it must at the same time be hung over its own head as a sword of Damocles.

In the domain of the interests of the general citizenry, the National Assembly showed itself so unproductive that, for example, the discussions on the Paris-Avignon railway, which began in the winter of 1850, were still not ripe for conclusion on December 2, 1851. Where it did not repress or pursue a reactionary course it was stricken with incurable barrenness.

While Bonaparte’s ministry partly took the initiative in framing laws in the spirit of the party of Order, and partly even outdid that party’s harshness in their execution and administration, he, on the other hand, sought by childish silly proposals to win popularity, to bring out his opposition to the National Assembly, and to hint at a secret reserve that was only temporarily prevented by conditions from making its hidden treasures available to the French people. Such was the proposal to decree an increase in pay of four sous a day to the noncommissioned officers. Such was the proposal of an honor-system loan bank for the workers. Money as a gift and money as a loan, it was with prospects such as these that he hoped to lure the masses. Donations and loans — the financial science of the lumpen proletariat, whether of high degree or low, is restricted to this. Such were the only springs Bonaparte knew how to set in action. Never has a pretender speculated more stupidly on the stupidity of the masses.

The National Assembly flared up repeatedly over these unmistakable attempts to gain popularity at its expense, over the growing danger that this adventurer, whom his debts spurred on and no established reputation held back, would venture a desperate coup. The discord between the party of Order and the President had taken on a threatening character when an unexpected event threw him back repentant into its arms. We mean the by-elections of March 10, 1850. These elections were held for the purpose of filling the representatives’ seats that after June 13 had been rendered vacant by imprisonment or exile. Paris elected only social-democratic candidates. It even concentrated most of the votes on an insurgent of June, 1848, on De Flotte. Thus did the Parisian petty bourgeoisie, in alliance with the proletariat, revenge itself for its defeat on June 13, 1849. It seemed to have disappeared from the battlefield at the moment of danger only to reappear there on a more propitious occasion with more numerous fighting forces and with a bolder battle cry. One circumstance seemed to heighten the peril of this election victory. The army voted in Paris for the June insurgent against La Hitte, a minister of Bonaparte’s, and in the departments largely for the Montagnards, who here too, though indeed not so decisively as in Paris, maintained the ascendancy over their adversaries.

Bonaparte saw himself suddenly confronted with revolution once more. As on January 29, 1849, as on June 13, 1849, so on March 10, 1850, he disappeared behind the party of Order. He made obeisance, he pusillanimously begged pardon, he offered to appoint any ministry it pleased at the behest of the parliamentary majority, he even implored the Orleanist and Legitimist party leaders, the Thiers, the Berryers, the Broglies, the Moles, in brief, the so-called burgraves,³ to take the helm of state themselves. The party of Order proved unable to take advantage of this opportunity that would never return. Instead of boldly possessing itself of the power offered, it did not even compel Bonaparte to reinstate the ministry dismissed on November 1; it contented itself with humiliating him by its forgiveness and adjoining M. Baroche to the Hautpoul Ministry. As public prosecutor this Baroche had stormed and raged before the High Court at Bourges, the first time against the revolutionists of May 15,⁴ the second time against the democrats of June 13, both

times because of an attempt on the life of the National Assembly. None of Bonaparte's ministers subsequently contributed more to the degradation of the National Assembly, and after December 2, 1851, we meet him once more as the comfortably installed and highly paid vice president of the Senate. He had spat in the revolutionists' soup in order that Bonaparte might eat it up.

The social-democratic party, for its part, seemed only to look for pretexts to put its own victory once again in doubt and to blunt its point. Vidal, one of the newly elected representatives of Paris, had been elected simultaneously in Strasbourg. He was induced to decline the election for Paris and accept it for Strasbourg. And so, instead of making its victory at the polls conclusive and thereby compelling the party of Order to contest it in parliament at once, instead of thus forcing the adversary to fight at the moment of popular enthusiasm and favorable mood in the army, the democratic party wearied Paris during the months of March and April with a new election campaign, let the aroused popular passions wear themselves out in this repeated provisional election game, let the revolutionary energy satiate itself with constitutional successes, dissipate itself in petty intrigues, hollow declamations, and sham movements, let the bourgeoisie rally and make its preparations, and, lastly, weakened the significance of the March elections by a sentimental commentary in the April by-election, the election of Eugene Sue. In a word, it made an April Fool of March 10.

The parliamentary majority understood the weakness of its antagonist. Its seventeen burgraves — for Bonaparte had left to it the direction of and responsibility for the attack — drew up a new electoral law, the introduction of which was entrusted to M. Faucher, who solicited this honor for himself. On May 8 he introduced the law by which universal suffrage was to be abolished, a residence of three years in the locality of the election to be imposed as a condition on the electors, and finally, the proof of this residence made dependent in the case of workers on a certificate from their employers.

Just as the democrats had, in revolutionary fashion, raged and agitated during the constitutional election contest, so now, when it was requisite to prove the serious nature of that victory arms in hand, did they in constitutional fashion preach order, *calme majestueux*, lawful action, that is to say, blind subjection to the will of the counterrevolution, which imposed itself as the law. During the debate the "Mountain" put the party of Order to shame by asserting, against the latter's revolutionary passion, the dispassionate attitude of the philistine who keeps within the law, and by felling that party to earth with the fearful reproach that it was proceeding in a revolutionary manner. Even the newly elected deputies were at pains to prove by their decorous and discreet action what a misconception it was to decry them as anarchists and construe their election as a victory for revolution. On May 31 the new electoral law went through. The Montagne contented itself with smuggling a protest into the President's pocket. The electoral law was followed by a new press law, by which the revolutionary newspaper press was entirely suppressed.⁵ It had deserved its fate. *The National* and *La Presse*, two bourgeois organs, were left after this deluge as the most advanced outposts of the revolution.

We have seen how during March and April the democratic leaders had done everything to embroil the people of Paris in a sham fight, how after May 8 they did everything to restrain them from a real fight. In addition to this, we must not forget that the year 1850 was one of the most splendid years of industrial and commercial prosperity, and the Paris proletariat was therefore fully employed. But the election law of May 31, 1850, excluded it from any participation in political power. It cut the proletariat off from the very arena of the struggle. It threw the workers back into the position of pariahs which they had occupied before the February Revolution. By letting themselves be led by the democrats in the face of such an event and forgetting the revolutionary interests of their class for momentary ease and comfort, they renounced the honor of being a conquering power, surrendered to their fate, proved that the defeat of June, 1848, had put them out of the fight for years and that the historical process would for the present again have to go on over their heads. As for the petty-bourgeois democracy, which on June 13 had cried,

“But if once universal suffrage is attacked, then we’ll show them,” it now consoled itself with the contention that the counterrevolutionary blow which had struck it was no blow and the law of May 31 no law. On the second Sunday in May, 1852, every Frenchman would appear at the polling place with ballot in one hand and sword in the other. With this prophecy it rested content. Lastly, the army was disciplined by its superior officers for the elections of March and April, 1850, just as it had been disciplined for those of May 28, 1849. This time, however, it said decidedly: “The revolution shall not dupe us a third time.”

The law of May 31, 1850, was the coup d’état of the bourgeoisie. All its conquests over the revolution hitherto had only a provisional character and were endangered as soon as the existing National Assembly retired from the stage. They depended on the hazards of a new general election, and the history of elections since 1848 irrefutably proved that the bourgeoisie’s moral sway over the mass of the people was lost in the same measure as its actual domination developed. On March 10 universal suffrage declared itself directly against the domination of the bourgeoisie; the bourgeoisie answered by outlawing universal suffrage. The law of May 31 was therefore one of the necessities of the class struggle. On the other hand, the constitution required a minimum of two million votes to make an election of the President of the Republic valid. If none of the candidates for the presidency received this minimum, the National Assembly was to choose the President from among the three candidates to whom the largest number of votes would fall. At the time when the Constituent Assembly made this law, ten million electors were registered on the rolls of voters. In its view, therefore, a fifth of the people entitled to vote was sufficient to make the presidential election valid. The law of May 31 struck at least three million votes off the electoral rolls, reduced the number of people entitled to vote to seven million, and nevertheless retained the legal minimum of two million for the presidential election. It therefore raised the legal minimum from a fifth to nearly a third of the effective votes; that is, it did everything to smuggle the election of the President out of the hands of the people and into the hands of the National Assembly. Thus through the electoral law of May 31 the party of Order seemed to have made its rule doubly secure, by surrendering the election of the National Assembly and that of the President of the Republic to the stationary section of society.

¹ An ironical allusion to Louis Bonaparte’s book *Des Idées apoleoniennes*, which he wrote in England and published in Paris and Brussels in 1839.

² The wine tax, abolished as of January 1, 1850 by decision of the Constituent Assembly, was re-introduced by a law of the Legislative Assembly on December 1 20-21, 1849.

The education law, which virtually placed the schools under the control of the clergy, was adopted by the Legislative Assembly on March 15-27, 1850. For an assessment of these laws see Karl Marx, *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850*.

³ The reference is to the commission of 17 Orleanists and Legitimists- deputies of the Legislative Assembly- appointed by the Minister of the Interior on May 1, 1850 to draft a new electoral law. Its members were nicknamed *burggraves*, a name borrowed from the title of a historical drama by Victor Hugo, as an allusion to their unwarranted claims to power and their reactionary aspirations. The drama is set in medieval Germany, where the *Burggraf* was governor, appointed by the emperor, of a *Burg* (city) or district.

⁴ From March 7 to April 3, 1849 the leaders of the Paris workers’ uprising of May 15, 1848 were tried at Bourges on a charge of conspiring against the government. Barbés and Albert were sentenced to exile, Blanqui to ten years solitary confinement and the rest of the accused to various terms of imprisonment or exile.

On April 16, 1848 a peaceful procession of Paris workers marched towards the Town Hall to present a petition to the Provisional Government for “organisation of labour” and “abolition of the exploitation

of man by man.” The workers encountered battalions of the bourgeois national guard and were forced to retreat.

On May 15, 1848 Paris workers led by Blanqui, Barbès and others took revolutionary action against the anti-labour and anti-democratic policy of the bourgeois Constituent Assembly which had opened on May 4. The participants in the mass demonstration forced their way into the Assembly, demanded the formation of a Ministry of Labour and presented a number of other demands. An attempt was made to form a revolutionary government. National guards from the bourgeois quarters and regular troops succeeded, however, in restoring the power of the Constituent Assembly. The leaders of the movement were arrested and put on trial.

⁵ The press law passed by the Legislative Assembly in July 1850 (“Loi sur le cautionnement des journaux et le timbre des écrits périodiques et non périodiques. 16-23 juillet 1850”) considerably increased the caution money which newspaper publishers had to deposit, and introduced a stamp-duty, which applied also to pamphlets. This new law was a continuation of reactionary measures which virtually led to the abolition of freedom of the press in France (see also Karl Marx, *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850*).

V

As soon as the revolutionary crisis had been weathered and universal suffrage abolished, the struggle between the National Assembly and Bonaparte broke out again.

The constitution had fixed Bonaparte's salary at 600,000 francs. Barely six months after his installation he succeeded in increasing this sum to twice as much, for Odilon Barrot wrung from the Constituent National Assembly an extra allowance of 600,000 francs a year for so-called representation moneys. After June 13 Bonaparte had caused similar requests to be voiced, this time without eliciting response from Barrot. Now, after May 31, he at once availed himself of the favorable moment and had his ministers propose a Civil List of three millions in the National Assembly. A long life of adventurous vagabondage had endowed him with the most developed antennae for feeling out the weak moments when he might squeeze money from his bourgeois. He practiced *chantage* [blackmail] regularly. The National Assembly had violated the sovereignty of the people with his assistance and his cognizance. He threatened to denounce its crime to the tribunal of the people unless it loosened its purse strings and purchased his silence with three million a year. It had robbed three million Frenchmen of their franchise. He demanded, for every Frenchman out of circulation, a franc in circulation, precisely three million francs. He, the elect of six millions, claimed damages for the votes which he said he had retrospectively been cheated out of. The Commission of the National Assembly refused the importunate man. The Bonapartist press threatened. Could the National Assembly break with the President of the Republic at a moment when in principle it had definitely broken with the mass of the nation? It rejected the annual Civil List, it is true, but it granted, for this once, an extra allowance of 2,160,000 francs. It thus rendered itself guilty of the double weakness of granting the money and of showing at the same time by its vexation that it granted it unwillingly. We shall see later for what purpose Bonaparte needed the money. After this vexatious aftermath, which followed on the heels of the abolition of universal suffrage and in which Bonaparte exchanged his humble attitude during the crisis of March and April for challenging impudence to the usurpatory parliament, the National Assembly adjourned for three months, from August 11 to November 11. In its place it left behind a Permanent Commission of twenty-eight members, which contained no Bonapartists but did contain some moderate republicans. The Permanent Commission of 1849 had included only Order men and Bonapartists. But at that time the party of Order declared itself permanently against the revolution. This time the parliamentary republic declared itself permanently against the President. After the law of May 31, this was the only rival that still confronted the party of Order.

When the National Assembly met once more in November, 1850, it seemed that, instead of the petty skirmishes it had hitherto had with the President, a great and ruthless struggle, a life-and-death struggle between the two powers, had become inevitable.

As in 1849 so during this year's parliamentary recess — the party of Order had broken up into its separate factions, each occupied with its own restoration intrigues, which had obtained fresh nutriment through the death of Louis Philippe. The Legitimist king, Henry V, had even nominated a formal ministry which resided in Paris and in which members of the Permanent Commission held seats. Bonaparte, in his turn, was therefore entitled to make tours of the French departments, and according to the disposition of the town he favored with his presence, now more or less covertly, now more or less overtly, to divulge his own restoration plans and canvass votes for himself. On these processions, which the great official *Moniteur* and the little private *Moniteurs* of Bonaparte naturally had to celebrate as triumphal processions, he was constantly accompanied by persons affiliated with the Society of December 10. This society dates from the year 1849. On the pretext of founding a benevolent society, the lumpen proletariat of Paris had been organized into secret sections, each section led by Bonapartist agents, with a Bonapartist

general at the head of the whole. Alongside decayed roués with dubious means of subsistence and of dubious origin, alongside ruined and adventurous offshoots of the bourgeoisie, were vagabonds, discharged soldiers, discharged jailbirds, escaped galley slaves, swindlers, mountebanks, lazzaroni,¹ pickpockets, tricksters, gamblers, *maquereaux* [pimps], brothel keepers, porters, literati, organ grinders, ragpickers, knife grinders, tinkers, beggars — in short, the whole indefinite, disintegrated mass, thrown hither and thither, which the French call *la bohème*; from this kindred element Bonaparte formed the core of the Society of December 10. A “benevolent society” — insofar as, like Bonaparte, all its members felt the need of benefiting themselves at the expense of the laboring nation. This Bonaparte, who constitutes himself *chief of the lumpenproletariat*, who here alone rediscovers in mass form the interests which he personally pursues, who recognizes in this scum, offal, refuse of all classes the only class upon which he can base himself unconditionally, is the real Bonaparte, the Bonaparte *sans phrase*. An old, crafty roué, he conceives the historical life of the nations and their performances of state as comedy in the most vulgar sense, as a masquerade in which the grand costumes, words, and postures merely serve to mask the pettiest knavery. Thus his expedition to Strasbourg, where the trained Swiss vulture played the part of the Napoleonic eagle. For his irruption into Boulogne he puts some London lackeys into French uniforms. They represent the army.² In his Society of December 10 he assembles ten thousand rascals who are to play the part of the people as Nick Bottom [A character in Shakespeare’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream*. — Ed.] that of the lion. At a moment when the bourgeoisie itself played the most complete comedy, but in the most serious manner in the world, without infringing any of the pedantic conditions of French dramatic etiquette, and was itself half deceived, half convinced of the solemnity of its own performance of state, the adventurer, who took the comedy as plain comedy, was bound to win. Only when he has eliminated his solemn opponent, when he himself now takes his imperial role seriously and under the Napoleonic mask imagines he is the real Napoleon, does he become the victim of his own conception of the world, the serious buffoon who no longer takes world history for a comedy but his comedy for world history. What the national *ateliers*³ were for the socialist workers, what the *Gardes mobile* were for the bourgeois republicans, the Society of December 10 was for Bonaparte, the party fighting force peculiar to him. On his journeys the detachments of this society packing the railways had to improvise a public for him, stage popular enthusiasm, roar *Vive l’Empereur*, insult and thrash republicans, under police protection, of course. On his return journeys to Paris they had to form the advance guard, forestall counter-demonstrations or disperse them. The Society of December 10 belonged to him, it was *his* work, his very own idea. Whatever else he appropriates is put into his hands by the force of circumstances; whatever else he does, the circumstances do for him or he is content to copy from the deeds of others. But Bonaparte with official phrases about order, religion, family, and property in public, before the citizens, and with the secret society of the Schufterles and Spiegelbergs⁴, the society of disorder, prostitution, and theft, behind him — that is Bonaparte himself as the original author, and the history of the Society of December 10 is his own history.

Now it had happened by way of exception that people’s representatives belonging to the party of Order came under the cudgels of the Decembrists. Still more. Yon, the police commissioner assigned to the National Assembly and charged with watching over its safety, acting on the deposition of a certain Allais, advised the Permanent Commission that a section of the Decembrists had decided to assassinate General Changarnier and Dupin, the President of the National Assembly, and had already designated the individuals who were to perpetrate the deed. One comprehends the terror of M. Dupin. A parliamentary inquiry into the Society of December 10 — that is, the profanation of the Bonapartist secret world — seemed inevitable. Just before the meeting of the National Assembly Bonaparte providently disbanded his society, naturally only on paper, for in a detailed memoir at the end of 1851 Police Prefect Carlier still sought in vain to move him to really break up the Decembrists.

The Society of December 10 was to remain the private army of Bonaparte until he succeeded in transforming the public army into a Society of December 10. Bonaparte made the first attempt at this shortly after the adjournment of the National Assembly, and precisely with the money just wrested from it. As a fatalist, he lives in the conviction that there are certain higher powers which man, and the soldier in particular, cannot withstand. Among these powers he counts, first and foremost, cigars and champagne, cold poultry and garlic sausage. Accordingly, to begin with, he treats officers and non-commissioned officers in his Elysée apartments to cigars and champagne, cold poultry and garlic sausage. On October 3 he repeats this maneuver with the mass of the troops at the St. Maur review, and on October 10 the same maneuver on a still larger scale at the Satory army parade. The uncle remembered the campaigns of Alexander in Asia, the nephew the triumphal marches of Bacchus in the same land. Alexander was a demigod, to be sure, but Bacchus was a god and moreover the tutelary deity of the Society of December 10.

After the review of October 3, the Permanent Commission summoned War Minister Hautpoul. He promised that these breaches of discipline would not recur. We know how on October 10 Bonaparte kept Hautpoul's word. As commander in chief of the Paris army, Changarnier had commanded at both reviews. At once a member of the Permanent Commission, chief of the National Guard, the "savior" of January 29 and June 13, the "bulwark of society," the candidate of the party of Order for presidential honors, the suspected monk of two monarchies, he had hitherto never acknowledged himself as the subordinate of the War Minister, had always openly derided the republican constitution, and had pursued Bonaparte with an ambiguous lordly protection. Now he was consumed with zeal for discipline against the War Minister and for the constitution against Bonaparte. While on October 10 a section of the cavalry raised the shout: "*Vive Napoléon! Vivent les saucissons!*" [Hurrah for Napoléon! Hurrah for the sausages!] Changarnier arranged that at least the infantry marching past under the command of his friend Neumayer should preserve an icy silence. As a punishment, the War Minister relieved General Neumayer of his post in Paris at Bonaparte's instigation, on the pretext of appointing him commanding general of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth divisions. Neumayer refused this exchange of posts and so had to resign. Changarnier, for his part, published an order of the day on November 2 in which he forbade the troops to indulge in political outcries or demonstrations of any kind while under arms. The Elysee newspapers attacked Changarnier; the papers of the party of Order attacked Bonaparte; the Permanent Commission held repeated secret sessions in which it was repeatedly proposed to declare the country in danger; the army seemed divided into two hostile camps, with two hostile general staffs, one in the Elysée, where Bonaparte resided, the other in the Tuileries, the quarters of Changarnier. It seemed that only the meeting of the National Assembly was needed to give the signal for battle. The French public judged this friction between Bonaparte and Changarnier like the English journalist who characterized it in these words:

"The political housemaids of France are sweeping away the glowing lava of the revolution with old brooms and wrangle with one another while they do their work."

Meanwhile, Bonaparte hastened to remove the War Minister Hautpoul, to pack him off in all haste to Algiers, and to appoint General Schramm War Minister in his place. On November 12 he sent to the National Assembly a message of American prolixity, overloaded with detail, redolent of order, desirous of reconciliation, constitutionally acquiescent, treating of all and sundry, but not of the *questions brûlantes* [burning questions] of the moment. As if in passing, he made the remark that according to the express provisions of the constitution the President alone could dispose of the army. The message closed with the following words of great solemnity:

"Above all things, France demands tranquillity.... But bound by an oath, I shall keep within the narrow limits that it has set for me.... As far as I am concerned, elected by the people and owing my power to it alone, I shall always bow to its lawfully expressed will. Should you resolve at this session on a revision of the

constitution, a Constituent Assembly will regulate the position of the executive power. If not, then the people will solemnly pronounce its decision in 1852. But whatever the solutions of the future may be, let us come to an understanding, so that passion, surprise, or violence may never decide the destiny of a great nation.... What occupies my attention, above all, is not who will rule France in 1852, but how to employ the time which remains at my disposal so that the intervening period may pass by without agitation or disturbance. I have opened my heart to you with sincerity; you will answer my frankness with your trust, my good endeavors with your cooperation, and God will do the rest.”

The respectable, hypocritically moderate, virtuously commonplace language of the bourgeoisie reveals its deepest meaning in the mouth of the autocrat of the Society of December 10 and the picnic hero of St. Maur and Satory.

The burgraves of the party of Order did not delude themselves for a moment concerning the trust that this opening of the heart deserved. About oaths they had long been blasé they numbered in their midst veterans and virtuosos of political perjury. Nor had they failed to hear the passage about the army. They observed with annoyance that in its discursive enumeration of lately enacted laws the message passed over the most important law, the electoral law, in studied silence, and moreover, in the event of there being no revision of the constitution, left the election of the President in 1852 to the people. The electoral law was the lead ball chained to the feet of the party of Order, which prevented it from walking and so much the more from storming forward! Moreover, by the official disbandment of the Society of December 10 and the dismissal of War Minister Hautpoul, Bonaparte had with his own hand sacrificed the scapegoats on the altar of the country. He had blunted the edge of the expected collision. Finally, the party of Order itself anxiously sought to avoid, to mitigate, to gloss over any decisive conflict with the executive power. For fear of losing their conquests over the revolution, they allowed their rival to carry off the fruits thereof. “Above all things, France demands tranquillity.” This was what the party of Order had cried to the revolution since February [1848], this was what Bonaparte’s message cried to the party of Order. “Above all things, France demands tranquillity.” Bonaparte committed acts that aimed at usurpation, but the party of Order committed “unrest” if it raised a row about these acts and construed them hypochondriacally. The sausages of Satory were quiet as mice when no one spoke of them. “Above all things, France demands tranquillity.” Bonaparte demanded, therefore, that he be left in peace to do as he liked and the parliamentary party was paralyzed by a double fear, the fear of again evoking revolutionary unrest and the fear of itself appearing as the instigator of unrest in the eyes of its own class, in the eyes of the bourgeoisie. Consequently, since France demanded tranquillity above all things, the party of Order dared not answer “war” after Bonaparte had talked “peace” in his message. The public, which had anticipated scenes of great scandal at the opening of the National Assembly, was cheated of its expectations. The opposition deputies, who demanded the submission of the Permanent Commission’s minutes on the October events, were out-voted by the majority. On principle, all debates that might cause excitement were eschewed. The proceedings of the National Assembly during November and December, 1850, were without interest.

At last, toward the end of December, guerrilla warfare began over a number of prerogatives of parliament. The movement got bogged down in petty squabbles about the prerogatives of the two powers, since the bourgeoisie had done away with the class struggle for the moment by abolishing universal suffrage.

A judgment for debt had been obtained from the court against Mauguin, one of the people’s representatives. In answer to the inquiry of the president of the court, the Minister of Justice, Rouher, declared that a *capias* should be issued against the debtor without further ado. Mauguin was thus thrown into debtors’ prison. The National Assembly flared up when it learned of the assault. Not only did it order his immediate release, but it even had him fetched forcibly from

Clichy the same evening, by its clerk. In order, however, to confirm its faith in the sanctity of private property and with the idea at the back of its mind of opening, in case of need, a place of safekeeping for Montagnards who had become troublesome, it declared imprisonment of people's representatives for debt permissible when its consent had been previously obtained. It forgot to decree that the President might also be locked up for debt. It destroyed the last semblance of the immunity that enveloped the members of its own body.

It will be remembered that, acting on the information given by a certain Allais, Police Commissioner Yon had denounced a section of the Decembrists for planning the murders of Dupin and Changarnier. In reference to this, at the very first session the quaestors made the proposal that parliament should form a police force of its own, paid out of the private budget of the National Assembly and absolutely independent of the police prefect. The Minister of the Interior, Baroche, protested against this invasion of his domain. A miserable compromise on this matter was concluded, according to which, true, the police commissioner of the Assembly was to be paid out of its private budget and to be appointed and dismissed by its quaestors, but only after previous agreement with the Minister of the Interior. Meanwhile the government had started criminal proceedings against Alais, and here it was easy to represent his information as a hoax and through the mouth of the public prosecutor to cast ridicule upon Dupin, Changarnier, Yon, and the whole National Assembly. Thereupon, on December 29, Minister Baroche writes a letter to Dupin in which he demands Yon's dismissal. The bureau of the Assembly, alarmed by its violence in the Mauguin affair and accustomed when it has ventured a blow at the executive power to receive two blows from it in return, does not sanction this decision. It dismisses Yon as a reward for his official zeal and robs itself of a parliamentary prerogative indispensable against a man who does not decide by night in order to execute by day, but decides by day and executes by night.

We have seen how on great and striking occasions during the months of November and December the National Assembly avoided or quashed the struggle with the executive power. Now we see it compelled to take up the struggle on the pettiest occasions. In the Mauguin affair it confirms the principle of imprisoning people's representatives for debt, but reserves the right to have it applied only to representatives obnoxious to itself and wrangles over this infamous privilege with the Minister of Justice. Instead of availing itself of the alleged murder plot to decree an inquiry into the Society of December 10 and irredeemably unmasking Bonaparte before France and Europe in his true character of chief of the Paris lumpen proletariat, it lets the conflict be degraded to a point where the only issue between it and the Minister of the Interior is which of them has the authority to appoint and dismiss a police commissioner. Thus during the whole of this period we see the party of Order compelled by its equivocal position to dissipate and disintegrate its struggle with the executive power in petty jurisdictional squabbles, pettifoggery, legalistic hairsplitting, and delimitational disputes, and to make the most ridiculous matters of form the substance of its activity. It does not dare take up the conflict at the moment when this has significance from the standpoint of principle, when the executive power has really exposed itself and the cause of the National Assembly would be the cause of the nation. By so doing it would give the nation its marching orders, and it fears nothing more than that the nation should move. On such occasions it accordingly rejects the motions of the Montagne and proceeds to the order of the day. The question at issue in its large aspects having thus been dropped, the executive power calmly waits for the time when it can again take up the same question on petty and insignificant occasions, when this is, so to speak, of only local parliamentary interest. Then the repressed rage of the party of Order breaks out, then it tears the curtain away from the coulisses, then it denounces the President, then it declares the republic in danger, but then, also, its fervor appears absurd and the occasion for the struggle seems a hypocritical pretext or altogether not worth fighting about. The parliamentary storm becomes a storm in a teacup, the fight becomes an intrigue, the conflict a scandal. While the revolutionary classes gloat with malicious joy over the

humiliation of the National Assembly, for they are just as enthusiastic about the parliamentary prerogatives of this Assembly as the latter is about the public liberties, the bourgeoisie outside parliament does not understand how the bourgeoisie inside parliament can waste time over such petty squabbles and imperil tranquillity by such pitiful rivalries with the President. It becomes confused by a strategy that makes peace at the moment when all the world is expecting battles, and attacks at the moment when all the world believes peace has been made.

On December 20 Pascal Duprat interpellated the Minister of the Interior concerning the Gold Bars Lottery. This lottery was a “daughter of Elysium.” Bonaparte with his faithful followers had brought her into the world and Police Prefect Carlier had placed her under his official protection, although French law forbids all lotteries except raffles for charitable purposes. Seven million lottery tickets at a franc-a-piece, the profits ostensibly to be devoted to shipping Parisian vagabonds to California. On the one hand, golden dreams were to supplant the socialist dreams of the Paris proletariat, the seductive prospect of the first prize the doctrinaire right to work. Naturally the Paris workers did not recognize in the glitter of the California gold bars the inconspicuous francs that were enticed out of their pockets. In the main, however, the matter was nothing short of a downright swindle. The vagabonds who wanted to open California gold mines without troubling to leave Paris were Bonaparte himself and his debt-ridden Round Table. The three millions voted by the National Assembly had been squandered in riotous living; in one way or another coffers had to be replenished. In vain had Bonaparte opened a national subscription for the building of so-called *cites ouvrières* [workers’ cities], and headed the list himself with a considerable sum. The hard-hearted bourgeois waited mistrustfully for him to pay up his share, and since this naturally did not ensue, the speculation in socialist castles in the air immediately fell to the ground. The gold bars proved a better draw. Bonaparte & Co. were not content to pocket part of the excess of the seven millions over the bars to be allotted in prizes; they manufactured false lottery tickets; they issued ten, fifteen, and even twenty tickets with the same number — a financial operation in the spirit of the Society of December 10! Here the National Assembly was confronted not with the fictitious President of the Republic but with Bonaparte in the flesh. Here it could catch him in the act, in conflict not with the constitution but with the *Code penal*. If after Duprat’s interpellation it proceeded to the order of the day, this did not happen merely because Girardin’s motion that it should declare itself “satisfied” reminded the party of Order of its own systematic corruption. The bourgeois, and above all the bourgeois inflated into a statesman, supplements his practical meanness by theoretical extravagance. As a statesman he becomes, like the state power that confronts him, a higher being that can be fought only in a higher, consecrated fashion.

Bonaparte, who precisely because he was a bohemian, a princely lumpen proletarian, had the advantage over a rascally bourgeois in that he could conduct the struggle meanly, now saw, after the Assembly guided him with its own hand across the slippery ground of the military banquets, the reviews, the Society of December 10, and finally the Code penal, that the moment had come when he could pass from an apparent defensive to the offensive. The minor defeats meanwhile sustained by the Minister of Justice, the Minister of War, the Minister of the Navy, and the Minister of Finance, through which the National Assembly signified its snarling displeasure, troubled him little. He not only prevented the ministers from resigning and thus recognizing the sovereignty of parliament over the executive power, but could now consummate what he had begun during the recess of the National Assembly: the severance of the military power from parliament, *the removal of Changarnier*.

An Elysée paper published an order of the day alleged to have been addressed during the month of May to the First Army Division, and therefore proceeding from Changarnier, in which the officers were urged, in the event of an insurrection, to give no quarter to the traitors in their own ranks, but to shoot them immediately, and to refuse troops to the National Assembly if it should requisition them. On January 3, 1851, the cabinet was interpellated concerning this order of the

day. For the investigation of this matter it requests a breathing space, first of three months, then of a week, finally of only twenty-four hours. The Assembly insists on an immediate explanation. Changarnier rises and declares that there never was such an order of the day. He adds that he will always hasten to comply with the demands of the National Assembly and that in case of a clash it can count on him. It receives his declaration with indescribable applause and passes a vote of confidence in him. It abdicates, it decrees its own impotence and the omnipotence of the army by placing itself under the private protection of a general; but the general deceives himself when he puts at its command against Bonaparte a power that he holds only as a fief from the same Bonaparte, and when, in his turn, he expects to be protected by this parliament, his own protégé in need of protection. Changarnier, however, believes in the mysterious power with which the bourgeoisie has endowed him since January 29, 1849. He considers himself the third power, existing side by side with both the other state powers. He shares the fate of the rest of this epoch's heroes, or rather saints, whose greatness consists precisely in the biased great opinion of them that their party creates in its own interests and who shrink to everyday figures as soon as circumstances call on them to perform miracles. Unbelief is, in general, the mortal enemy of these reputed heroes who are really saints. Hence their majestically moral indignation at the dearth of enthusiasm displayed by wits and scoffers.

That same evening the ministers were summoned to the Elysée. Bonaparte insists on the dismissal of Changarnier; five ministers refuse to sign; the *Moniteur* announces a ministerial crisis, and the press of the party of Order threatens to form a parliamentary army under Changarnier's command. The party of Order had constitutional authority to take this step. It merely had to appoint Changarnier president of the National Assembly and requisition any number of troops it pleased for its protection. It could do so all the more safely as Changarnier still actually stood at the head of the army and the Paris National Guard and was only waiting to be requisitioned together with the army. The Bonapartist press did not as yet even dare to question the right of the National Assembly to requisition troops directly, a legal scruple that in the given circumstances did not look promising. That the army would have obeyed the order of the National Assembly is probable when one bears in mind that Bonaparte had to search all Paris for eight days in order, finally, to find two generals — Baraguay d'Hilliers and Saint-Jean d'Angely — who declared themselves ready to countersign Changarnier's dismissal. That the party of Order, however, would have found in its own ranks and in parliament the necessary number of votes for such a resolution is more than doubtful, when one considers that eight days later two hundred and eighty-six votes detached themselves from the party and that in December, 1851, at the last hour of decision, the Montagne still rejected a similar proposal. Nevertheless, the burgraves might, perhaps, still have succeeded in spurring the mass of their party to a heroism that consisted in feeling themselves secure behind a forest of bayonets and accepting the services of an army that had deserted to their camp. Instead of this, on the evening of January 6, Messrs. the Burgraves betook themselves to the Elysée to make Bonaparte desist from dismissing Changarnier by using statesmanlike phrases and urging considerations of state. Whomever one seeks to persuade, one acknowledges as master of the situation. On January 12, Bonaparte, assured by this step, appoints a new ministry in which the leaders of the old ministry, Fould and Baroche, remain. Saint-Jean D'Angely becomes War Minister, the *Moniteur* publishes the decree dismissing Changarnier, and his command is divided between Baraguay d'Hilliers, who receives the First Army Division, and Perrot, who receives the National Guard. The bulwark of society has been discharged, and while this does not cause any tiles to fall from the roofs, quotations on the Bourse are, on the other hand, going up.

By repulsing the army, which places itself in the person of Changarnier at its disposal, and so surrendering the army irrevocably to the President, the party of Order declares that the bourgeoisie has forfeited its vocation to rule. A parliamentary ministry no longer existed. Having now indeed lost its grip on the army and the National Guard, what forcible means remained to it

with which simultaneously to maintain the usurped authority of parliament over the people and its constitutional authority against the President? None. Only the appeal to impotent principles remained to it now, to principles that it had itself always interpreted merely as general rules, which one prescribes for others in order to be able to move all the more freely oneself. The dismissal of Changarnier and the falling of the military power into Bonaparte's hands closes the first part of the period we are considering, the period of struggle between the party of Order and the executive power. War between the two powers has now been openly declared, is openly waged, but only after the party of Order has lost both arms and soldiers. Without the ministry, without the army, without the people, without public opinion, after its electoral law of May 31 no longer the representative of the sovereign nation, sans eyes, sans ears, sans teeth, sans everything, the National Assembly had undergone a gradual transformation into an *ancient French parliament*⁵ that has to leave action to the government and content itself with growling remonstrances *post festum* [belatedly].

The party of Order receives the new ministry with a storm of indignation. General Bedeau recalls to mind the mildness of the Permanent Commission during the recess, and the excessive consideration it showed by waiving the publication of its minutes. The Minister of the Interior himself now insists on the publication of these minutes, which by this time have naturally become as dull as ditch water, disclose no fresh facts, and have not the slightest effect on the blasé public. Upon Remusat's proposal the National Assembly retires into its office and appoints a "Committee for Extraordinary Measures." Paris departs the less from the rut of its everyday routine because at this moment trade is prosperous, factories are busy, corn prices low, foodstuffs overflowing, and the savings banks receiving fresh deposits daily. The "extraordinary measures" that parliament has announced with so much noise fizzle out on January 18 in a no-confidence vote against the ministry without General Changarnier ever being mentioned. The party of Order was forced to frame its motion in this way to secure the votes of the republicans, since of all the ministry's measures, Changarnier's dismissal was precisely the only one the republicans approved of, while the party of Order was in fact not in a position to Censure the other ministerial acts, which it had itself dictated.

The no-confidence vote of January 18 was passed by four hundred and fifteen votes to two hundred and eighty-six. Thus, it was carried only by a coalition of the extreme Legitimists and Orleanists with the pure republicans and the Montagne. Thus it proved that the party of Order had lost in conflicts with Bonaparte not only the ministry, not only the army, but also its independent parliamentary majority; that a squad of representatives had deserted its camp, out of fanaticism for conciliation, out of fear of the struggle, out of lassitude, out of family regard for the state salaries so near and dear to them, out of speculation about ministerial posts becoming vacant (Odilon Barrot), out of sheer egoism, which makes the ordinary bourgeois always inclined to sacrifice the general interest of his class for this or that private motive. From the first, the Bonapartist representatives adhered to the party of Order only in the struggle against revolution. The leader of the Catholic party, Montalembert, had already at that time thrown his influence into the Bonapartist scale, since he despaired of the parliamentary party's prospects of life. Lastly, the leaders of this party, Thiers and Berryer, the Orleanist and the Legitimist, were compelled openly to proclaim themselves republicans, to confess that their hearts were royalist but their heads republican, that the parliamentary republic was the sole possible form for the rule of the bourgeoisie as a whole. Thus they were compelled, before the eyes of the bourgeois class itself, to stigmatize the restoration plans, which they continued indefatigably to pursue behind parliament's back, as an intrigue as dangerous as it was brainless.

The no-confidence vote of January 18 hit the ministers and not the President. But it was not the ministry, it was the President who had dismissed Changarnier. Should the party of Order impeach Bonaparte himself? Because of his restoration desires? The latter merely supplemented their own. Because of his conspiracy in connection with the military reviews and the Society of December

10? They had buried these themes long since under routine orders of the day. Because of the dismissal of the hero of January 29 and June 13, the man who in May, 1850, threatened to set fire to all four corners of Paris in the event of a rising? Their allies of the Montagne and Cavaignac did not even allow them to raise the fallen bulwark of society by means of an official attestation of sympathy. They themselves could not deny the President the constitutional authority to dismiss a general. They only raged because he made an unparliamentary use of his constitutional right. Had they not continually made an unconstitutional use of their parliamentary prerogative, particularly in regard to the abolition of universal suffrage? They were therefore reduced to moving within strictly parliamentary limits. And it took that peculiar malady which since 1848 has raged all over the Continent, *parliamentary cretinism*, which holds those infected by it fast in an imaginary world and robs them of all sense, all memory, all understanding of the rude external world — it took this parliamentary cretinism for those who had destroyed all the conditions of parliamentary power with their own hands, and were bound to destroy them in their struggle with the other classes, still to regard their parliamentary victories as victories and to believe they hit the President by striking at his ministers. They merely gave him the opportunity to humiliate the National Assembly afresh in the eyes of the nation. On January 20 the *Moniteur* announced that the resignation of the entire ministry had been accepted. On the pretext that no parliamentary party any longer had a majority — as the vote of January 18, this fruit of the coalition between Montagne and royalists, proved — and pending the formation of a new ministry, of which not one member was an Assembly representative, all being absolutely unknown and insignificant individuals; a ministry of mere clerks and copyists. The party of Order could now work to exhaustion playing with these marionettes; the executive power no longer thought it worth while to be seriously represented in the National Assembly. The more his ministers were pure dummies, the more obviously Bonaparte concentrated the whole executive power in his own person and the more scope he had to exploit it for his own ends.

In coalition with the Montagne, the party of Order revenged itself by rejecting the grant to the President of 1,800,000 francs which the chief of the Society of December 10 had compelled his ministerial clerks to propose. This time a majority of only a hundred and two votes decided the matter; thus twenty-seven fresh votes had fallen away since January 18; the dissolution of the party of Order was progressing. At the same time, so there might not for a moment be any mistake about the meaning of its coalition with the Montagne, it scorned even to consider a proposal signed by a hundred and eighty-nine members of the Montagne calling for a general amnesty of political offenders. It sufficed for the Minister of the Interior, a certain Vaisse, to declare that the tranquillity was only apparent, that in secret great agitation prevailed, that in secret ubiquitous societies were being organized, the democratic papers were preparing to come out again, the reports from the departments were unfavorable, the Geneva refugees were directing a conspiracy spreading by way of Lyon all over the South of France, France was on the verge of an industrial and commercial crisis, the manufacturers of Roubaix had reduced working hours, the prisoners of Belle Isle ⁶ were in revolt — it sufficed for even a mere Vaisse to conjure up the red specter and the party of Order rejected without discussion a motion that would certainly have won the National Assembly immense popularity and thrown Bonaparte back into its arms. Instead of letting itself be intimidated by the executive power with the prospect of fresh disturbances, it ought rather to have allowed the class struggle a little elbow room, so as to keep the executive power dependent on it. But it did not feel equal to the task of playing with fire.

Meanwhile the so-called transition ministry continued to vegetate until the middle of April. Bonaparte wearied and befooled the National Assembly with continual new ministerial combinations. Now he seemed to want to form a republican ministry with Lamartine and Billault, now a parliamentary one with the inevitable Odilon Barrot, whose name is never missing when a dupe is necessary, then a Legitimist ministry with Vatimesnil and Benoit d'Azy, and then again an Orleanist one with Maleville. While he thus kept the different factions of the party of Order in

tension against one another, and alarmed them as a whole by the prospect of a republican ministry and the consequent inevitable restoration of universal suffrage, he at the same time engendered in the bourgeoisie the conviction that his honest efforts to form a parliamentary ministry were being frustrated by the irreconcilability of the royalist factions. The bourgeoisie, however, cried out all the louder for a “strong government”; it found it all the more unpardonable to leave France “without administration,” the more a general commercial crisis seemed now to be approaching, and won recruits for socialism in the towns just as the ruinously low price of corn did in the countryside. Trade daily became slacker, the number of unemployed increased perceptibly; ten thousand workers, at least, were breadless in Paris, innumerable factories stood idle in Rouen, Mulhouse, Lyon, Roubaix, Tourcoing, St. Etienne, Elbeuf, etc. Under these circumstances Bonaparte could venture, on April 11, to restore the ministry of January 18: Messrs. Rouher, Fould, Baroche, etc., reinforced by M. Leon Faucher, whom the Constituent Assembly during its last days had, with the exception of five votes cast by ministers, unanimously stigmatized by a vote of no confidence for sending out false telegrams. The National Assembly had therefore gained a victory over the ministry on January 18, had struggled with Bonaparte for three months, only to have Fould and Baroche on April 11 admit the puritan Faucher as a third party into their ministerial alliance.

In November, 1849, Bonaparte had contented himself with an unparliamentary ministry, in January, 1851, with an extra-parliamentary one, and on April 11 he felt strong enough to form an anti-parliamentary ministry, which harmoniously combined in itself the no-confidence votes of both Assemblies, the Constituent and the Legislative, the republican and the royalist. This gradation of ministries was the thermometer with which parliament could measure the decrease of its own vital heat. By the end of April the latter had fallen so low that Persigny, in a personal interview, could urge Changarnier to go over to the camp of the President. Bonaparte, he assured him, regarded the influence of the National Assembly as completely destroyed, and the proclamation was already prepared that was to be published after the coup d'état, which was kept steadily in view but was by chance again postponed. Changarnier informed the leaders of the party of Order of the obituary notice, but who believes that bedbug bites are fatal? And parliament, stricken, disintegrated, and death-tainted as it was, could not prevail upon itself to see in its duel with the grotesque chief of the Society of December 10 anything but a duel with a bedbug. But Bonaparte answered the party of Order as Agesilaus did King Agis: “*I seem to thee an ant, but one day I shall be a lion.*”⁷

¹ Lazzaroni – a contemptuous name for declassed proletarians, primarily in the Kingdom of Naples. These people were repeatedly used by reactionary governments against liberal and democratic movements.

² This refers to Louis Bonaparte's attempts during the July monarchy to stage a coup d'état by means of a military mutiny. On October 30, 1836 he succeeded, with the help of several Bonapartist officers, in inciting two artillery regiments of the Strasbourg garrison to mutiny, but they were disarmed within a few hours. Louis Bonaparte was arrested and deported to America. On August 6, 1840, taking advantage of a partial revival of Bonapartist sentiments in France, he landed in Boulogne with a handful of conspirators and attempted to raise a mutiny among the troops of the local garrison. This attempt likewise proved a failure. He was sentenced to life imprisonment, but escaped to England in 1846.

³ The national ateliers (workshops) were instituted by the Provisional Government immediately after the February revolution of 1848. By this means the Government sought to discredit Louis Blanc's ideas on “the organisation of labour” in the eyes of the workers and, at the same time, to utilise those employed in the national workshops, organised on military lines, against the revolutionary proletariat. Revolutionary ideas, however, continued to gain ground in the national workshops. The Government

took steps to reduce the number of workers employed in them, to send a large number off to public works in the provinces and finally to liquidate the workshops. This precipitated a proletarian uprising in Paris in June 1848. After its suppression, the Cavaignac Government issued a decree on July 3, disbanding the national workshops.

For an assessment of the national workshops see Karl Marx, *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850*.

⁴ Schufterle and Spiegelberg are characters in Friedrich Schiller's play 'The Robbers'.

⁵ The parliaments in France-judicial institutions that came into being in the Middle Ages. The Paris parliament was the highest court of appeal and also performed important administrative and political functions, such as the registration of royal decrees, without which they had no legal force. The parliaments enjoyed the right to remonstrate against government decrees. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they consisted of officials of high birth called the "nobility of the mantle." The parliaments ultimately became the bulwark of Right-wing opposition to absolutism and impeded the implementation of even moderate reforms, and were abolished during the French Revolution. in 1790.

⁶ Belle Isle – an island in the Bay of Biscay, a place of detention of political prisoners in 1849-57; among others, workers who took part in the Paris uprising in June 1848 were detained there.

⁷ Here Marx is drawing a parallel with a story told by the Greek writer Athenaeus (2nd-3rd cent. A.D.) in his book *Deipnosophistae* (Dinner-Table Philosophers). The Egyptian Pharaoh Tachos, alluding to the small stature of the Spartan King Agesilaus, who had come with his troops to the Pharaoh's help, said: "The mountain was in labour. Zeus was afraid. But the mountain has brought forth a mouse." Agesilaus replied: "I seem to you now only a mouse, but the time will come when I will appear to you like a lion."

VI

The coalition with the Montagne and the pure republicans, to which the party of Order saw itself condemned in its unavailing efforts to maintain possession of the military power and to reconquer supreme control of the executive power, proved incontrovertibly that it had forfeited its independent parliamentary majority. On May 28 the mere power of the calendar, of the hour hand of the clock, gave the signal for its complete disintegration. With May 28, the last year of the life of the National Assembly began. It now had to decide for continuing the constitution unaltered or for revising it. But revision of the constitution — that implied not only rule of the bourgeoisie or of the petty-bourgeois democracy, democracy or proletarian anarchy, parliamentary republic or Bonaparte, it implied at the same time Orleans or Bourbon! Thus fell in the midst of parliament the apple of discord that was bound to inflame openly the conflict of interests which split the party of Order into hostile factions. The party of Order was a combination of heterogeneous social substances. The question of revision generated a political temperature at which the product again decomposed into its original components.

The Bonapartists' interest in a revision was simple. For them it was above all a question of abolishing Article 45, which forbade Bonaparte's reelection and the prolongation of his authority. No less simple appeared the position of the republicans. They unconditionally rejected any revision; they saw in it a universal conspiracy against the republic. Since they commanded more than a quarter of the votes in the National Assembly, and according to the constitution three-quarters of the votes were required for a resolution for revision to be legally valid and for the convocation of a revising Assembly, they needed only to count their votes to be sure of victory. And they were sure of victory.

As against these clear positions, the party of Order found itself inextricably caught in contradictions. If it should reject revision, it would imperil the status quo, since it would leave Bonaparte only one way out, that of force; and since on the second Sunday in May, 1852, at the decisive moment, it would be surrendering France to revolutionary anarchy, with a President who had lost his authority, with a parliament which for a long time had not possessed it, and with a people that meant to reconquer it. If it voted for constitutional revision, it knew that it voted in vain and would be bound to fail constitutionally because of the republicans' veto. If it unconstitutionally declared a simple majority vote to be binding, it could hope to dominate the revolution only if it subordinated itself unconditionally to the sovereignty of the executive power; then it would make Bonaparte master of the constitution, of its revision, and of the party itself. A partial revision, which would prolong the authority of the President, would pave the way for imperial usurpation. A general revision, which would shorten the existence of the republic, would bring the dynastic claims into unavoidable conflict, for the conditions of a Bourbon and an Orleanist restoration were not only different, they were mutually exclusive.

The parliamentary republic was more than the neutral territory on which the two factions of the French bourgeoisie, Legitimists and Orleanists, large landed property and industry, could dwell side by side with equality of rights. It was the unavoidable condition of their common rule, the sole form of state in which their general class interest subjected to itself at the same time both the claims of their particular factions and all the remaining classes of society. As royalists they fell back into their old antagonism, into the struggle for the supremacy of landed property or of money, and the highest expression of this antagonism, its personification, was their kings themselves, their dynasties. Hence the resistance of the party of Order to the recall of the Bourbons.

The Orleanist and people's representative Creton had in 1849, 1850, and 1851 periodically introduced a motion for the revocation of the decree exiling the royal families. Just as regularly, parliament presented the spectacle of an Assembly of royalists that obdurately barred the gates

through which their exiled kings might return home. Richard III murdered Henry VI, remarking that he was too good for this world and belonged in heaven. The royalists declared France too bad to possess her kings again. Constrained by force of circumstances, they had become republicans and repeatedly sanctioned the popular decision that banished their kings from France.

A revision of the constitution — and circumstances compelled taking that into consideration — called in question, along with the republic, the common rule of the two bourgeois factions, and revived, with the possibility of a monarchy, the rivalry of the interests which the monarchy had predominantly represented by turns, the struggle for the supremacy of one faction over the other. The diplomats of the party of Order believed they could settle the struggle by an amalgamation of the two dynasties, by a so-called fusion of the royalist parties and their royal houses. The real fusion of the Restoration and the July Monarchy was the parliamentary republic, in which Orleanist and Legitimist colors were obliterated and the various species of bourgeois disappeared into the bourgeois as such, the bourgeois genus. Now, however, Orleanist was to become Legitimist and Legitimist Orleanist. Royalty, in which their antagonism was personified, was to embody their unity, the expression of their exclusive factional interests was to become the expression of their common class interest, the monarchy was to do what only the abolition of two monarchies, the republic, could do and had done. This was the philosopher's stone, to produce which the doctors of the party of Order racked their brains. As if the Legitimist monarchy could ever become the monarchy of the industrial bourgeois or the bourgeois monarchy ever become the monarchy of the hereditary landed aristocracy. As if landed property and industry could fraternize under one crown, when the crown could descend to only one head, the head of the elder brother or of the younger. As if industry could come to terms with landed property at all, so long as landed property itself does not decide to become industrial. If Henry V should die tomorrow, the Count of Paris would not on that account become the king of the Legitimists unless he ceased to be the king of the Orleanists. The philosophers of fusion, however, who became more vociferous in proportion as the question of revision came to the fore, who had provided themselves with an official daily organ in the *Assemblée Nationale*, and who are again at work even at this very moment (February, 1852), considered the whole difficulty to be due to the opposition and rivalry of the two dynasties. The attempts to reconcile the Orleans family with Henry V, begun since the death of Louis Philippe, but, like the dynastic intrigues generally, played at only while the National Assembly was in recess, during the entr'actes, behind the scenes — sentimental coquetry with the old superstition rather than seriously meant business — now became grand performances of state, enacted by the party of Order on the public stage, instead of in amateur theatricals as before. The couriers sped from Paris to Venice, from Venice to Claremont,¹ from Claremont to Paris. The Count of Chambord issues a manifesto in which "with the help of all the members of his family" he announces not his, but the "national" restoration. The Orleanist Salvandy throws himself at the feet of Henry V. The Legitimist chiefs, Berryer, Benoit d'Azy, Saint-Priest, travel to Claremont to persuade the Orleans set, but in vain. The fusionists perceive too late that the interests of the two bourgeois factions neither lose exclusiveness nor gain pliancy when they become accentuated in the form of family interests, the interests of two royal houses. If Henry V were to recognize the Count of Paris as his heir - the sole success that the fusion could achieve at best — the House of Orleans would not win any claim that the childlessness of Henry V had not already secured to it, but it would lose all the claims it had gained through the July Revolution. It would waive its original claims, all the titles it had wrested from the older branch of the Bourbons in almost a hundred years of struggle; it would barter away its historical prerogative, the prerogative of the modern kingdom, for the prerogative of its genealogical tree. The fusion, therefore, would be nothing but a voluntary abdication of the House of Orleans, its resignation to Legitimacy, repentant withdrawal from the Protestant state church into the Catholic. A withdrawal, moreover, that would not even bring it to the throne it had lost, but to the steps of the throne where it had been born. The old Orleanist

ministers, Guizot, Duchatel, etc., who likewise hastened to Claremont to advocate the fusion, in fact represented merely the Katzenjammer over the July Revolution, the despair about the bourgeois kingdom and the kingliness of the bourgeois, the superstitious belief in Legitimacy as the last charm against anarchy. Imagining themselves mediators between Orleans and Bourbons, they were in reality merely Orleanist renegades, and the Prince of Joinville received them as such. On the other hand, the viable, bellicose section of the Orleanists, Thiers, Baze, etc., convinced Louis Philippe's family all the more easily that if any directly monarchist restoration presupposed the fusion of the two dynasties, and if any such fusion presupposed abdication of the House of Orleans, it was, on the contrary, wholly in accord with the tradition of their forefathers to recognize the republic for the moment and wait until events permitted the conversion of the presidential chair into a throne. Rumors of Joinville's candidature were circulated, public curiosity was kept in suspense, and a few months later, in September, after the rejection of revision, his candidature was publicly proclaimed.

The attempt at a royalist fusion of Orleanists with Legitimists had thus not only failed; it had destroyed their *parliamentary fusion*, their common republican form, and had broken up the party of Order into its original component parts; but the more the estrangement between Claremont and Venice grew, the more their settlement collapsed and the Joinville agitation gained ground, so much the more eager and earnest became the negotiations between Bonaparte's minister Faucher and the Legitimists.

The disintegration of the party of Order did not stop at its original elements. Each of the two great factions, in its turn, decomposed all over again. It was as if all the old shadings that had formerly fought and jostled one another within each of the two circles, whether Legitimist or Orleanist, had thawed out again like dry Infusoria on contact with water, as if they had acquired anew sufficient vital energy to form groups of their own and independent antagonisms. The Legitimists dreamed they were back among the controversies between the Tuileries and the Pavillon Marsan, between Villèle and Polignac.² The Orleanists relived the golden days of the tourney between Guizot, Mole, Broglie, Thiers, and Odilon Barrot.

The section of the party of Order that was eager for revision, but was divided again on the limits to revisions — a section composed of the Legitimists led by Berryer and Falloux, on the one hand, and by La Rochejaquelein, on the other, and of the conflict-weary Orleanists led by Mole, Broglie, Montalembert and Odilon Barrot — agreed with the Bonapartist representatives on the following indefinite and broadly framed motion: "With the object of restoring to the nation the full exercise of its sovereignty, the undersigned representatives move that the constitution be revised."

At the same time, however, they unanimously declared through their reporter Tocqueville that the National Assembly had no right to move the *abolition of the republic*, that this right was vested solely in the Revising Chamber. For the rest, the constitution might be revised only in a "*legal*" manner, hence only if the constitutionally prescribed three-quarters of the number of votes were cast in favor of revision. On July 19, after six days of stormy debate, revision was rejected, as was to be anticipated. Four hundred and forty-six votes were cast for it, but two hundred and seventy-eight against. The extreme Orleanists, Thiers, Changarnier, etc., voted with the republicans and the Montagne.

Thus the majority of parliament declared against the constitution, but this constitution itself declared for the minority and that its vote was binding. But had not the party of Order subordinated the constitution to the parliamentary majority on May 31, 1850, and on June 13, 1849? Up to now, was not its whole policy based on the subordination of the paragraphs of the constitution to the decisions of the parliamentary majority? Had it not left to the democrats the antediluvian superstitious belief in the letter of the law, and castigated the democrats for it? At the present moment, however, revision of the constitution meant nothing but continuation of the presidential authority, just as continuation of the constitution meant nothing but Bonaparte's

deposition. Parliament had declared for him, but the constitution declared against parliament. He therefore acted in the sense of parliament when he tore up the constitution and acted in the sense of the constitution when he adjourned parliament.

Parliament had declared the constitution and, with the latter, its own rule to be “beyond the majority”; by its vote it had abolished the constitution and prolonged the term of presidential power, while declaring at the same time that neither could the one die nor the other live so long as the Assembly itself continued to exist. Those who were to bury it were standing at the door. While it debated on revision, Bonaparte removed General Baraguay d’Hilliers, who had proved irresolute, from the command of the First Army Division and appointed in his place General Magnan, the victor of Lyons,³ the hero of the December days, one of his creatures, who under Louis Philippe had already more or less compromised himself in Bonaparte’s favor on the occasion of the Boulogne expedition.

The party of Order proved by its decision on revision that it knew neither how to rule nor how to serve; neither how to live nor how to die; neither how to suffer the republic nor how to overthrow it; neither how to uphold the constitution nor how to throw it overboard; neither how to cooperate with the President nor how to break with him. To whom, then, did it look for the solution of all the contradictions? To the calendar, to the course of events. It ceased to presume to sway them. It therefore challenged events to assume sway over it, and thereby challenged the power to which, in the struggle against the people, it had surrendered one attribute after another until it stood impotent before this power. In order that the head of the executive power might be able the more undisturbedly to draw up his plan of campaign against it, strengthen his means of attack, select his tools, and fortify his positions, it resolved precisely at this critical moment to retire from the stage and adjourn for three months, from August 10 to November 4.

The parliamentary party was not only dissolved into its two great factions, each of these factions was not only split up within itself, but the party of Order in parliament had fallen out with the party of Order outside parliament. The spokesmen and scribes of the bourgeoisie, its platform and its press — in short, the ideologists of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie itself, the representatives and the represented — faced one another in estrangement and no longer understood one another.

The Legitimists in the provinces, with their limited horizon and unlimited enthusiasm, accused their parliamentary leaders, Berryer and Falloux, of deserting to the Bonapartist camp and of defection from Henry V. Their fleur-de-lis minds believed in the fall of man, but not in diplomacy.

Far more fateful and decisive was the breach of the commercial bourgeoisie with its politicians. It reproached them not as the Legitimists reproached theirs, with having abandoned their principles, but on the contrary, with clinging to principles that had become useless.

I have indicated above that since Fould’s entry into the ministry the section of the commercial bourgeoisie which had held the lion’s share of power under Louis Philippe, namely, the aristocracy of finance, had become Bonapartist. Fould not only represented Bonaparte’s interests in the Bourse, he represented at the same time the interests of the Bourse before Bonaparte. The position of the aristocracy of finance is most strikingly depicted in a passage from its European organ, the *London Economist*. In the issue of February 1, 1851, its Paris correspondent writes:

“Now we have it stated from numerous quarters that above all things France demands tranquillity. The President declares it in his message to the Legislative Assembly; it is echoed from the tribune; it is asserted in the journals; it is announced from the pulpit, it is demonstrated by the sensitiveness of the public funds at the least prospect of disturbance, and their firmness the instant it is made manifest that the executive is victorious.”

In its issue of November 29, 1851, the *Economist* declares in its own name:

“The President is the guardian of order, and is now recognized as such on every stock exchange of Europe.”

The aristocracy of finance, therefore, condemned the parliamentary struggle of the party of Order with the executive power as a disturbance of order, and celebrated every victory of the President over its ostensible representatives as a victory of order. By the aristocracy of finance must here be understood not merely the great loan promoters and speculators in public funds, in regard to whom it is immediately obvious that their interests coincide with the interests of the state power. All modern finance, the whole of the banking business, is interwoven in the closest fashion with public credit. A part of their business capital is necessarily invested and put out at interest in quickly convertible public funds. Their deposits, the capital placed at their disposal and distributed by them among merchants and industrialists, are partly derived from the dividends of holders of government securities. If in every epoch the stability of the state power signified Moses and the prophets to the entire money market and to the priests of this money market, why not all the more so today, when every deluge threatens to sweep away the old states, and the old state debts with them?

The industrial bourgeoisie too, in its fanaticism for order, was angered by the squabbles of the parliamentary party of Order with the executive power. After their vote of January 18 on the occasion of Changarnier's dismissal, Thiers, Angles, Sainte-Beuve, etc., received from their constituents, in precisely the industrial districts, public reproofs in which their coalition with the Montagne was especially scourged as high treason to order. If, as we have seen, the boastful taunts, the petty intrigues which marked the struggle of the party of Order with the President merited no better reception, then on the other hand this bourgeois party, which required its representatives to allow the military power to pass from its own parliament to an adventurous pretender without offering resistance, was not even worth the intrigues that were squandered in its interests. It proved that the struggle to maintain its public interests, its own class interests, its political power, only troubled and upset it, as it disturbed private business.

With barely an exception the bourgeois dignitaries of the departmental towns, the municipal authorities, the judges of the commercial courts, etc., everywhere received Bonaparte on his tours in the most servile manner, even when, as in Dijon, he made an unrestrained attack on the National Assembly, and especially on the party of Order.

When trade was good, as it still was at the beginning of 1851, the commercial bourgeoisie raged against any parliamentary struggle, lest trade be put out of humor. When trade was bad, as it continually was from the end of February, 1851, the commercial bourgeoisie accused the parliamentary struggles of being the cause of stagnation and cried out for them to stop so that trade could start again. The revision debates came on just in this bad period. Since the question here was whether the existing form of state was to be or not to be, the bourgeoisie felt all the more justified in demanding from its representatives the ending of this torturous provisional arrangement and at the same time the maintenance of the status quo. There was no contradiction in this. By the end of the provisional arrangement it understood precisely its continuation, the postponement to a distant future of the moment when a decision had to be reached. The status quo could be maintained in only two ways: prolongation of Bonaparte's authority or his constitutional retirement and the election of Cavaignac. A section of the bourgeoisie desired the latter solution and knew no better advice to give its representatives than to keep silent and leave the burning question untouched. They were of the opinion that if their representatives did not speak, Bonaparte would not act. They wanted an ostrich parliament that would hide its head in order to remain unseen. Another section of the bourgeoisie desired, because Bonaparte was already in the presidential chair, to leave him sitting in it, so that everything could remain in the same old rut. They were indignant because their parliament did not openly infringe the constitution and abdicate without ceremony.

The Department Councils, those provincial representative bodies of the big bourgeoisie, which met from August 25 on during the recess of the National Assembly, declared almost unanimously for revision, and thus against parliament and in favor of Bonaparte.

Still more unequivocally than in its falling out with its parliamentary representatives, the bourgeoisie displayed its wrath against its literary representatives, its own press. The sentences to ruinous fines and shameless terms of imprisonment, on the verdicts of bourgeois juries, for every attack of bourgeois journalists on Bonaparte's usurpationist desires, for every attempt of the press to defend the political rights of the bourgeoisie against the executive power, astonished not merely France, but all Europe.

While the parliamentary party of Order, by its clamor for tranquillity, as I have shown, committed itself to quiescence, while it declared the political rule of the bourgeoisie to be incompatible with the safety and existence of the bourgeoisie — by destroying with its own hands, in the struggle against the other classes of society, all the conditions for its own regime, the parliamentary regime — the extraparlimentary mass of the bourgeoisie, on the other hand, by its servility toward the President, by its vilification of parliament, by its brutal maltreatment of its own press, invited Bonaparte to suppress and annihilate its speaking and writing section, its politicians and its literati, its platform and its press, so it would then be able to pursue its private affairs with full confidence in the protection of a strong and unrestricted government. It declared unequivocally that it longed to get rid of its own political rule in order to get rid of the troubles and dangers of ruling.

And this extraparlimentary bourgeoisie, which had already rebelled against the purely parliamentary and literary struggle for the rule of its own class, and had betrayed the leaders of this struggle, now dares after the event to indict the proletariat for not having risen in a bloody struggle, a life-and-death struggle on its behalf! This bourgeoisie, which every moment sacrificed its general class interests, that is, its political interests, to the narrowest and most sordid private interests, and demanded a similar sacrifice from its representatives, now moans that the proletariat has sacrificed its ideal political interests to its material interests. It poses as a lovely creature that has been misunderstood and deserted in the decisive hour by the proletariat, misled by socialists. And it finds a general echo in the bourgeois world. Naturally, I do not speak here of German shyster politicians and riff-raff of the same persuasion. I refer, for example, to the already quoted Economist, which as late as November 29, 1851, that is, four days prior to the coup d'état, declared Bonaparte to be the "guardian of order" but Thiers and Berryer to be "anarchists," and on December 27, 1851, after Bonaparte had quieted these "anarchists," is already vociferous about the treason to "the skill, knowledge, discipline, spiritual insight, intellectual resources, and moral weight of the middle and upper ranks" committed by the masses of "ignorant, untrained, and stupid proletaires." The stupid, ignorant, and vulgar mass was none other than the bourgeois mass itself.

In the year 1851, France, to be sure, had passed through a kind of minor trade crisis. The end of February showed a decline in exports compared with 1850; in March trade suffered and factories closed down; in April the position of the industrial departments appeared as desperate as after the February days; in May business had still not revived; as late as June 28 the holdings of the Bank of France showed, by the enormous growth of deposits and the equally great decrease in advances on bills of exchange, that production was at a standstill, and it was not until the middle of October that a progressive improvement of business again set in. The French bourgeoisie attributed this trade stagnation to purely political causes, to the struggle between parliament and the executive power, to the precariousness of a merely provisional form of state, to the terrifying prospect of the second Sunday in May of 1852. I will not deny that all these circumstances had a depressing effect on some branches of industry in Paris and the departments. But in any case the influence of political conditions was only local and inconsiderable. Does this require further proof than the fact that the improvement of trade set in toward the middle of October, at the very moment when

the political situation grew worse, the political horizon darkened, and a thunderbolt from Elysium was expected at any moment? For the rest, the French bourgeois, whose “skill, knowledge, spiritual insight, and intellectual resources” reach no further than his nose, could throughout the period of the Industrial Exhibition in London⁴ have found the cause of his commercial misery right under his nose. While in France factories were closed down, in England commercial bankruptcies broke out. While in April and May the industrial panic reached a climax in France, in April and May the commercial panic reached a climax in England. Like the French woolen industry, the English woolen industry suffered, and as French silk manufacture, so did English silk manufacture. True, the English cotton mills continued working, but no longer at the same profits as in 1849 and 1850. The only difference was that the crisis in France was industrial, in England commercial; that while in France the factories stood idle, in England they extended operations, but under less favorable conditions than in preceding years; that in France it was exports, in England imports which were hardest hit. The common cause, which is naturally not to be sought within the bounds of the French political horizon, was obvious. The years 1849 and 1850 were years of the greatest material prosperity and of an overproduction that appeared as such only in 1851. At the beginning of this year it was given a further special impetus by the prospect of the Industrial Exhibition. In addition there were the following special circumstances: first, the partial failure of the cotton crop in 1850 and 1851, then the certainty of a bigger cotton crop than had been expected; first the rise, then the sudden fall — in short, the fluctuations in the price of cotton. The crop of raw silk, in France at least, had turned out to be even below the average yield. Woolen manufacture, finally, had expanded so much since 1848 that the production of wool could not keep pace with it and the price of raw wool rose out of all proportion to the price of woolen manufactures. Here, then, in the raw material of three industries for the world market, we already have three-fold material for a stagnation in trade. Apart from these special circumstances, the apparent crisis of 1851 was nothing else but the halt which overproduction and overspeculation invariably make in completing the industrial cycle, before they summon all their strength in order to rush feverishly through the final phase of this cycle and arrive once more at their starting point, the general trade crisis. During such intervals in the history of trade, commercial bankruptcies break out in England, while in France industry itself is reduced to idleness, partly forced into retreat by the competition, just then becoming intolerable, of the English in all markets, and partly singled out for attack as a luxury industry by every business stagnation. Thus besides the general crisis France goes through national trade crises of her own, which are nevertheless determined and conditioned far more by the general state of the world market than by French local influences. It will not be without interest to contrast the judgment of the English bourgeois with the prejudice of the French bourgeois. In its annual trade report for 1851, one of the largest Liverpool houses writes:

“Few years have more thoroughly belied the anticipations formed at their commencement than the one just closed; instead of the great prosperity which was almost unanimously looked for it has proved one of the most discouraging that has been seen for the last quarter of a century — this, of course, refers to the mercantile, not to the manufacturing classes. And yet there certainly were grounds for anticipating the reverse at the beginning of the year — stocks of produce were moderate, money was abundant, and food was cheap, a plentiful harvest well secured, unbroken peace on the Continent, and no political or fiscal disturbances at home; indeed, the wings of commerce were never more unfettered.... To what source, then, is this disastrous result to be attributed? We believe to overtrading in both imports and exports. Unless our merchants will put more stringent limits to their freedom of action, nothing but a triennial panic can keep us in check.”

Now picture to yourself the French bourgeois, how in the throes of this business panic his trade-crazy brain is tortured, set in a whirl, and stunned by rumors of coups d’etat and the restoration of

universal suffrage, by the struggle between parliament and the executive power, by the Fronde war between Orleanists and Legitimists, by the communist conspiracies in the south of France, by alleged Jacqueries in the departments of Nièvre and Cher, by the advertisements of the different candidates for the presidency, by the cheapjack solutions offered by the journals, by the threats of the republicans to uphold the constitution and universal suffrage by force of arms, by the gospel-preaching emigre heroes *in partibus*, who announced that the world would come to an end on the second Sunday in May, 1852 — think of all this and you will comprehend why in this unspeakable, deafening chaos of fusion, revision, prorogation, constitution, conspiracy, coalition, emigration, usurpation, and revolution, the bourgeois madly snorts at his parliamentary republic:

“Rather an end with terror than terror without end!”

Bonaparte understood this cry. His power of comprehension was sharpened by the growing turbulence of creditors, who with each sunset which brought settling day, the second Sunday in May, 1852, nearer, saw a movement of the stars protesting their earthly bills of exchange. They had become veritable astrologers. The National Assembly had blighted Bonaparte’s hopes of a constitutional prolongation of his authority; the candidature of the Prince of Joinville forbade further vacillation.

If ever an event has, well in advance of its coming, cast its shadow before, it was Bonaparte’s coup d’état. As early as January 29, 1849, barely a month after his election, he had made a proposal about it to Changarnier. In the summer of 1849 his own Prime Minister, Odilon Barrot, had covertly denounced the policy of coups d’état; in the winter of 1850 Thiers had openly done so. In May, 1851, Persigny had sought once more to win Changarnier for the coup; the *Messenger de l’Assemblée* had published an account of these negotiations. During every parliamentary storm the Bonapartist journals threatened a coup d’état, and the nearer the crisis drew, the louder their tone became. In the orgies that Bonaparte kept up every night with men and women of the “swell mob,” as soon as the hour of midnight approached and copious potations had loosened tongues and fired imaginations, the coup d’état was fixed for the following morning. Swords were drawn, glasses clinked, the representatives were thrown out the window, the imperial mantle fell upon Bonaparte’s shoulders, until the following morning banished the ghost once more and astonished Paris learned, from vestals of little reticence and from indiscreet paladins, of the danger it had once again escaped. During the months of September and October rumors of a coup d’état followed fast, one after the other. Simultaneously the shadow took on color, like a variegated daguerreotype. Look up the September and October copies of the organs of the European daily press and you will find, word for word, intimations like the following: “Paris is full of rumors of a coup d’état. The capital is to be filled with troops during the night, and the next morning is to bring decrees which will dissolve the National Assembly, declare the Department of the Seine in a state of siege, restore universal suffrage, and appeal to the people. Bonaparte is said to be seeking ministers for the execution of these illegal decrees.” The dispatches that bring these tidings always end with the fateful word “postponed.” The coup d’état was ever the fixed idea of Bonaparte. With this idea he had again set foot on French soil. He was so obsessed by it that he continually betrayed it and blurted it out. He was so weak that, just as continually, he gave it up again. The shadow of the coup d’état had become so familiar to the Parisians as a specter that they were not willing to believe in it when it finally appeared in the flesh. What allowed the coup d’état to succeed was therefore neither the reticent reserve of the chief of the Society of December 10 nor the fact that the National Assembly was caught unawares. If it succeeded, it succeeded despite its indiscretion and with its foreknowledge, a necessary, inevitable result of antecedent developments.

On October 10 Bonaparte announced to his ministers his decision to restore universal suffrage; on the sixteenth they handed in their resignations; on the twenty-sixth Paris learned of the formation of the Thorigny Ministry. Police Prefect Carlier was simultaneously replaced by Maupas; the

head of the First Military Division, Magnan, concentrated the most reliable regiments in the capital. On November 4 the National Assembly resumed its sessions. It had nothing better to do than to recapitulate in a short, succinct form the course it had gone through and to prove that it was buried only after it had died.

The first post it forfeited in the struggle with the executive power was the ministry. It had solemnly to admit this loss by accepting at full value the Thorigny Ministry, a mere shadow cabinet. The Permanent Commission had received M. Giraud with laughter when he presented himself in the name of the new ministers. Such a weak ministry for such strong measures as the restoration of universal suffrage! Yet the precise object was to get nothing through in parliament, but everything against parliament.

On the very first day of its reopening, the National Assembly received the message from Bonaparte in which he demanded the restoration of universal suffrage and the abolition of the law of May 31, 1850. The same day his ministers introduced a decree to this effect. The National Assembly at once rejected the ministry's motion of urgency and rejected the law itself on November 13 by three hundred and fifty-five votes to three hundred and forty-eight. Thus, it tore up its mandate once more; it once more confirmed the fact that it had transformed itself from the freely elected representatives of the people into the usurpatory parliament of a class; it acknowledged once more that it had itself cut in two the muscles which connected the parliamentary head with the body of the nation.

If by its motion to restore universal suffrage the executive power appealed from the National Assembly to the people, the legislative power appealed by its Quaestors' Bill from the people to the army. This Quaestors' Bill was to establish its right of directly requisitioning troops, of forming a parliamentary army. While it thus designated the army as the arbitrator between itself and the people, between itself and Bonaparte, while it recognized the army as the decisive state power, it had to confirm, on the other hand, the fact that it had long given up its claim to dominate this power. By debating its right to requisition troops, instead of requisitioning them at once, it betrayed its doubts about its own powers. By rejecting the Quaestors' Bill, it made public confession of its impotence. This bill was defeated, its proponents lacking a hundred and eight votes of a majority. The Montagne thus decided the issue. It found itself in the position of Buridan's ass — not, indeed, between two bundles of hay with the problem of deciding which was the more attractive, but between two showers of blows with the problem of deciding which was the harder. On the one hand, there was the fear of Changarnier; on the other, the fear of Bonaparte. It must be confessed that the position was not a heroic one.

On November 18 an amendment was moved to the law on municipal elections introduced by the party of Order, to the effect that instead of three years', one year's domicile should suffice for municipal electors. The amendment was lost by a single vote, but this one vote immediately proved to be a mistake. By splitting up into its hostile factions, the party of Order had long ago forfeited its independent parliamentary majority. It showed now that there was no longer any majority at all in parliament. The National Assembly had become incapable of transacting business. Its atomic constituents were no longer held together by any force of cohesion; it had drawn its last breath; it was dead.

Finally, a few days before the catastrophe, the extra-parliamentary mass of the bourgeoisie was solemnly to confirm once more its breach with the bourgeoisie in parliament. Thiers, as a parliamentary hero infected more than the rest with the incurable disease of parliamentary cretinism, had, after the death of parliament, hatched out, together with the Council of State, a new parliamentary intrigue, a Responsibility Law by which the President was to be firmly held within the limits of the constitution. Just as, on laying the foundation stone of the new market halls in Paris on September 15, Bonaparte, like a second Masaniello, had enchanted the *dames des balles*, the fishwives - to be sure, one fishwife outweighed seventeen burghers in real power - just as after the introduction of the Quaestors' Bill he enraptured the lieutenants whom he

regaled in the Elysee, so now, on November 25, he swept off their feet the industrial bourgeoisie, which had gathered at the circus to receive at his hands prize medals for the London Industrial Exhibition.

I shall give the significant portion of his speech as reported in the *Journal des Débats*:

“‘With such unhopd-for successes, I am justified in reiterating how great the French Republic would be if it were permitted to pursue its real interests and reform its institutions, instead of being constantly disturbed by demagogues, on the one hand, and by monarchist hallucinations, on the other.’ (Loud, stormy and repeated applause from every part of the amphitheater.) ‘The monarchist hallucinations hinder all progress and all important branches of industry. In place of progress nothing but struggle. One sees men who were formerly the most zealous supporters of the royal authority and prerogative become partisans of a Convention merely in order to weaken the authority that has sprung from universal suffrage.’ (Loud and repeated applause.) ‘We see men who have suffered most from the Revolution, and have deplored it most, provoke a new one, and merely in order to fetter the nation’s will.... I promise you tranquillity for the future,’ etc., etc. (Bravo, bravo, a storm of bravos.)”

Thus the industrial bourgeoisie applauds with servile bravos the coup d’etat of December 2, the annihilation of parliament, the downfall of its own rule, the dictatorship of Bonaparte. The thunder of applause on November 25 had its answer in the thunder of cannon on December 4,⁵ and it was on the house of Monsieur Sallandrouze, who had clapped most, that they clapped most of the bombs.

Cromwell, when he dissolved the Long Parliament, went alone into its midst, took out his watch so that it should not continue to exist a minute after the time limit he had fixed, and drove out each one of the members of Parliament with hilariously humorous taunts. Napoleon, smaller than his prototype, at least betook himself on the eighteenth Brumaire to the legislative body and read out to it, though in a faltering voice, its sentence of death. The second Bonaparte, who, moreover, found himself in possession of an executive power very different from that of Cromwell or Napoleon, sought his model not in the annals of world history but in the annals of the Society of December 10, in the annals of the criminal courts. He robs the Bank of France of twenty-five million francs, buys General Magnan with a million, the soldiers with fifteen francs apiece and liquor, comes together with his accomplices secretly like a thief in the night, has the houses of the most dangerous parliamentary leaders broken into, and Cavaignac, Lamoricière, Le Flô, Changarnier, Charras, Thiers, Baze, etc., dragged from their beds and put in prison, the chief squares of Paris and the parliamentary building occupied by troops, and cheapjack placards posted early in the morning on all the walls, proclaiming the dissolution of the National Assembly and the Council of State, the restoration of universal suffrage, and the placing of the Seine Department in a state of siege. In like manner he inserted a little later in the *Moniteur* a false document which asserted that influential parliamentarians had grouped themselves around him and formed a state consulta.

The rump parliament, assembled in the mairie building of the Tenth Arrondissement and consisting mainly of Legitimists and Orleanists, votes the deposition of Bonaparte amid repeated cries of “Long live the Republic,” unfailingly harangues the gaping crowds before the building, and is finally led off in the custody of African sharpshooters, first to the d’Orsay barracks, and later packed into prison vans and transported to the prisons of Mazas, Ham, and Vincennes. Thus ended the party of Order, the Legislative Assembly, and the February Revolution.

Before hastening to close, let us briefly summarize the latter’s history:

1. First period. From February 24 to May 4, 1848. February period. Prologue. Universal-brotherhood swindle.

2. Second period. Period of constituting the republic and of the Constituent National Assembly.

a. **May 4 to June 25, 1848.** Struggle of all classes against the proletariat. Defeat of the proletariat in the June days.

b. **June 25 to December 10, 1848.** Dictatorship of the pure bourgeois republicans. Drafting of the constitution. Proclamation of a state of siege in Paris. The bourgeois dictatorship set aside on December 10 by the election of Bonaparte as President.

c. **December 20, 1848, to May 28, 1849.** Struggle of the Constituent Assembly with Bonaparte and with the party of Order in alliance with him. Passing of the Constituent Assembly. Fall of the republican bourgeoisie.

3. Third period. Period of the constitutional republic and of the Legislative National Assembly.

a. **May 28, 1849, to June 13, 1849.** Struggle of the petty bourgeoisie with the bourgeoisie and with Bonaparte. Defeat of the petty-bourgeois democracy.

b. **June 13, 1849, to May 31, 1850.** Parliamentary dictatorship of the party of Order. It completes its rule by abolishing universal suffrage, but loses the parliamentary ministry.

c. **May 31, 1850, to December 2, 1851.** Struggle between the parliamentary bourgeoisie and Bonaparte.

(1) **May 31, 1850, to January 12, 1851.** The Assembly loses the supreme command of the army.

(2) **January 12 to April 11, 1851.** It is worsted in its attempts to regain the administrative power. The party of Order loses its independent parliamentary majority. It forms a coalition with the republicans and the Montagne.

(3) **April 11, 1851, to October 9, 1851.** Attempts at revision, fusion, prorogation. The party of Order decomposes into its separate constituents. The breach between the bourgeois parliament and press and the mass of the bourgeoisie becomes definite.

(4) **October 9 to December 2, 1851.** Open breach between parliament and the executive power. The Assembly performs its dying act and succumbs, left in the lurch by its own class, by the army, and by all the remaining classes. Passing of the parliamentary regime and of bourgeois rule. Victory of Bonaparte. Parody of restoration of empire.

¹ In the 1850s, the Count of Chambord, the Legitimist pretender to the French throne, lived in Venice.

² The reference is to tactical disagreements in the Legitimist camp during the Restoration period. Louis XVIII and Villele favoured a more cautious introduction of reactionary measures while the Count d'Artois (King Charles X from 1824) and Polignac ignored the actual situation in France and advocated the complete restoration of the pre-revolutionary regime.

The Tuileries Palace in Paris was Louis XVIII's residence.

The Pavillon Marsan, one of the wings of the Palace, was the residence of the Count d'Artois during the Restoration.

³ General Magnan directed the suppression of the armed uprising of workers and artisans in Lyons on June 15, 1849

⁴ The Great Exhibition in London, from May to October 1851, was the first world trade and industrial exhibition.

⁵ On December 4, 1851 government troops commanded by Bonapartist generals suppressed a republican uprising directed against the coup d'état in Paris. The uprising was led by a group of Left-

wing deputies of the Legislative Assembly and leaders of workers' corporations and secret societies. Employing cannon, the government troops destroyed the barricades erected by the defenders of the Republic. While fighting the insurgents, drunken soldiers and officers fired at passers-by, at customers in cafés and at spectators at windows and balconies. Several bourgeois mansions were also damaged in this Bonapartist terror.

VII

The social republic appeared as a phrase, as a prophecy, on the threshold of the February Revolution. In the June days of 1848, it was drowned in the blood of the Paris proletariat, but it haunts the subsequent acts of the drama like a ghost. The democratic republic announces its appearance. It is dissipated on June 13, 1849, together with its deserting petty bourgeois, but in its flight it redoubles its boastfulness. The parliamentary republic together with the bourgeoisie takes possession of the entire state; it enjoys its existence to the full, but December 2, 1851, buries it to the accompaniment of the anguished cry of the coalesced royalists: “Long live the Republic!”

The French bourgeoisie balked at the domination of the working proletariat; it has brought the lumpen proletariat¹ to domination, with the Chief of the Society of December 10 at the head. The bourgeoisie kept France in breathless fear of the future terrors of red anarchy – Bonaparte discounted this future for it when, on December 4, he had the eminent bourgeois of the Boulevard Montmartre and the Boulevard des Italiens shot down at their windows by the drunken army of law and order. The bourgeoisie apotheosized the sword; the sword rules it. It destroyed the revolutionary press; its own press is destroyed. It placed popular meetings under police surveillance; its salons are placed under police supervision. It disbanded the democratic National Guard, its own National Guard is disbanded. It imposed a state of siege; a state of siege is imposed upon it. It supplanted the juries by military commissions; its juries are supplanted by military commissions. It subjected public education to the sway of the priests; the priests subject it to their own education. It jailed people without trial, it is being jailed without trial. It suppressed every stirring in society by means of state power; every stirring in its society is suppressed by means of state power. Out of enthusiasm for its moneybags it rebelled against its own politicians and literary men; its politicians and literary men are swept aside, but its moneybag is being plundered now that its mouth has been gagged and its pen broken. The bourgeoisie never tired of crying out to the revolution what St. Arsenius cried out to the Christians: “*Fuge, tace, quiesce!*” [“Flee, be silent, keep still!”] Bonaparte cries to the bourgeoisie: “*Fuge, tace, quiesce!*”

The French bourgeoisie had long ago found the solution to Napoleon’s dilemma: “In fifty years Europe will be republican or Cossack.” It solved it in the “Cossack republic.” No Circe using black magic has distorted that work of art, the bourgeois republic, into a monstrous shape. That republic has lost nothing but the semblance of respectability. Present-day France was already contained in the parliamentary republic. It required only a bayonet thrust for the bubble to burst and the monster to leap forth before our eyes.

Why did the Paris proletariat not rise in revolt after December 2?

The overthrow of the bourgeoisie had as yet been only decreed; the decree was not carried out. Any serious insurrection of the proletariat would at once have put new life into the bourgeoisie, reconciled it with the army, and insured a second June defeat for the workers.

On December 4 the proletariat was incited by bourgeois and shopkeeper to fight. On the evening of that day several legions of the National Guard promised to appear, armed and uniformed, on the scene of battle. For the bourgeois and the shopkeeper had learned that in one of his decrees of December 2 Bonaparte had abolished the secret ballot and had ordered them to put a “yes” or “no” after their names on the official registers. The resistance of December 4 intimidated Bonaparte. During the night he had placards posted on all the street corners of Paris announcing the restoration of the secret ballot. The bourgeois and the shopkeeper believed they had gained their objective. Those who failed to appear next morning were the bourgeois and the shopkeeper.

By a *coup de main* the night of December 1-2 Bonaparte had robbed the Paris proletariat of its leaders, the barricade commanders. An army without officers, averse to fighting under the banner of the Montagnards because of the memories of June, 1848 and 1849, and May, 1850, it left to its

vanguard, the secret societies, the task of saving the insurrectionary honor of Paris, which the bourgeoisie had surrendered to the military so unresistingly that, subsequently, Bonaparte could disarm the National Guard with the sneering motive of his fear that its weapons would be turned against it by the anarchists!

“This is the complete and final triumph of socialism!” Thus Guizot characterized December 2. But if the overthrow of the parliamentary republic contains within itself the germ of the triumph of the proletarian revolution, its immediate and obvious result was Bonaparte’s victory over parliament, of the executive power over the legislative power, of force without phrases over the force of phrases. In parliament the nation made its general will the law; that is, it made the law of the ruling class its general will. It renounces all will of its own before the executive power and submits itself to the superior command of an alien, of authority. The executive power, in contrast to the legislative one, expresses the heteronomy of a nation in contrast to its autonomy. France therefore seems to have escaped the despotism of a class only to fall back under the despotism of an individual, and what is more, under the authority of an individual without authority. The struggle seems to be settled in such a way that all classes, equally powerless and equally mute, fall on their knees before the rifle butt.

But the revolution is thoroughgoing. It is still traveling through purgatory. It does its work methodically. By December 2, 1851, it had completed half of its preparatory work; now it is completing the other half. It first completed the parliamentary power in order to be able to overthrow it. Now that it has achieved this, it completes the executive power, reduces it to its purest expression, isolates it, sets it up against itself as the sole target, in order to concentrate all its forces of destruction against it. And when it has accomplished this second half of its preliminary work, Europe will leap from its seat and exult: Well burrowed, old mole!²

The executive power with its enormous bureaucratic and military organization, with its wide-ranging and ingenious state machinery, with a host of officials numbering half a million, besides an army of another half million – this terrifying parasitic body which enmeshes the body of French society and chokes all its pores sprang up in the time of the absolute monarchy, with the decay of the feudal system which it had helped to hasten. The seignorial privileges of the landowners and towns became transformed into so many attributes of the state power, the feudal dignitaries into paid officials, and the motley patterns of conflicting medieval plenary powers into the regulated plan of a state authority whose work is divided and centralized as in a factory.

The *first* French Revolution, with its task of breaking all separate local, territorial, urban, and provincial powers in order to create the civil unity of the nation, was bound to develop what the monarchy had begun, centralization, but at the same time the limits, the attributes, and the agents of the governmental power. Napoleon completed this state machinery. The Legitimate Monarchy and the July Monarchy added nothing to it but a greater division of labor, increasing at the same rate as the division of labor inside the bourgeois society created new groups of interests, and therefore new material for the state administration. Every common interest was immediately severed from the society, countered by a higher, general interest, snatched from the activities of society’s members themselves and made an object of government activity – from a bridge, a schoolhouse, and the communal property of a village community, to the railroads, the national wealth, and the national University of France. Finally the parliamentary republic, in its struggle against the revolution, found itself compelled to strengthen the means and the centralization of governmental power with repressive measures. ***All revolutions perfected this machine instead of breaking it.*** The parties, which alternately contended for domination, regarded the possession of this huge state structure as the chief spoils of the victor.

But under the absolute monarchy, during the first Revolution, and under Napoleon the bureaucracy was only the means of preparing the class rule of the bourgeoisie. Under the Restoration, under Louis Philippe, under the parliamentary republic, it was the instrument of the ruling class, however much it strove for power of its own.

Only under the second Bonaparte does the state seem to have made itself completely independent. The state machinery has so strengthened itself vis-à-vis civil society that the Chief of the Society of December 10 suffices for its head – an adventurer dropped in from abroad, raised on the shoulders of a drunken soldiery which he bought with whisky and sausages and to which he has to keep throwing more sausages. Hence the low-spirited despair, the feeling of monstrous humiliation and degradation that oppresses the breast of France and makes her gasp. She feels dishonored.

And yet the state power is not suspended in the air. Bonaparte represented a class, and the most numerous class of French society at that, the small-holding peasants.

Just as the Bourbons were the dynasty of the big landed property and the Orleans the dynasty of money, so the Bonapartes are the dynasty of the peasants, that is, the French masses. The chosen of the peasantry is not the Bonaparte who submitted to the bourgeois parliament but the Bonaparte who dismissed the bourgeois parliament. For three years the towns had succeeded in falsifying the meaning of the December 10 election and in cheating the peasants out of the restoration of the Empire. The election of December 10, 1848, has been consummated only by the coup d'état of December 2, 1851.

The small-holding peasants form an enormous mass whose members live in similar conditions but without entering into manifold relations with each other. Their mode of production isolates them from one another instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse. The isolation is furthered by France's poor means of communication and the poverty of the peasants. Their field of production, the small holding, permits no division of labor in its cultivation, no application of science, and therefore no multifariousness of development, no diversity of talent, no wealth of social relationships. Each individual peasant family is almost self-sufficient, directly produces most of its consumer needs, and thus acquires its means of life more through an exchange with nature than in intercourse with society. A small holding, the peasant and his family; beside it another small holding, another peasant and another family. A few score of these constitute a village, and a few score villages constitute a department. Thus the great mass of the French nation is formed by the simple addition of homologous magnitudes, much as potatoes in a sack form a sack of potatoes. Insofar as millions of families live under conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests, and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class. Insofar as there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests forms no community, no national bond, and no political organization among them, they do not constitute a class. They are therefore incapable of asserting their class interest in their own name, whether through a parliament or a convention. They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented. Their representative must at the same time appear as their master, as an authority over them, an unlimited governmental power which protects them from the other classes and sends them rain and sunshine from above. The political influence of the small-holding peasants, therefore, finds its final expression in the executive power which subordinates society to itself.

Historical tradition gave rise to the French peasants' belief in the miracle that a man named Napoleon would bring all glory back to them. And there turned up an individual who claims to be that man because he bears the name Napoleon, in consequence of the Code Napoleon, which decrees: "Inquiry into paternity is forbidden." After a twenty-year vagabondage and a series of grotesque adventures the legend is consummated, and the man becomes Emperor of the French. The fixed idea of the nephew was realized because it coincided with the fixed idea of the most numerous class of the French people.

But, it may be objected, what about the peasant uprisings in half of France,³ the raids of the army on the peasants, the mass incarceration and transportation of the peasants?

Since Louis XIV, France has experienced no similar persecution of the peasants “on account of demagogic agitation.”⁴

But let us not misunderstand. The Bonaparte dynasty represents not the revolutionary, but the conservative peasant; not the peasant who strikes out beyond the condition of his social existence, the small holding, but rather one who wants to consolidate his holding; not the countryfolk who in alliance with the towns want to overthrow the old order through their own energies, but on the contrary those who, in solid seclusion within this old order, want to see themselves and their small holdings saved and favored by the ghost of the Empire. It represents not the enlightenment but the superstition of the peasant; not his judgment but his prejudice; not his future but his past; not his modern Cevennes but his modern Vendée.⁵ The three years’ stern rule of the parliamentary republic freed a part of the French peasants from the Napoleonic illusion and revolutionized them, even though superficially; but the bourgeoisie violently repulsed them as often as they set themselves in motion. Under the parliamentary republic the modern and the traditional consciousness of the French peasant contended for mastery. The process took the form of an incessant struggle between the schoolmasters and the priests. The bourgeoisie struck down the schoolmasters. The peasants for the first time made efforts to behave independently vis-à-vis the government. This was shown in the continual conflict between the mayors and the prefects. The bourgeoisie deposed the mayors. Finally, during the period of the parliamentary republic, the peasants of different localities rose against their own offspring, the army. The bourgeoisie punished these peasants with sieges and executions. And this same bourgeoisie now cries out against the stupidity of the masses, the vile multitude that betrayed it to Bonaparte. The bourgeoisie itself has violently strengthened the imperialism of the peasant class; it has preserved the conditions that form the birthplaces of this species of peasant religion. The bourgeoisie, in truth, is bound to fear the stupidity of the masses so long as they remain conservative, and the insight of the masses as soon as they become revolutionary.

In the uprisings after the coup d’état, a part of the French peasants protested, arms in hand, against their own vote of December 10, 1848. The school they had gone to since 1848 had sharpened their wits. But they had inscribed themselves in the historical underworld; history held them to their word, and the majority was still so implicated that precisely in the reddest departments the peasant population voted openly for Bonaparte. In their view, the National Assembly had hindered his progress. He has now merely broken the fetters that the towns had imposed on the will of the countryside. In some parts the peasants even entertained the grotesque notion of a convention with Napoleon.

After the first Revolution had transformed the semi-feudal peasants into freeholders, Napoleon confirmed and regulated the conditions in which they could exploit undisturbed the soil of France which they had only just acquired, and could slake their youthful passion for property. But what is now ruining the French peasant is his small holding itself, the division of the land and the soil, the property form which Napoleon consolidated in France. It is exactly these material conditions which made the feudal peasant a small-holding peasant and Napoleon an emperor. Two generations sufficed to produce the unavoidable result: progressive deterioration of agriculture and progressive indebtedness of the agriculturist. The “Napoleonic” property form, which at the beginning of the nineteenth century was the condition of the emancipation and enrichment of the French countryfolk, has developed in the course of this century into the law of their enslavement and their pauperism. And just this law is the first of the “Napoleonic ideas” which the second Bonaparte has to uphold. If he still shares with the peasants the illusion that the cause of their ruin is to be sought not in the small holdings themselves but outside them – in the influence of secondary circumstances – his experiments will shatter like soap bubbles when they come in contact with the relations of production.

The economic development of small-holding property has radically changed the peasants’ relations with the other social classes. Under Napoleon the fragmentation of the land in the

countryside supplemented free competition and the beginning of big industry in the towns. The peasant class was the ubiquitous protest against the recently overthrown landed aristocracy. The roots that small-holding property struck in French soil deprived feudalism of all nourishment. The landmarks of this property formed the natural fortification of the bourgeoisie against any surprise attack by its old overlords. But in the course of the nineteenth century the urban usurer replaced the feudal one, the mortgage replaced the feudal obligation, bourgeois capital replaced aristocratic landed property. The peasant's small holding is now only the pretext that allows the capitalist to draw profits, interest, and rent from the soil, while leaving it to the agriculturist himself to see to it how he can extract his wages. The mortgage debt burdening the soil of France imposes on the French peasantry an amount of interest equal to the annual interest on the entire British national debt. Small-holding property, in this enslavement by capital toward which its development pushes it unavoidably, has transformed the mass of the French nation into troglodytes. Sixteen million peasants (including women and children) dwell in caves, a large number of which have but one opening, others only two and the most favored only three. Windows are to a house what the five senses are to the head. The bourgeois order, which at the beginning of the century set the state to stand guard over the newly emerged small holdings and fertilized them with laurels, has become a vampire that sucks the blood from their hearts and brains and casts them into the alchemist's caldron of capital. The *Code Napoléon* is now nothing but the codex of restraints, of forced sales and compulsory auctions. To the four million (including children, etc.) officially recognized paupers, vagabonds, criminals, and prostitutes in France must be added another five million who hover on the margin of existence and either have their haunts in the countryside itself or, with their rags and their children, continually desert the countryside for the towns and the towns for the countryside. Therefore the interests of the peasants are no longer, as under Napoleon, in accord with, but are now in opposition to bourgeois interests, to capital. Hence they find their natural ally and leader in the urban proletariat, whose task it is to overthrow the bourgeois order. But "strong and unlimited government" - and this is the second "Napoleonic idea" that the second Napoleon has to carry out - is called upon to defend this "material order" by force. This "material order" also serves, in all Bonaparte's proclamations, as the slogan against the rebellious peasants.

In addition to the mortgage which capital imposes on it, the small holding is burdened by taxes. Taxes are the life source of the bureaucracy, the army, the priests, and the court - in short, of the entire apparatus of the executive power. Strong government and heavy taxes are identical. By its very nature, small-holding property forms a basis for an all-powerful and numberless bureaucracy. It creates a uniform level of personal and economic relationships over the whole extent of the country. Hence it also permits uniform action from a supreme center on all points of this uniform mass. It destroys the aristocratic intermediate steps between the mass of the people and the power of the state. On all sides, therefore, it calls forth the direct intrusion of this state power and the interposition of its immediate organs. Finally, it produces an unemployed surplus population which can find no place either on the land or in the towns and which perforce reaches out for state offices as a sort of respectable alms, and provokes the creation of additional state positions. By the new markets which he opened with bayonets, and by the plundering of the Continent, Napoleon repaid the compulsory taxes with interest. These taxes were a spur to the industry of the peasant, whereas now they rob his industry of its last resources and complete his defenselessness against pauperism. An enormous bureaucracy, well gallooned and well fed, is the "Napoleonic idea" which is most congenial to the second Bonaparte. How could it be otherwise, considering that alongside the actual classes of society, he is forced to create an artificial caste for which the maintenance of his regime becomes a bread-and-butter question? Hence one of his first financial operations was the raising of officials' salaries to their old level and the creation of new sinecures.

Another "*idée napoléonienne*" [Napoleonic idea] is the domination of the priests as an instrument of government. But while at the time of their emergence the small-holding owners, in their accord

with society, in their dependence on natural forces and submission to the authority which protected them from above, were naturally religious, now that they are ruined by debts, at odds with society and authority, and driven beyond their own limitations, they have become naturally irreligious.

Heaven was quite a pleasing addition to the narrow strip of land just won, especially as it makes the weather; it becomes an insult as soon as it is thrust forward as a substitute for the small holding. The priest then appears as only the anointed bloodhound of the earthly police – another “*idée napoléonienne*.” The expedition against Rome will take place in France itself next time, but in a sense opposite from that of M. de Montalembert.

Finally, the culminating “*idée napoléonienne*” is the ascendancy of the army. The army was the “*point d’honneur*” of the small-holding peasants, it was they themselves transformed into heroes, defending their new possessions against the outer world, glorifying their recently won nationhood, plundering and revolutionizing the world. The uniform was their own state costume; war was their poetry; the small holding, enlarged and rounded off in imagination, was their fatherland, and patriotism the ideal form of the sense of property. But the enemies whom the French peasant now has to defend his property against are not the Cossacks; they are the *huissiers* [bailiffs] and the tax collectors. The small holding no longer lies in the so-called fatherland but in the registry of mortgages. The army itself is no longer the flower of the peasant youth; it is the swamp flower of the peasant lumpen proletariat. It consists largely of replacements, of substitutes, just as the second Bonaparte is himself only a replacement, the substitute for Napoleon. It now performs its deeds of valor by hounding the peasants in masses like chamois, by doing gendarme duty; and if the natural contradictions of his system chase the Chief of the Society of December 10 across the French border, his army, after some acts of brigandage, will reap, not laurels, but thrashings.

It is clear: All “*idée napoléonienne*” are ideas of the undeveloped small holding in the freshness of its youth; they are a contradiction to the outlived holdings. They are only the hallucinations of its death struggle, words transformed into phrases, spirits transformed into ghosts. But the parody of imperialism was necessary to free the mass of the French nation from the weight of tradition and to work out in pure form the opposition between state power and society. With the progressive deterioration of small-holding property, the state structure erected upon it collapses. The centralization of the state that modern society requires arises only on the ruins of the military-bureaucratic government machinery which was forged in opposition to feudalism.

The condition of the French peasants provides us with the answer to the riddle of the general elections of December 20 and 21, which bore the second Bonaparte up Mount Sinai, not to receive laws but to give them.

Obviously the bourgeoisie now had no choice but to elect Bonaparte. When the Puritans of the Council of Constance⁶ complained of the dissolute lives of the popes and wailed about the necessity for moral reform, Cardinal Pierre d’Ailly thundered at them: “Only the devil in person can still save the Catholic Church, and you ask for angels.” Similarly, after the coup d’état the French bourgeoisie cried out: Only the Chief of the Society of December 10 can still save bourgeois society! Only theft can still save property; only perjury, religion; bastardy, the family; disorder, order!

As the executive authority which has made itself independent, Bonaparte feels it to be his task to safeguard “bourgeois order.” But the strength of this bourgeois order lies in the middle class. He poses, therefore, as the representative of the middle class and issues decrees in this sense. Nevertheless, he is somebody solely because he has broken the power of that middle class, and keeps on breaking it daily. He poses, therefore, as the opponent of the political and literary power of the middle class. But by protecting its material power he revives its political power. Thus the cause must be kept alive, but the effect, where it manifests itself, must be done away with. But

this cannot happen without small confusions of cause and effect, since in their interaction both lose their distinguishing marks. New decrees obliterate the border line. Bonaparte knows how to pose at the same time as the representative of the peasants and of the people in general, as a man who wants to make the lower classes happy within the framework of bourgeois society. New decrees cheat the “true socialists”⁷ of their governmental skill in advance. But above all, Bonaparte knows how to pose as the Chief of the Society of December 10, as the representative of the lumpen proletariat to which he himself, his entourage, his government, and his army belong, and whose main object is to benefit itself and draw California lottery prizes from the state treasury. And he confirms himself as Chief of the Society of December 10 with decrees, without decrees, and despite decrees.

This contradictory task of the man explains the contradictions of his government, the confused groping which tries now to win, now to humiliate, first one class and then another, and uniformly arrays all of them against him; whose uncertainty in practice forms a highly comical contrast to the imperious, categorical style of the government decrees, a style slavishly copied from the uncle.

Industry and commerce, hence the business affairs of the middle class, are to prosper in hothouse fashion under the strong government: the grant of innumerable railroad concessions. But the Bonapartist lumpen proletariat is to enrich itself: those in the know play *tripotage* [underhand dealings] on the Exchange with the railroad concessions. But no capital is forthcoming for the railroads: obligation of the Bank to make advances on railroad shares. But at the same time the Bank is to be exploited for personal gain and therefore must be cajoled: release the Bank from the obligation to publish its report weekly; leonine⁸ agreement of the Bank with the government. The people are to be given employment: initiation of public works. But the public works increase the people's tax obligations: hence reduction of taxes by an attack on the rentiers, by conversion of the 5-percent bonds into 4½-percent. But the middle class must again receive a sweetening: hence a doubling of the wine tax for the people, who buy wine retail, and a halving of the wine tax for the middle class, which drinks it wholesale; dissolution of the actual workers' associations, but promises of miraculous future associations. The peasants are to be helped: mortgage banks which hasten their indebtedness and accelerate the concentration of property. But these banks are to be used to make money out of the confiscated estates of the House of Orleans; no capitalist wants to agree to this condition, which is not in the decree, and the mortgage bank remains a mere decree, etc., etc.

Bonaparte would like to appear as the patriarchal benefactor of all classes. But he cannot give to one without taking from another. Just as it was said of the Duke de Guise in the time of the Fronde that he was the most obliging man in France because he gave all his estates to his followers, with feudal obligations to him, so Bonaparte would like to be the most obliging man in France and turn all the property and all the labor of France into a personal obligation to himself. He would like to steal all of France in order to make a present of it to France, or rather in order to buy France anew with French money, for as the Chief of the Society of December 10 he must buy what ought to belong to him. And to the Institution of Purchase belong all the state institutions, the Senate, the Council of State, the Assembly, the Legion of Honor, the military medals, the public laundries, the public works, the railroads, the general staff, the officers of the National Guard, the confiscated estates of the House of Orleans. The means of purchase is obtained by selling every place in the army and the government machinery. But the most important feature of this process, by which France is taken in order to give to her, are the percentages that find their way into the pockets of the head and the members of the Society of December 10 during the turnover. The witticism with which Countess L., the mistress of M. de Morny, characterized the confiscation of the Orleans estates – “It is the first *vol* [the word means both “flight” and “theft”] of the eagle” – is applicable to every flight of this eagle, who is more like a *raven*.⁹ He and his followers call out to one another like that Italian Carthusian admonishing the miser who

ostentatiously counted the goods on which he could still live for years: “*Tu fai conto sopra i beni, bisogna prima far il conto sopra gli anni*” [Thou countest thy goods, thou shouldst first count thy years]. In order not to make a mistake in the years, they count the minutes. At the court, in the ministries, at the head of the administration and the army, a gang of blokes of whom the best that can be said is that one does not know whence they come – these noisy, disreputable, rapacious bohemians who crawl into gallooned coats with the same grotesque dignity as the high dignitaries of Soulouque – elbow their way forward. One can visualize clearly this upper stratum of the Society of December 10 if one reflects that Veron-Crevel [A dissolute philistine character in Balzac’s novel *Cousin Bette*] is its preacher of morals and Granier de Cassagnac its thinker. When Guizot, at the time of his ministry, turned this Granier of an obscure newspaper into a dynastic opponent, he used to boast of him with the quip: “*C’est le roi des droles*” [He is the king of buffoons]. It would be wrong to recall either the Regency¹⁰ or Louis XV in connection with Louis Bonaparte’s court and clique. For “often before France has experienced a government of mistresses, but never before a government of kept men.” Driven by the contradictory demands of his situation, and being at the same time, like a juggler, under the necessity of keeping the public gaze on himself, as Napoleon’s successor, by springing constant surprises – that is to say, under the necessity of arranging a coup d’état in miniature every day – Bonaparte throws the whole bourgeois economy into confusion, violates everything that seemed inviolable to the Revolution of 1848, makes some tolerant of revolution and makes others lust for it, and produces anarchy in the name of order, while at the same time stripping the entire state machinery of its halo, profaning it and making it at once loathsome and ridiculous. The cult of the Holy Tunic of Trier¹¹ he duplicates in Paris in the cult of the Napoleonic imperial mantle. But when the imperial mantle finally falls on the shoulders of Louis Bonaparte, the bronze statue of Napoleon will come crashing down from the top of the Vendôme Column.¹²

¹ Roughly translated as slum workers or the mob, this term identifies the class of outcast, degenerated and submerged elements that make up a section of the population of industrial centers. It includes beggars, prostitutes, gangsters, racketeers, swindlers, petty criminals, tramps, chronic unemployed or unemployables, persons who have been cast out by industry, and all sorts of declassed, degraded or degenerated elements. In times of prolonged crisis (depression), innumerable young people also, who cannot find an opportunity to enter into the social organism as producers, are pushed into this limbo of the outcast. Here demagogues and fascists of various stripes find some area of the mass base in time of struggle and social breakdown, when the ranks of the Lumpenproletariat are enormously swelled by ruined and declassed elements from all layers of a society in decay.

The term was coined by Marx in *The German Ideology* in the course of a critique of Max Stirner. In passage of *The Ego and His Own* which Marx is criticising at the time, Stirner frequently uses the term *Lumpe* and applies it as a prefix, but never actually used the term “lumpenproletariat.” *Lumpen* originally meant “rags,” but began to be used to mean “a person in rags.” From having the sense of “ragamuffin,” it came to mean “riff-raff” or “knave,” and by the beginning of the eighteenth century it began to be used freely as a prefix to make a range of perjorative terms. By the 1820s, “lumpen” could be tacked on to almost any German word.

The term was later used in the Communist Manifesto (where it is translated as “dangerous classes”) and in *Class Struggles in France*, and elsewhere.

² Paraphrase from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Act 1, Scene 5: “Well said, old mole!”

³ This refers to the participation of peasants in the republican uprisings in France in late 1851 in protest against the Bonapartist coup d’état. These uprisings, involving mainly artisans and workers of small towns and settlements, local peasants, tradesmen and intellectuals, embraced nearly twenty

departments in south-east, south-west and central France. Lacking unity and centralisation they were fairly quickly suppressed by police and troops.

⁴ Here Marx compares the Bonapartist authorities' reprisals against the participants in the republican movement, including peasants, with the persecution of the so-called demagogues in Germany in the 1820s and 1830s. Demagogues in Germany were participants in the opposition movement of intellectuals. The name became current after the Karlsbad Conference of Ministers of the German States in August 1819, which adopted a special decision against the intrigues of "demagogues."

⁵ Cévennes – a mountain region in the Languedoc Province of France where all uprising of peasants, known as the uprising of "Camisards" (camise in old French means shirt) took place between 1702 and 1705. The uprising, which began in protest against the persecution of Protestants, assumed all openly anti-feudal character.

Vendée – a department in Western France; during the French Revolution of 1789-94 a centre of a royalist revolt in which the mass of the local peasantry took part. The name "Vendée" came to denote counter-revolutionary activity.

⁶ The Council of Constance (1414-18) was convened to strengthen the position of the Catholic Church at that period. The Council condemned the teachings of John Wycliffe and Jan Huss, and put an end to the split in the Catholic Church by electing a new Pope instead of the three pretenders competing for the papacy.

⁷ The reference is to German or "true socialism" which was widespread in Germany in the 1840s, mostly among petty-bourgeois intellectuals. The "true socialists" – Karl Grün, Moses Hess, Hermann Kriege – substituted the sentimental preaching of love and brotherhood for the ideas of socialism and denied the need for a bourgeois-democratic revolution in Germany. Marx and Engels criticised this trend in the following works: *The German Ideology*, *Circular Against Kriege*, *German Socialism in Verse and Prose* and *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.

⁸ From Aesop's fable about the lion who made a contract in which one partner got all the profits and the other all the disadvantages

⁹ This witticism of Countess Lehon and the caustic remark of Madame de Girardin on the Bonapartist regime, which Marx quotes at the end of the paragraph, were forwarded to him, together with many other items used in *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, by Richard Reinhardt, a German refugee in Paris, Heinrich Heine's secretary. In his letter to Ferdinand Lassalle of February 23, 1852 Marx quotes a letter to him from Reinhardt, in the following passage: "As for de Morny, the minister who resigned with Dupin, he was known as the of his mistress' (Countess Lehon's) husband, which caused Emile de Girardin's wife to say that while it was not unprecedented for governments to be in the hands of men who were governed by their wives, none had ever been known to be in the hands of *hommes entretenus* [kept men]. Well, this same Countess Lehon holds a salon where she is one of Bonaparte's most vociferous opponents and it was she who, on the occasion of the confiscation of the Orleans' estates let fall 'C'est le premier vol de l'aigle'. A pun: "It is the first flight of the eagle" and "It is the first theft of the eagle." Thanks to this remark of his wife's, Emile de Girardin was expelled."

¹⁰ The reference is to the Regency of Philippe of Orleans in France from 1715 to 1723 during the minority of Louis XV.

¹¹ The Holy Coat of Trier – a relic exhibited in the Catholic Cathedral at Trier, allegedly a garment of Christ of which he was stripped at his crucifixion. Generations of pilgrims came to venerate it.

¹² The Vendôme Column was erected in Paris between 1806 and 1810 in tribute to the military victories of Napoleon I. It was made of bronze from captured enemy guns and crowned by a statue of Napoleon; the statue was removed during the Restoration but re-erected in 1833. In the spring of 1871, by order of the Paris Commune, the Vendôme Column was destroyed as a symbol of militarism.

The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte

By KARL MARX



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Translated by DANIEL DE LEON

Prefaces by DANIEL DE LEON, FREDERICK ENGELS and KARL MARX

ILLUSTRATED

With Glossary

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Louis Bonaparte was mercilessly satirized in cartoons and caricatures until the coup. The iron censorship he imposed thereafter put a temporary halt to the lampooning in France. However, the European cartoonists outside France took up where their French colleagues had been compelled to leave off. The greatest pen and pencil artists of France had meanwhile succeeded in recording the corruption and scoundrelism of the little man who, through the magic of the name Napoleon, had managed for a time to follow in his uncle's footsteps.

These great artists, true social satirists of the highest order, included such outstanding men as Honore Daumier (born 1808), Andre Gill (Gosset de Guines, born 1840), Gavarni (Guillaume Sulpice Chevalier, born 1804), Grandville, Bertall, Faustin and many others. Daumier was the greatest of these—an immortal among artists and social satirists. He was imprisoned by Louis Philippe in 1832, but carried on dauntlessly through the coup of Napoleon the Little. Balzac said of him that his genius was “Michelangelo-like.”

The caricatures included here have been selected from the vast number emanating from the pens of these great European artists and social caricaturists of the early and middle 19th century.

“WON'T SOMEBODY PLEASE GIVE ME A LITTLE EMPIRE?” By Bertall,
Journal pour Rire, 1848. (page 17)

“NEITHER THE ONE NOR THE OTHER!” By Honor Daumier, 1851. (page 39)

“IN HIS OWN CIRCLE HE IS QUITE ACCURATELY REFERRED TO AS THE
MELANCHOLY PARROT.” By Wilhelm Scholz, *Kladderadatsch*, 1880. (page
55)

NAPOLEON III AND WILHELM I OF PRUSSIA. From *Vienna Kikeriki*. (page 73)

THE HEARSE. By Wilhelm Scholz, *Kladderadatsch*, 1870. (page 94)

“CLOTHES DON'T MAKE THE MAN.” By Faustin, 1870. (page 111)

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

“The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte” is one of Karl Marx’ most profound and most brilliant monographs. It may be considered the best work extant on the philosophy of history, with an eye especially upon the history of the Movement of the Proletariat, together with the bourgeois and other manifestations that accompany the same, and the tactics that such conditions dictate.

The recent populist uprising; the more recent “Debs Movement”; the thousand and one utopian and chimerical notions that are flaring up; the capitalist manoeuvres; the hopeless, helpless grasping after straws, that characterize the conduct of the bulk of the working class; all of these, together with the empty-headed, ominous figures that are springing into notoriety for a time and have their day, mark the present period of the Labor Movement in the nation a critical one. The best information acquirable, the best mental training obtainable are requisite to steer through the existing chaos that the death-tainted social system of to-day creates all around us. To aid in this needed information and mental training, this instructive work is now made accessible to English readers, and is commended to the serious study of the serious.

The teachings contained in this work are hung on an episode in recent French history. With some this fact may detract of its value. A pedantic, supercilious notion is extensively abroad among us that we are an “Anglo-Saxon” nation; and an equally pedantic, supercilious habit causes many to look to England for inspiration, as from a racial birthplace. Nevertheless, for weal or for woe, there is no such thing extant as “Anglo-Saxon”—of all nations, said to be “Anglo-Saxon,” in the United States least. What we still have from England, much as appearances may seem to point the other way, is not of our bone-and-marrow, so to speak, but rather partakes of the nature of “importations.” We are no more English on account of them than we are Chinese because we all drink tea.

Of all European nations, France is the one to which we come nearest. Besides its republican form of government,—the directness of its history, the unity of its

actions, the sharpness that marks its internal development, are all characteristics that find their parallel here best, and vice versa. In all essentials the study of modern French history, particularly when sketched by such a masterhand as Marx', is the most valuable one for the acquisition of that historic, social and biologic insight that our country stands particularly in need of, and that will be inestimable during the approaching critical days.

For the assistance of those who, unfamiliar with the history of France, may be confused by some of the terms used by Marx, the following explanations may prove aidful.

On the 18th Brumaire (Nov. 9th), the post-revolutionary development of affairs in France enabled the first Napoleon to take a step that led with inevitable certainty to the imperial throne. The circumstance that fifty and odd years later similar events aided his nephew, Louis Bonaparte, to take a similar step with a similar result, gives the name to this work—"The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte."

As to the other terms and allusions that occur, the following sketch will suffice:

Upon the overthrow of the first Napoleon came the restoration of the Bourbon throne (Louis XVIII, succeeded by Charles X). In July, 1830, an uprising of the upper tier of the bourgeoisie, or capitalist class—the aristocracy of finance—, overthrew the Bourbon throne, or landed aristocracy, and set up the throne of Orleans, a younger branch of the house of Bourbon, with Louis Philippe as king. From the month in which this revolution occurred, Louis Philippe's monarchy is called the "July Monarchy." In February, 1848, a revolt of a lower tier of the capitalist class—the industrial bourgeoisie—, against the aristocracy of finance, in turn dethroned Louis Philippe. This affair, also named from the month in which it took place, is the "February Revolution." The "Eighteenth Brumaire" starts with that event.

Despite the inapplicableness to our own affairs of the political names and political leadership herein described, both these names and leaderships are to such an extent the products of an economic-social development that has here too taken place with even greater sharpness, and they have their present or threatened counterparts here so completely, that, by the light of this work of Marx', we are best

enabled to understand our own history, to know whence we come, whither we are going, and how to conduct themselves {ourselves?}.

D.D.L.

New York, Sept. 12, 1897.

PREFACE BY FREDERICK ENGELS

To the Third German Edition, 1885

[Translated By Emil F. Teichert]

That a new edition of “The Eighteenth Brumaire” has become necessary, thirty-three years after its first appearance, proves that even today this booklet has lost none of its value.

It was in fact a work of genius. Immediately after the event that struck the entire political world like lightning out of a clear sky; an event damned by some with loud cries of moral indignation and accepted by others as an escape from the Revolution, and as punishment for its blunders; an event that amazed all but was understood by none—immediately after this event, Marx came forth with a brief, epigrammatic expose which revealed the entire course of French history in its inner connections since the February days; reduced the miracle of December 2 to a natural, necessary result of these inner connections, and thus did not need to treat the hero of the *coup d'état* other than with the contempt he so well deserved. And the sketch was drawn with such a master hand that every disclosure made since only added additional proof of the accuracy with which it reflected reality. This eminent understanding of history in the making, this clear recognition of events at the moment of their unfolding is, in fact, without equal.

But Marx's thorough knowledge of French history was required for this. France is the country where, more than any place else, the historic class struggles were fought through each time to a decision, where the changing political forms within which they occurred, and in which their results were summed up, have also been marked with the sharpest outlines. The central point of feudalism In the Middle Ages, the model country of a monarchy based on unified estates since the Renaissance, France destroyed feudalism in the great Revolution, and established the untrammelled rule of the bourgeoisie in a classical manner unequaled by any other European country. And the struggle of the rising proletariat against the ruling bourgeoisie also manifested itself here in an acute form unknown anywhere

else. This was the reason why Marx not only studied the past history of France with particular preference, but also the current history in all its aspects, gathered his material for future use, and was therefore never taken by surprise by events.

There is another circumstance to be added to this. It was precisely Marx who first discovered history's great law of motion, according to which law all historical struggles, whether they take place on the political, religious, philosophical or any other ideological domain, are, in fact, more or less clear expressions of the struggles of social classes, and that the existence and resulting collisions of these classes are, in turn, determined by the degree of their economic development, by the manner and methods of their production and the resulting methods of exchange. This law, which has the same significance for history as the law of the transformation of energy has for natural science, also gave Marx the key to an understanding of the second French Republic. He put this law to a test in this history, and even after thirty-three years we can still say that it has brilliantly stood that test.

FREDERICK ENGELS

1885.

PREFACE BY KARL MARX

[Translated By Emil F. Teichert]

My friend Joseph Weydemeyer,¹ whose death was all too untimely, had planned to publish a political weekly paper in New York beginning January 1, 1852. He requested me to furnish for that paper a history of the *coup d'état*. I thence wrote weekly articles for him, until mid February, under the title, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte." In the meantime, Weydemeyer's original plan came to naught. Instead, in the spring of 1852, he published a monthly paper, *Die Revolution*, the second issue of which consisted of my "Eighteenth Brumaire." Several hundred copies of this issue found their way to Germany at the time without, however, getting into the book trade proper. A German bookdealer of avowed radical pretensions, to whom I offered my work for the trade, rejected it—being most virtuously shocked at "presumptions so contrary to the times."

It is apparent from the foregoing that this work originated under the immediate pressure of events, and its historical data do not go beyond the month of February (1852). The present republication of the work is in part due to the demand for it from bookdealers, and in part to the pressure of my friends in Germany.

Of the works that dealt with the same subject at approximately the same time as mine there are but two worthy of note: Victor Hugo's "Napoleon le Petit" and Proudhon's "*Coup d'état*."

Victor Hugo confines himself to bitter and witty invective against the responsible instigator of the *coup d'état*. The event itself appears to him like a bolt out of the blue. He sees in it only the despotic act of a single individual. He is not aware that, instead of minimizing, he magnifies this individual, in that he attributes to him a personal power of initiative without example in the history of the world. Proudhon, for his part, seeks to explain the *coup d'état* as the result of a preceding historical development. Unwittingly, however, his historical treatment of

¹Military Commandant of the St. Louis district during the American Civil War.

the *coup d'état* transforms itself into a historical apologetic essay for its hero. He thus falls into the error of our so-called objective historians. I, on the other hand, point out how the class struggles in France created circumstances and conditions that made it possible for a mediocre and grotesque personality to play the part of a hero.

A revision of this text would have robbed it of the coloring peculiar to it. I have therefore confined myself solely to the correction of typographical errors and to the striking out of allusions now no longer intelligible.

The forecast in the concluding sentence of my work: “But when the imperial mantle finally falls upon the shoulders of Louis Bonaparte the iron statue of Napoleon will tumble from the Vendome column,” has already been fulfilled.²

Colonel Charras initiated the attack on the Napoleon cult in his work on the 1815 campaign. Since then, and particularly during recent years, French literature has put an end to the Napoleon legend through the weapons of historical research, criticism, satire and wit. Outside of France this forceful rupture with the traditional popular belief, this great intellectual revolution, was noticed but little and still less understood.

Finally, I hope that, particularly in Germany, my work will contribute toward eliminating the current stock phrase of Caesarism. In superficial historical analogy the main point is forgotten, namely, that in the class struggles of ancient Rome, between the free rich and the free poor, only a privileged minority played a part, whereas the great productive mass of the population, the slaves, served only as a passive support for these combatants. The significant remark of Sismondi—the Roman proletariat lived at the expense of society, whereas modern society lives at the expense of the proletariat—is forgotten. With such a complete difference in the material and economic circumstances between the ancient and the modern class

²As Marx noted in this 1869 preface, this forecast was fulfilled a few short years after the imperial mantle fell upon the shoulders of Louis Bonaparte (December 2, 1851). By order of Emperor Louis Napoleon (Louis Bonaparte), the military statue of the first Napoleon, which originally surmounted the Vendome column, was taken down and replaced by one of Napoleon I in imperial robes. Fifteen months after Marx noted the fulfillment of his forecast, the imperial mantle fell from the shoulders of Louis Bonaparte. Half a year later, the Vendome column was condemned by the Paris Commune as a symbol of chauvinism and international enmity. It was demolished on May 16, 1871, before a cheering multitude. Its replacement after the defeat of the Commune failed to restore the Napoleonic legend.

The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte

struggle, the political figures called into being can have no more in common with each other than the Archbishop of Canterbury with the High Priest Samuel.

KARL MARX

London, June 23, 1869.

THE EIGHTEENTH BRUMAIRE OF LOUIS BONAPARTE

I.

Hegel says somewhere that all great historic facts and personages recur twice. He forgot to add: "Once as tragedy, and again as farce." Caussidiere for Danton, Louis Blanc for Robespierre, the "Mountain" of 1848–51 for the "Mountain" of 1793–95, the Nephew for the Uncle. The identical caricature marks also the conditions under which the second edition of the eighteenth Brumaire is issued.

Man makes his own history, but he does not make it out of the whole cloth; he does not make it out of conditions chosen by himself, but out of such as he finds close at hand. The tradition of all past generations weighs like an alp upon the brain of the living. At the very time when men appear engaged in revolutionizing things and themselves, in bringing about what never was before, at such very epochs of revolutionary crises do they anxiously conjure up into their service the spirits of the past, assume their names, their battle cries, their costumes to enact a new historic scene in such time-honored disguise and with such borrowed language. Thus did Luther masquerade as the Apostle Paul; thus did the revolution of 1789–1814 drape itself alternately as Roman Republic and as Roman Empire; nor did the revolution of 1848 know what better to do than to parody at one time the year 1789, at another the revolutionary traditions of 1793–95. Thus does the beginner, who has acquired a new language, keep on translating it back into his own mother tongue; only then has he grasped the spirit of the new language and is able freely to express himself therewith when he moves in it without recollections of old, and has forgotten in its use his own hereditary tongue.

When these historic conjurations of the dead past are closely observed a striking difference is forthwith noticeable. Camille Desmoulins, Danton, Robespierre, St. Juste, Napoleon, the heroes as well as the parties and the masses of the old French revolution, achieved in Roman costumes and with Roman phrases the task of their time: the emancipation and the establishment of modern bourgeois society. One set knocked to pieces the old feudal groundwork and mowed down the

feudal heads that had grown upon it; Napoleon brought about, within France, the conditions under which alone free competition could develop, the partitioned lands be exploited, the nation's unshackled powers of industrial production be utilized; while, beyond the French frontier, he swept away everywhere the establishments of feudality, so far as requisite, to furnish the bourgeois social system of France with fit surroundings of the European continent, and such as were in keeping with the times. Once the new social establishment was set on foot, the antediluvian giants vanished, and, along with them, the resuscitated Roman world—the Brutuses, Gracchi, Publicolas, the Tribunes, the Senators, and Cæsar himself. In its sober reality, bourgeois society had produced its own true interpreters in the Says, Cousins, Royer-Collards, Benjamin Constants and Guizots; its real generals sat behind the office desks; and the mutton-head of Louis XVIII. was its political head. Wholly absorbed in the production of wealth and in the peaceful fight of competition, this society could no longer understand that the ghosts of the days of Rome had watched over its cradle. And yet, lacking in heroism as bourgeois society is, it nevertheless had stood in need of heroism, of self-sacrifice, of terror, of civil war, and of bloody battle fields to bring it into the world. Its gladiators found in the stern classic traditions of the Roman republic the ideals and the form, the self-deceptions, that they needed in order to conceal from themselves the narrow bourgeois substance of their own struggles, and to keep their passion up to the height of a great historic tragedy. Thus, at another stage of development, a century before, did Cromwell and the English people draw from the Old Testament the language, passions and illusions for their own bourgeois revolution. When the real goal was reached, when the remodeling of English society was accomplished, Locke supplanted Habakuk.

Accordingly, the reviving of the dead in those revolutions served the purpose of glorifying the new struggles, not of parodying the old; it served the purpose of exaggerating to the imagination the given task, not to recoil before its practical solution; it served the purpose of rekindling the revolutionary spirit, not to trot out its ghost.

In 1848–51 only the ghost of the old revolution wandered about, from Marrast

the “Républicain en gaunts jaunes,”³ who disguised himself in old Bailly, down to the adventurer, who hid his repulsively trivial features under the iron death mask of Napoleon. A whole people, that imagines it has imparted to itself accelerated powers of motion through a revolution, suddenly finds itself transferred back to a dead epoch, and, lest there be any mistake possible on this head, the old dates turn up again; the old calendars; the old names; the old edicts, which long since had sunk to the level of the antiquarian’s learning; even the old bailiffs, who had long seemed mouldering with decay. The nation takes on the appearance of that crazy Englishman in Bedlam, who imagines he is living in the days of the Pharaohs, and daily laments the hard work that he must do in the Ethiopian mines as gold digger, immured in a subterranean prison, with a dim lamp fastened on his head, behind him the slave overseer with a long whip, and, at the mouths of the mine a mob of barbarous camp servants who understand neither the convicts in the mines nor one another, because they do not speak a common language. “And all this,” cries the crazy Englishman, “is demanded of me, the free-born Englishman, in order to make gold for old Pharaoh.” “In order to pay off the debts of the Bonaparte family”—sobs the French nation. The Englishman, so long as he was in his senses, could not rid himself of the rooted thought of making gold. The Frenchmen, so long as they were busy with a revolution, could not rid themselves of the Napoleonic memory, as the election of December 10th proved. They longed to escape from the dangers of revolution back to the flesh pots of Egypt; the 2d of December, 1851, was the answer. They have not merely the caricature of the old Napoleon, but the old Napoleon himself—caricatured as he needs must appear in the middle of the nineteenth century.

The social revolution of the nineteenth century can not draw its poetry from the past, it can draw that only from the future. It cannot start upon its work before it has stricken off all superstition concerning the past. Former revolutions required historic reminiscences in order to intoxicate themselves with their own issues. The revolution of the nineteenth century must let the dead bury their dead in order to reach its issue. With the former, the phrase surpasses the substance; with this one,

³ Silk-stockings republican.

the substance surpasses the phrase.

The February revolution was a surprisal; old society was taken unawares; and the people proclaimed this political stroke a great historic act whereby the new era was opened. On the 2d of December, the February revolution is jockeyed by the trick of a false player, and what seems to be overthrown is no longer the monarchy, but the liberal concessions which had been wrung from it by centuries of struggles. Instead of society itself having conquered a new point, only the State appears to have returned to its oldest form, to the simply brazen rule of the sword and the club. Thus, upon the “coup de main” of February, 1848, comes the response of the “coup de tête” of December, 1851. So won, so lost. Meanwhile, the interval did not go by unutilized. During the years 1848–1851, French society retrieved in abbreviated, because revolutionary, method the lessons and teachings, which—if it was to be more than a disturbance of the surface—should have preceded the February revolution, had it developed in regular order, by rule, so to say. Now French society seems to have receded behind its point of departure; in fact, however, it was compelled to first produce its own revolutionary point of departure, the situation, circumstances, conditions, under which alone the modern revolution is in earnest.

Bourgeois revolutions, like those of the eighteenth century, rush onward rapidly from success to success, their stage effects outbid one another, men and things seem to be set in flaming brilliants, ecstasy is the prevailing spirit; but they are short-lived, they reach their climax speedily, then society relapses into a long fit of nervous reaction before it learns how to appropriate the fruits of its period of feverish excitement. Proletarian revolutions, on the contrary, such as those of the nineteenth century, criticize themselves constantly; constantly interrupt themselves in their own course; come back to what seems to have been accomplished, in order to start over anew; scorn with cruel thoroughness the half measures, weaknesses and meannesses of their first attempts; seem to throw down their adversary only in order to enable him to draw fresh strength from the earth, and again to rise up against them in more gigantic stature; constantly recoil in fear before the undefined monster magnitude of their own objects—until finally that situation is created which renders all retreat impossible, and the conditions themselves cry out:

“Hic Rhodus, hic salta!”⁴

“Here is the rose, now dance!”

Every observer of average intelligence, even if he failed to follow step by step the course of French development, must have anticipated that an unheard of fiasco was in store for the revolution. It was enough to hear the self-satisfied yelpings of victory wherewith the Messieurs Democrats mutually congratulated one another upon the pardons of May 2d, 1852. Indeed, May 2d had become a fixed idea in their heads; it had become a dogma with them—something like the day on which Christ was to reappear and the Millennium to begin had become in the heads of the Chiliasts. Weakness had, as it ever does, taken refuge in the wonderful; it believed the enemy was overcome if, in its imagination, it hocus-pocused him away; and it lost all sense of the present in the imaginary apotheosis of the future, that was at hand, and of the deeds, that it had “in petto,” but which it did not yet want to bring to the scratch. The heroes, who ever seek to refute their established incompetence by mutually bestowing their sympathy upon one another and by pulling together, had packed their satchels, taken their laurels in advance payments, and were just engaged in the work of getting discounted “in partibus,” on the stock exchange, the republics for which, in the silence of their unassuming dispositions, they had carefully organized the government personnel. The 2d of December struck them like a bolt from a clear sky; and the peoples, who, in periods of timid despondency, gladly allow their hidden fears to be drowned by the loudest screamers, will perhaps have become convinced that the days are gone by when the cackling of geese could save the Capitol.

The constitution, the national assembly, the dynastic parties, the blue and the red republicans, the heroes from Africa, the thunder from the tribune, the flash-lightnings from the daily press, the whole literature, the political names and the intellectual celebrities, the civil and the criminal law, the “liberté, égalité, fraternité,” together with the 2d of May, 1852,—all vanished like a phantasmagoria before the ban of one man, whom his enemies themselves do not pronounce an adept

⁴ “Here is Rhodes, leap here!”

at witchcraft. Universal suffrage seems to have survived only for a moment, to the end that, before the eyes of the whole world, it should make its own testament with its own hands, and, in the name of the people, declare: "All that exists deserves to perish."

It is not enough to say, as the Frenchmen do, that their nation was taken by surprise. A nation, no more than a woman, is excused for the unguarded hour when the first adventurer who comes along can do violence to her. The riddle is not solved by such shifts, it is only formulated in other words. There remains to be explained how a nation of thirty-six millions can be surprised by three swindlers, and taken to prison without resistance.

Let us recapitulate in general outlines the phases which the French revolution of February 24th, 1848, to December, 1851, ran through.

Three main periods are unmistakable:

First—The February period;

Second—The period of constituting the republic, or of the constitutive national assembly (May 4, 1848 to May 29th, 1849);

Third—The period of the constitutional republic, or of the legislative national assembly (May 29, 1849, to December 2, 1851).

The first period, from February 24, or the downfall of Louis Philippe, to May 4, 1848, the date of the assembling of the constitutive assembly—the February period proper—may be designated as the prologue of the revolution. It officially expressed



Louis Bonaparte Caricature

"Won't somebody please give me a little empire?"

(By Bertall, *Journal pour Rire*, 1848)

its own character in this, that the government which it improvised declared itself “provisional,” and, like the government, everything that was broached, attempted or uttered, pronounced itself provisional. Nobody and nothing dared to assume the right of permanent existence and of an actual fact. All the elements that had prepared or determined the revolution—dynastic opposition, republican bourgeoisie, democratic-republican small traders’ class, social-democratic labor element—all found “provisionally” their place in the February government.

It could not be otherwise. The February days contemplated originally a reform of the suffrage laws, whereby the area of the politically privileged among the property-holding class was to be extended, while the exclusive rule of the aristocracy of finance was to be overthrown. When, however, it came to a real conflict, when the people mounted the barricades, when the National Guard stood passive, when the army offered no serious resistance, and the kingdom ran away, then the republic seemed self-understood. Each party interpreted it in its own sense. Won, arms in hand, by the proletariat, they put upon it the stamp of their own class, and proclaimed the SOCIAL REPUBLIC. Thus the general purpose of modern revolutions was indicated, a purpose, however, that stood in most singular contradiction to every thing that, with the material at hand, with the stage of enlightenment that the masses had reached, and under the existing circumstances and conditions, could be immediately used. On the other hand, the claims of all the other elements, that had co-operated in the revolution of February, were recognized by the lion’s share that they received in the government. Hence, in no period do we find a more motley mixture of high-sounding phrases together with actual doubt and helplessness; of more enthusiastic reform aspirations, together with a more slavish adherence to the old routine; more seeming harmony permeating the whole of society together with a deeper alienation of its several elements. While the Parisian proletariat was still gloating over the sight of the great perspective that had disclosed itself to their view, and was indulging in seriously meant discussions over the social problems, the old powers of society had grouped themselves, had gathered together, had deliberated and found an unexpected support in the mass of the nation—the peasants and small traders—all of whom threw themselves on {of?} a sudden upon the political stage, after the barriers of the July monarchy had fallen down.

The second period, from May 4, 1848, to the end of May, 1849, is the period of the constitution, of the founding of the bourgeois republic. Immediately after the February days, not only was the dynastic opposition surprised by the republicans, and the republicans by the Socialists, but all France was surprised by Paris. The national assembly, that met on May 4, 1848, to frame a constitution, was the outcome of the national elections; it represented the nation. It was a living protest against the assumption of the February days, and it was intended to bring the results of the revolution back to the bourgeois measure. In vain did the proletariat of Paris, which forthwith understood the character of this national assembly, endeavor, a few days after its meeting, on May 15, to deny its existence by force, to dissolve it, to disperse the organic apparition, in which the reacting spirit of the nation was threatening them, and thus reduce it back to its separate component parts. As is known, the 15th of May had no other result than that of removing Blanqui and his associates, i.e., the real leaders of the proletarian party, from the public scene for the whole period of the cycle which we are here considering.

Upon the bourgeois monarchy of Louis Philippe, only the bourgeois republic could follow; that is to say, a limited portion of the bourgeoisie, having ruled under the name of the king, now the whole bourgeoisie was to rule under the name of the people. The demands of the Parisian proletariat are utopian tom-fooleries that have to be done away with. To this declaration of the constitutional national assembly, the Paris proletariat answers with the June insurrection, the most colossal event in the history of European civil wars. The bourgeois republic won. On its side stood the aristocracy of finance, the industrial bourgeoisie; the middle class; the small traders' class; the army; the slums, organized as Garde Mobile; the intellectual celebrities, the parsons' class, and the rural population. On the side of the Parisian proletariat stood none but itself. Over 3,000 insurgents were massacred, after the victory 15,000 were transported without trial. With this defeat, the proletariat steps to the background on the revolutionary stage. It always seeks to crowd forward, so soon as the movement seems to acquire new impetus, but with ever weaker effort and ever smaller results. So soon as any of the above lying layers of society gets into revolutionary fermentation, it enters into alliance therewith and thus shares all the defeats which the several parties successively suffer. But these succeeding blows

become ever weaker the more generally they are distributed over the whole surface of society. The more important leaders of the Proletariat, in its councils, and the press, fall one after another victims of the courts, and ever more questionable figures step to the front. IT PARTLY THROWS ITSELF UPON DOCTRINAIRE EXPERIMENTS, “CO-OPERATIVE BANKING” AND “LABOR EXCHANGE” SCHEMES; IN OTHER WORDS, IT GOES INTO MOVEMENTS, IN WHICH IT GIVES UP THE TASK OF REVOLUTIONIZING THE OLD WORLD WITH ITS OWN LARGE COLLECTIVE WEAPONS, AND, ON THE CONTRARY, SEEKS TO BRING ABOUT ITS EMANCIPATION, BEHIND THE BACK OF SOCIETY, IN PRIVATE WAYS, WITHIN THE NARROW BOUNDS OF ITS OWN CLASS CONDITIONS, AND, CONSEQUENTLY, INEVITABLY FAILS. The proletariat seems to be able neither to find again the revolutionary magnitude within itself nor to draw new energy from the newly formed alliances until ALL THE CLASSES, with whom it contended in June, shall lie prostrate along with itself. But in all these defeats, the proletariat succumbs at least with the honor that attaches to great historic struggles; not France alone, all Europe trembles before the June earthquake, while the successive defeats inflicted upon the higher classes are bought so easily that they need the brazen exaggeration of the victorious party itself to be at all able to pass muster as an event; and these defeats become more disgraceful the further removed the defeated party stands from the proletariat.

True enough, the defeat of the June insurgents prepared, leveled the ground, upon which the bourgeois republic could be founded and erected; but it, at the same time, showed that there are in Europe other issues besides that of “Republic or Monarchy.” It revealed the fact that here the BOURGEOIS REPUBLIC meant the unbridled despotism of one class over another. It proved that, with nations enjoying an older civilization, having developed class distinctions, modern conditions of production, an intellectual consciousness, wherein all traditions of old have been dissolved through the work of centuries, that with such countries the republic means only the POLITICAL REVOLUTIONARY FORM OF BOURGEOIS SOCIETY, not its CONSERVATIVE FORM OF EXISTENCE, as is the case in the United States of America, where, true enough, the classes already exist, but have not yet acquired permanent character, are in constant flux and reflux, constantly

changing their elements and yielding them up to one another; where the modern means of production, instead of coinciding with a stagnant population, rather compensate for the relative scarcity of heads and hands; and, finally, where the feverishly youthful life of material production, which has to appropriate a new world to itself, has so far left neither time nor opportunity to abolish the illusions of old.⁵

All classes and parties joined hands in the June days in a “PARTY OF ORDER” against the class of the proletariat, which was designated as the “PARTY OF ANARCHY,” of Socialism, of Communism. They claimed to have “saved” society against the “enemies of society.” They gave out the slogans of the old social order—“Property, Family, Religion, Order”—as the pass-words for their army, and cried out to the counter-revolutionary crusaders: “In this sign thou wilt conquer!” From that moment on, so soon as any of the numerous parties, which had marshalled themselves under this sign against the June insurgents, tries, in turn, to take the revolutionary field in the interest of its own class, it goes down in its turn before the cry: “Property, Family, Religion, Order.” Thus it happens that “society is saved” as often as the circle of its ruling class is narrowed, as often as a more exclusive interest asserts itself over the general. Every demand for the most simple bourgeois financial reform, for the most ordinary liberalism, for the most commonplace republicanism, for the flattest democracy, is forthwith punished as an “assault upon society,” and is branded as “Socialism.” Finally the High Priests of “Religion and Order” themselves are kicked off their tripods; are fetched out of their beds in the dark, hurried into patrol wagons, thrust into jail or sent into exile; their temple is razed to the ground, their mouths are sealed, their pen is broken, their law torn to pieces in the name of Religion, of Family, of Property, and of Order. Bourgeois, fanatic on the point of “Order,” are shot down on their own balconies by drunken soldiers, forfeit their family property, and their houses are bombarded for pastime—all in the name of Property, of Family, of Religion, and of Order. Finally, the refuse of bourgeois society constitutes the “holy phalanx of Order,” and the hero Crapulinsky makes his entry into the Tuileries as the “Savior of Society.”

⁵ This was written at the beginning of 1852.

II.

Let us resume the thread of events.

The history of the Constitutional National Assembly, from the June days on, is the history of the supremacy and dissolution of the republican bourgeois party, the party which is known under the several names of “Tricolor Republican,” “True Republican,” “Political Republican,” “Formal Republican,” etc., etc.

Under the bourgeois monarchy of Louis Philippe, this party had constituted the OFFICIAL REPUBLICAN OPPOSITION, and consequently had been a recognized element in the then political world. It had its representatives in the Chambers, and commanded considerable influence in the press. Its Parisian organ, the “National,” passed, in its way, for as respectable a paper as the “Journal des Debats.” This position in the constitutional monarchy corresponded to its character. The party was not a fraction of the bourgeoisie, held together by great and common interests, and marked by special business requirements. It was a coterie of bourgeois with republican ideas—writers, lawyers, officers and civil employees, whose influence rested upon the personal antipathies of the country for Louis Philippe, upon reminiscences of the old Republic, upon the republican faith of a number of enthusiasts, and, above all, upon the spirit of French patriotism, whose hatred of the treaties of Vienna and of the alliance with England kept them perpetually on the alert. The “National” owed a large portion of its following under Louis Philippe to this covert imperialism, that, later, under the republic, could stand up against it as a deadly competitor in the person of Louis Bonaparte. The paper fought the aristocracy of finance just the same as did the rest of the bourgeois opposition. The polemic against the budget, which, in France, was closely connected with the opposition to the aristocracy of finance, furnished too cheap a popularity and too rich a material for Puritanical leading articles, not to be exploited. The industrial bourgeoisie was thankful to it for its servile defence of the French tariff system, which, however, the paper had taken up more out of patriotic than economic reasons; the whole bourgeois class was thankful to it for its vicious denunciations of Communism and Socialism. For the rest, the party of the “National” was PURELY

REPUBLICAN, i.e., it demanded a republican instead of a monarchic form of bourgeois government; above all, it demanded for the bourgeoisie the lion's share of the government. As to how this transformation was to be accomplished, the party was far from being clear. What, however, was clear as day to it and was openly declared at the reform banquets during the last days of Louis Philippe's reign, was its unpopularity with the democratic middle class, especially with the revolutionary proletariat. These pure republicans, as pure republicans go, were at first on the very point of contenting themselves with the regency of the Duchess of Orleans, when the February revolution broke out, and when it gave their best known representatives a place in the provisional government. Of course, they enjoyed from the start the confidence of the bourgeoisie and of the majority of the Constitutional National Assembly. The Socialist elements of the Provisional Government were promptly excluded from the Executive Committee, which the Assembly had elected upon its convening, and the party of the "National" subsequently utilized the outbreak of the June insurrection to dismiss this Executive Committee also, and thus rid itself of its nearest rivals—the SMALL TRADERS' CLASS or DEMOCRATIC REPUBLICANS (Ledru-Rollin, etc.). Cavaignac, the General of the bourgeois republican party, who commanded at the battle of June, stepped into the place of the Executive Committee with a sort of dictatorial power. Marrast, former editor-in-chief of the "National," became permanent President of the Constitutional National Assembly; and the Secretaryship of State, together with all the other important posts, devolved upon the pure republicans.

The republican bourgeois party, which since long had looked upon itself as the legitimate heir of the July monarchy, thus found itself surpassed in its own ideal; but it came into power, not as it had dreamed under Louis Philippe, through a liberal revolt of the bourgeoisie against the throne, but through a grape-shot-and-canistered mutiny of the proletariat against Capital. That which it imagined to be the MOST REVOLUTIONARY, came about as the MOST COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY event. The fruit fell into its lap, but it fell from the Tree of Knowledge, not from the Tree of Life.

The exclusive power of the bourgeois republicans lasted only from June 24 to the 10th of December, 1848. It is summed up in the FRAMING OF A

REPUBLICAN CONSTITUTION and in THE STATE OF SIEGE OF PARIS.

The new Constitution was in substance only a republicanized edition of the constitutional charter of 1830. The limited suffrage of the July monarchy, which excluded even a large portion of the bourgeoisie from political power, was irreconcilable with the existence of the bourgeois republic. The February revolution had forthwith proclaimed direct and universal suffrage in the place of the old law. The bourgeois republicans could not annul this act. They had to content themselves with tacking to it the limitation of a six months' residence. The old organization of the administrative law, of municipal government, of court procedures, of the army, etc., remained untouched, or, where the constitution did change them, the change affected their index, not their subject; their name, not their substance.

The inevitable "General Staff" of the "freedoms" of 1848—personal freedom, freedom of the press, of speech, of association and of assemblage, freedom of instruction, of religion, etc.—received a constitutional uniform that rendered them invulnerable. Each of these freedoms is proclaimed the absolute right of the French citizen, but always with the gloss that it is unlimited in so far only as it be not curtailed by the "equal rights of others," and by the "public safety," or by the "laws," which are intended to effect this harmony. For instance:

"Citizens have the right of association, of peaceful and unarmed assemblage, of petitioning, and of expressing their opinions through the press or otherwise. THE ENJOYMENT OF THESE RIGHTS HAS NO LIMITATION OTHER THAN THE EQUAL RIGHTS OF OTHERS AND THE PUBLIC SAFETY." (Chap. II. of the French Constitution, Section 8.)

"Education is free. The freedom of education shall be ENJOYED under the conditions provided by law, and under the supervision of the State." (Section 9.)

"The domicile of the citizen is inviolable, except under the forms prescribed by law." (Chap. I., Section 3), etc., etc.

The Constitution, it will be noticed, constantly alludes to future organic laws,

that are to carry out the glosses, and are intended to regulate the enjoyment of these unabridged freedoms, to the end that they collide neither with one another nor with the public safety. Later on, the organic laws are called into existence by the “Friends of Order,” and all the above named freedoms are so regulated that, in their enjoyment, the bourgeoisie encounter no opposition from the like rights of the other classes. Wherever the bourgeoisie wholly interdicted these rights to “others,” or allowed them their enjoyment under conditions that were but so many police snares, it was always done only in the interest of the “public safety,” i.e., of the bourgeoisie, as required by the Constitution.

Hence it comes that both sides—the “Friends of Order,” who abolished all those freedoms, as well as the democrats, who had demanded them all—appeal with full right to the Constitution: Each paragraph of the Constitution contains its own antithesis, its own Upper and Lower House—freedom as a generalization, the abolition of freedom as a specification. Accordingly, so long as the NAME of freedom was respected, and only its real enforcement was prevented—in a legal way, of course—the constitutional existence of freedom remained uninjured, untouched, however completely its COMMON existence might be extinguished.

This Constitution, so ingeniously made invulnerable, was, however, like Achilles, vulnerable at one point: not in its heel, but in its head, or rather, in the two heads into which it ran out—the Legislative Assembly, on the one hand, and the President on the other. Run through the Constitution and it will be found that only those paragraphs wherein the relation of the President to the Legislative Assembly is defined, are absolute, positive, uncontradictory, undistortable. Here the bourgeois republicans were concerned in securing their own position. Articles 45–70 of the Constitution are so framed that the National Assembly can constitutionally remove the President, but the President can set aside the National Assembly only unconstitutionally, he can set it aside only by setting aside the Constitution itself. Accordingly, by these provisions, the National Assembly challenges its own violent destruction. It not only consecrates, like the charter of 1830, the division of powers, but it extends this feature to an unbearably contradictory extreme. The “play of constitutional powers,” as Guizot styled the clapper-clawings between the legislative and the executive powers, plays permanent “vabanque” in the

Constitution of 1848. On the one side, 750 representatives of the people, elected and qualified for re-election by universal suffrage, who constitute an uncontrollable, indissoluble, indivisible National Assembly, a National Assembly that enjoys legislative omnipotence, that decides in the last instance over war, peace and commercial treaties, that alone has the power to grant amnesties, and that, through its perpetuity, continually maintains the foreground on the stage; on the other, a President, clad with all the attributes of royalty, with the right to appoint and remove his ministers independently from the national assembly, holding in his hands all the means of executive power, the dispenser of all posts, and thereby the arbiter of at least one and a half million existences in France, so many being dependent upon the 500,000 civil employés and upon the officers of all grades. He has the whole armed power behind him. He enjoys the privilege of granting pardons to individual criminals; suspending the National Guards; of removing with the consent of the Council of State the general, cantonal and municipal Council men, elected by the citizens themselves. The initiative and direction of all negotiations with foreign countries are reserved to him. While the Assembly itself is constantly acting upon the stage, and is exposed to the critically vulgar light of day, he leads a hidden life in the Elysian fields, only with Article 45 of the Constitution before his eyes and in his heart daily calling out to him: “Frère, il faut mourir!”⁶ Your power expires on the second Sunday of the beautiful month of May, in the fourth year after your election! The glory is then at an end; the play is not performed twice; and, if you have any debts, see to it betimes that you pay them off with the 600,000 francs that the Constitution has set aside for you, unless, perchance, you should prefer traveling to Clichy⁷ on the second Monday of the beautiful month of May.”

While the Constitution thus clothes the President with actual power, it seeks to secure the moral power to the National Assembly. Apart from the circumstance that it is impossible to create a moral power through legislative paragraphs, the Constitution again neutralizes itself in that it causes the President to be chosen by all the Frenchmen through direct suffrage. While the votes of France are splintered to pieces upon the 750 members of the National Assembly, they are here, on the

⁶ Brother, you must die!

⁷ The debtors' prison

contrary, concentrated upon ONE individual. While each separate Representative represents only this or that party, this or that city, this or that dunghill, or possibly only the necessity of electing some one Seven-hundred-and-fiftieth or other, with whom neither the issue nor the man is closely considered, that ONE, the President, on the contrary, is the elect of the nation, and the act of his election is the trump card, that the sovereign people plays out once every four years. The elected National Assembly stands in a metaphysical, but the elected President in a personal relation to the nation. True enough, the National Assembly presents in its several Representatives the various sides of the national spirit, but, in the President, this spirit is incarnated. As against the National Assembly, the President possesses a sort of divine right, he is by the grace of the people.

Thetis, the sea-goddess, had prophesied to Achilles that he would die in the bloom of youth. The Constitution, which had its weak spot, like Achilles, had also, like Achilles, the presentiment that it would depart by premature death. It was enough for the pure republicans, engaged at the work of framing a constitution, to cast a glance from the misty heights of their ideal republic down upon the profane world in order to realize how the arrogance of the royalists, of the Bonapartists, of the democrats, of the Communists, rose daily, together with their own discredit, and in the same measure as they approached the completion of their legislative work of art, without Thetis having for this purpose to leave the sea and impart the secret to them. They sought to outwit fate by means of constitutional artifice, through Section 111 of the Constitution, according to which every motion to revise the Constitution had to be discussed three successive times, between each of which a full month was to elapse, and required at least a three-fourths majority, with the additional proviso that not less than 500 members of the National Assembly voted. They thereby only made the impotent attempt, still to exercise as a parliamentary minority, to which in their mind's eye they prophetically saw themselves reduced, a power, that, at this very time, when they still disposed over the parliamentary majority and over all the machinery of government, was daily slipping from their weak hands.

Finally, the Constitution entrusts itself for safe keeping, in a melodramatic paragraph, "to the watchfulness and patriotism of the whole French people, and of

each individual Frenchman,” after having just before, in another paragraph, entrusted the “watchful” and the “patriotic” themselves to the tender, inquisitorial attention of the High Court, instituted by itself.

That was the Constitution of 1848, which, on the 2d of December, 1851, was not overthrown, by one head, but tumbled down at the touch of a mere hat; though, true enough, that hat was a three-cornered Napoleon hat.

While the bourgeois republicans were engaged in the Assembly with the work of splicing this Constitution, of discussing and voting, Cavaignac, on the outside, maintained the state of siege of Paris. The state of siege of Paris was the midwife of the constitutional assembly, during its republican pains of travail. When the constitution is later on swept off the earth by the bayonet, it should not be forgotten that it was by the bayonet, likewise—and the bayonet turned against the people, at that—that it had to be protected in its mother’s womb, and that by the bayonet it had to be planted on earth. The ancestors of these “honest republicans” had caused their symbol, the tricolor, to make the tour of Europe. These, in their turn, also made a discovery, which, all of itself, found its way over the whole continent, but, with ever renewed love, came back to France, until, by this time, it had acquired the right of citizenship in one-half of her Departments—the STATE OF SIEGE. A wondrous discovery this was, periodically applied at each succeeding crisis in the course of the French revolution. But the barrack and the bivouac, thus periodically laid on the head of French society, to compress her brain and reduce her to quiet; the sabre and the musket, periodically made to perform the functions of judges and of administrators, of guardians and of censors, of police officers and of watchmen; the military mustache and the soldier’s jacket, periodically heralded as the highest wisdom and guiding stars of society;—were not all of these, the barrack and the bivouac, the sabre and the musket, the mustache and the soldier’s jacket bound, in the end, to hit upon the idea that they might as well save society once for all, by proclaiming their own régime as supreme, and relieve bourgeois society wholly of the care of ruling itself? The barrack and the bivouac, the sabre and the musket, the moustache and the soldier’s jacket were all the more bound to hit upon this idea, seeing that they could then also expect better cash payment for their increased deserts, while at the merely periodic states of siege and the transitory savings of

society at the behest of this or that bourgeois faction, very little solid matter fell to them except some dead and wounded, besides some friendly bourgeois grimaces. Should not the military, finally, in and for its own interest, play the game of “state of siege,” and simultaneously besiege the bourgeois exchanges? Moreover, it must not be forgotten, and be it observed in passing, that COL. BERNARD, the same President of the Military Committee, who, under Cavaignac, helped to deport 15,000 insurgents without trial, moves at this period again at the head of the Military Committees now active in Paris.

Although the honest, the pure republicans built with the state of siege the nursery in which the Praetorian guards of December 2, 1851, were to be reared, they, on the other hand, deserve praise in that, instead of exaggerating the feeling of patriotism, as under Louis Philippe, now that they themselves are in command of the national power, they crawl before foreign powers; instead of making Italy free, they allow her to be reconquered by Austrians and Neapolitans. The election of Louis Bonaparte for President on December 10, 1848, put an end to the dictatorship of Cavaignac and to the constitutional assembly.

In Article 44 of the Constitution it is said: “The President of the French Republic must never have lost his quality of French citizen.” The first President of the French Republic, L. N. Bonaparte, had not only lost his quality of French citizen, had not only been an English special constable, but was even a naturalized Swiss citizen.

In the previous chapter I have explained the meaning of the election of December 10. I shall not here return to it. Suffice it here to say that it was a REACTION OF THE FARMERS’ CLASS, who had been expected to pay the costs of the February revolution, against the other classes of the nation: it was a REACTION OF THE COUNTRY AGAINST THE CITY. It met with great favor among the soldiers, to whom the republicans of the “National” had brought neither fame nor funds; among the great bourgeoisie, who hailed Bonaparte as a bridge to the monarchy; and among the proletarians and small traders, who hailed him as a scourge to Cavaignac. I shall later have occasion to enter closer into the relation of the farmers to the French revolution.

The epoch between December 20, 1848, and the dissolution of the constitutional

assembly in May, 1849, embraces the history of the downfall of the bourgeois republicans. After they had founded a republic for the bourgeoisie, had driven the revolutionary proletariat from the field, and had meanwhile silenced the democratic middle class, they are themselves shoved aside by the mass of the bourgeoisie, who justly appropriate this republic as their property. This bourgeois mass was ROYALIST, however. A part thereof, the large landed proprietors, had ruled under the restoration, hence, was LEGITIMIST; the other part, the aristocrats of finance and the large industrial capitalists, had ruled under the July monarchy, hence, was ORLEANIST. The high functionaries of the Army, of the University, of the Church, in the civil service, of the Academy and of the press, divided themselves on both sides, although in unequal parts. Here, in the bourgeois republic, that bore neither the name of BOURBON, nor of ORLEANS, but the name of CAPITAL, they had found the form of government under which they could all rule in common. Already the June insurrection had united them all into a “Party of Order.” The next thing to do was to remove the bourgeois republicans, who still held the seats in the National Assembly. As brutally as these pure republicans had abused their own physical power against the people, so cowardly, low-spirited, disheartened, broken, powerless did they yield, now when the issue was the maintenance of their own republicanism and their own legislative rights against the Executive power and the royalists. I need not here narrate the shameful history of their dissolution. It was not a downfall, it was extinction. Their history is at an end for all time. In the period that follows, they figure, whether within or without the Assembly, only as memories—memories that seem again to come to life so soon as the question is again only about the word “Republic,” and as often as the revolutionary conflict threatens to sink down to the lowest level. In passing, I might observe that the journal which gave to this party its name, the “National,” goes over to Socialism during the following period.

Before we close this period, we must cast a look back upon the two powers, one of which destroys the other on December 2, 1851, while, from December 2, 1848, down to the departure of the constitutional assembly, they live in marital relations. We mean Louis Bonaparte, on the one hand, and, on the other, the party of the allied royalists, of Order, and of the large bourgeoisie.

At the inauguration of his presidency, Bonaparte forthwith framed a ministry out of the party of Order, at whose head he placed Odillon Barrot, be it noted, the old leader of the liberal wing of the parliamentary bourgeoisie. Mr. Barrot had finally hunted down a seat in the ministry, the spook of which had been pursuing him since 1830; and, what is more, he had the chairmanship in this ministry, although not, as he had imagined under Louis Philippe, the promoted leader of the parliamentary opposition, but with the commission to kill a parliament, and, moreover, as an ally of all his arch enemies, the Jesuits and the Legitimists. Finally he leads the bride home, but only after she has been prostituted. As to Bonaparte, he seemed to eclipse himself completely. The party of Order acted for him.

Immediately at the first session of the ministry the expedition to Rome was decided upon, which, it was there agreed, was to be carried out behind the back of the National Assembly, and the funds for which, it was equally agreed, were to be wrung from the Assembly under false pretences. Thus the start was made with a swindle on the National Assembly, together with a secret conspiracy with the absolute foreign powers against the revolutionary Roman republic. In the same way, and with a similar maneuver, did Bonaparte prepare his stroke of December 2 against the royalist legislature and its constitutional republic. Let it not be forgotten that the same party, which, on December 20, 1848, constituted Bonaparte's ministry, constituted also, on December 2, 1851, the majority of the legislative National Assembly.

In August, the constitutive assembly decided not to dissolve until it had prepared and promulgated a whole series of organic laws, intended to supplement the Constitution. The party of Order proposed to the assembly, through Representative Râteau, on January 6, 1849, to let the organic laws go, and rather to order its own dissolution. Not the ministry alone, with Mr. Odillon Barrot at its head, but all the royalist members of the National Assembly were also at this time hectoring to it that its dissolution was necessary for the restoration of the public credit, for the consolidation of order, to put an end to the existing uncertain and provisional, and establish a definite state of things; they claimed that its continued existence hindered the effectiveness of the new Government, that it sought to prolong its life out of pure malice, and that the country was tired of it. Bonaparte

took notice of all these invectives hurled at the legislative power, he learned them by heart, and, on December 21, 1851, he showed the parliamentary royalists that he had learned from them. He repeated their own slogans against themselves.

The Barrot ministry and the party of Order went further. They called all over France for petitions to the National Assembly in which that body was politely requested to disappear. Thus they led the people's unorganic masses to the fray against the National Assembly, i.e., against the constitutionally organized expression of the people itself. They taught Bonaparte to appeal from the parliamentary body to the people. Finally, on January 29, 1849, the day arrived when the constitutional assembly was to decide about its own dissolution. On that day the body found its building occupied by the military; Changarnier, the General of the party of Order, in whose hands was joined the supreme command of both the National Guards and the regulars, held that day a great military review, as though a battle were imminent; and the coalized royalists declared threateningly to the constitutional assembly that force would be applied if it did not act willingly. It was willing, and chaffered only for a very short respite. What else was the 29th of January, 1849, than the "coup d'état" of December 2, 1851, only executed by the royalists with Napoleon's aid against the republican National Assembly? These gentlemen did not notice, or did not want to notice, that Napoleon utilized the 29th of January, 1849, to cause a part of the troops to file before him in front of the Tuileries, and that he seized with avidity this very first open exercise of the military against the parliamentary power in order to hint at Caligula. The allied royalists saw only their own Changarnier.

Another reason that particularly moved the party of Order forcibly to shorten the term of the constitutional assembly were the organic laws, the laws that were to supplement the Constitution, as, for instance, the laws on education, on religion, etc. The allied royalists had every interest in framing these laws themselves, and not allowing them to be framed by the already suspicious republicans. Among these organic laws, there was, however, one on the responsibility of the President of the republic. In 1851 the Legislature was just engaged in framing such a law when Bonaparte forestalled that political stroke by his own of December 2. What all would not the coalized royalists have given in their winter parliamentary campaign

of 1851, had they but found this “Responsibility law” ready made, and framed at that, by the suspicious, the vicious republican Assembly!

After, on January 29, 1849, the constitutive assembly had itself broken its last weapon, the Barrot ministry, and the “Friends of Order” harrassed it to death, left nothing undone to humiliate it, and wrung from its weakness, despairing of itself, laws that cost it the last vestige of respect with the public. Bonaparte, occupied with his own fixed Napoleonic idea, was audacious enough openly to exploit this degradation of the parliamentary power: When the National Assembly, on May 8, 1849, passed a vote of censure upon the Ministry on account of the occupation of Civita-Vecchia by Oudinot, and ordered that the Roman expedition be brought back to its alleged purpose, Bonaparte published that same evening in the “Moniteur” a letter to Oudinot, in which he congratulated him on his heroic feats, and already, in contrast with the quill-pushing parliamentarians, posed as the generous protector of the Army. The royalists smiled at this. They took him simply for their dupe. Finally, as Marrast, the President of the constitutional assembly, believed on a certain occasion the safety of the body to be in danger, and, resting on the Constitution, made a requisition upon a colonel, together with his regiment, the Colonel refused obedience, took refuge behind the “discipline,” and referred Marrast to Changarnier, who scornfully sent him off with the remark that he did not like “bayonettes intelligentes.”⁸ In November, 1851, as the coalized royalists wanted to begin the decisive struggle with Bonaparte, they sought, by means of their notorious “Questors Bill,” to enforce the principle of the right of the President of the National Assembly to issue direct requisitions for troops. One of their Generals, Leflô, supported the motion. In vain did Changarnier vote for it, or did Thiers render homage to the cautious wisdom of the late constitutional assembly. The Minister of War, St. Arnaud, answered him as Changarnier had answered Marrast—and he did so amidst the plaudits of the Mountain.

Thus did the party of Order itself, when as yet it was not the National Assembly, when as yet it was only a Ministry, brand the parliamentary regime. And yet this party objects vociferously when the 2d of December, 1851, banishes that

⁸ Intelligent bayonets.

régime from France!

We wish it a happy journey.

III.

On May 29, 1849, the legislative National Assembly convened. On December 2, 1851, it was broken up. This period embraces the term of life of the CONSTITUTIONAL or PARLIAMENTARY REPUBLIC.

In the first French revolution, upon the reign of the CONSTITUTIONALISTS succeeds that of the GIRONDINS; and upon the reign of the GIRONDINS follows that of the JACOBINS. Each of these parties in succession rests upon its more advanced element. So soon as it has carried the revolution far enough not to be able to keep pace with, much less march ahead of it, it is shoved aside by its more daring allies, who stand behind it, and it is sent to the guillotine. Thus the revolution moves along an upward line.

Just the reverse in 1848. The proletarian party appears as an appendage to the small traders' or democratic party; it is betrayed by the latter and allowed to fall on April 16, May 15, and in the June days. In its turn, the democratic party leans upon the shoulders of the bourgeois republicans; barely do the bourgeois republicans believe themselves firmly in power, than they shake off these troublesome associates for the purpose of themselves leaning upon the shoulders of the party of Order. The party of Order draws in its shoulders, lets the bourgeois republicans tumble down heels over head, and throws itself upon the shoulders of the armed power. Finally, still of the mind that it is sustained by the shoulders of the armed power, the party of Order notices one fine morning that these shoulders have turned into bayonets. Each party kicks backward at those that are pushing forward, and leans forward upon those that are crowding backward; no wonder that, in this ludicrous posture, each loses its balance, and, after having cut the unavoidable grimaces, breaks down amid singular somersaults. Accordingly, the revolution moves along a downward line. It finds itself in this retreating motion before the last February-barricade is cleared away, and the first governmental authority of the revolution has been constituted.

The period we now have before us embraces the motliest jumble of crying contradictions: constitutionalists, who openly conspire against the Constitution;

revolutionists, who admittedly are constitutional; a National Assembly, that wishes to be omnipotent, yet ever remains parliamentary; a Mountain, that finds its occupation in submission, and that parries its present defeats with prophecies of future victories; royalists, who constitute the “patres conscripti” of the republic, and are compelled by the situation to uphold abroad the hostile monarchic houses, whose adherents they are, while in France they support the republic, that they hate; an Executive power that finds its strength in its very weakness, and its dignity in the contempt that it inspires; a republic, that is nothing else than the combined infamy of two monarchies—the Restoration and the July Monarchy—with an imperial label; unions, whose first clause is disunion; struggles, whose first law is indecision; in the name of peace, barren and hollow agitation; in the name of the revolution, solemn sermonizings on peace; passions without truth; truths without passion; heroes without heroism; history without events; development, whose only moving force seems to be the calendar, and tiresome by the constant iteration of the same tensions and relaxes; contrasts, that seem to intensify themselves periodically, only in order to wear themselves off and collapse without a solution; pretentious efforts made for show, and bourgeois frights at the danger of the destruction of the world, simultaneous with the carrying on of the pettiest intrigues and the performance of court comedies by the world’s saviours, who, in their “laissez aller,” recall the Day of Judgment not so much as the days of the Fronde; the official collective genius of France brought to shame by the artful stupidity of a single individual; the collective will of the nation, as often as it speaks through the general suffrage, seeking its true expression in the prescriptive enemies of the public interests until it finally finds it in the arbitrary will of a filibuster. If ever a slice from history is drawn black upon black, it is this. Men and events appear as reversed “Schlemiels,”⁹ as shadows, the bodies of which have been lost. The revolution itself paralyzes its own apostles, and equips only its adversaries with passionate violence. When the “Red Spectre,” constantly conjured up and exorcised by the counter-revolutionists, finally does appear, it does not appear with the Anarchist Phrygian cap on its head, but in the uniform of Order, in the RED

⁹ The hero in Chamisso’s “Peter Schlemihl,” who loses his own shadow.

BREECHES OF THE FRENCH SOLDIER.

We saw that the Ministry, which Bonaparte installed on December 20, 1849, the day of his “Ascension,” was a Ministry of the party of Order, of the Legitimist and Orleanist coalition. The Barrot-Falloux Ministry had weathered the republican constitutive convention, whose term of life it had shortened with more or less violence, and found itself still at the helm. Changarnier, the General of the allied royalists, continued to unite in his person the command-in-chief of the First Military Division and of the Parisian National Guard. Finally, the general elections had secured the large majority in the National Assembly to the party of Order. Here the Deputies and Peers of Louis Philippe met a saintly crowd of Legitimists, for whose benefit numerous ballots of the nation had been converted into admission tickets to the political stage. The Bonapartist representatives were too thinly sowed to be able to build an independent parliamentary party. They appeared only as “mauvaise queue”¹⁰ played upon the party of Order. Thus the party of Order was in possession of the Government, of the Army, and of the legislative body, in short, of the total power of the State, morally strengthened by the general elections, that caused their sovereignty to appear as the will of the people, and by the simultaneous victory of the counter-revolution on the whole continent of Europe.

Never did {a} party open its campaign with larger means at its disposal and under more favorable auspices.

The shipwrecked pure republicans found themselves in the legislative National Assembly melted down to a clique of fifty men, with the African Generals Cavaignac, Lamorcière and Bedeau at its head. The great OPPOSITION party was, however, formed by the Mountain. This parliamentary baptismal name was given to itself by the SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC party. It disposed of more than two hundred votes out of the seven hundred and fifty in the National Assembly, and, hence, was at least just as powerful as any one of the three factions of the party of Order. Its relative minority to the total royalist coalition seemed counterbalanced by special circumstances: Not only did the Departmental election returns show that it had gained a considerable following among the rural population, but, furthermore, it

¹⁰ Practical joke.

numbered almost all the Paris Deputies in its camp; the Army had, by the election of three under-officers, made a confession of democratic faith; and the leader of the Mountain, Ledru-Rollin, had, in contrast to all the representatives of the party of Order, been raised to the rank of the “parliamentary nobility” by five Departments, who combined their suffrages upon him. Accordingly, in view of the inevitable collisions of the royalists among themselves, on the one hand, and of the whole party of Order with Bonaparte, on the other, the Mountain seemed, on May 29, 1849, to have before it all the elements of success. A fortnight later, it had lost everything, its honor included.

Before we follow this parliamentary history any further, a few observations are necessary, in order to avoid certain common deceptions concerning the whole character of the epoch that lies before us. According to the view of the democrats, the issue, during the period of the legislative National Assembly, was, the same as during the period of the constitutive assembly, simply the struggle between republicans and royalists; the movement itself was summed up by them in the catch-word REACTION—night, in which all cats are grey, and allows them to draw out their drowsy commonplaces. Indeed, at first sight, the party of ORDER presents the appearance of a tangle of royalist factions, that, not only intrigue against each other, each aiming to raise its own Pretender to the throne, and exclude the Pretender of the opposite party, but also are all united in a common hatred for and common attacks against the “Republic.” On its side, the MOUNTAIN appears, in counter-distinction to the royalist conspiracy, as the representative of the “Republic.” The party of ORDER seems constantly engaged in a “Reaction,” which, neither more nor less than in Prussia, is directed against the press, the right of association and the like, and is enforced by brutal police interventions on the part of the bureaucracy, the police and the public prosecutor—just as in Prussia; the MOUNTAIN, on the contrary, is engaged with equal assiduity in parrying these attacks, and thus in defending the “eternal rights of man”—as every so-called people’s party has more or less done for the last hundred and fifty years. At a closer inspection, however, of the situation and of the parties, this superficial appearance, which veils the CLASS STRUGGLE, together with the peculiar physiognomy of this period, vanishes wholly.



Louis Bonaparte Caricature

"Neither the one nor the other!"

France repelling advances of Prince Joinville (left) and Louis Bonaparte (right) in election for the presidency.

(By Honore Daumier, 1851)

Legitimists and Orleanists constituted, as said before, the two large factions of the party of Order. What held these two factions to their respective Pretenders, and inversely kept them apart from each other, what else was it but the lily and the tricolor, the House of Bourbon and the House of Orleans, different shades of royalty? Under the Bourbons, LARGE LANDED PROPERTY ruled together with its parsons and lackeys; under the Orleanist, it was the high finance, large industry, large commerce, i.e., CAPITAL, with its retinue of lawyers,

professors and orators. The Legitimate kingdom was but the political expression for the hereditary rule of the landlords, as the July monarchy was but the political expression for the usurped rule of the bourgeois upstarts. What, accordingly, kept these two factions apart was no so-called set of principles, it was their material conditions for life—two different sorts of property—; it was the old antagonism of the City and the Country, the rivalry between Capital and Landed property. That simultaneously old recollections; personal animosities, fears and hopes; prejudices and illusions; sympathies and antipathies; convictions, faith and principles bound these factions to one House or the other, who denies it? Upon the several forms of property, upon the social conditions of existence, a whole superstructure is reared of various and peculiarly shaped feelings, illusions, habits of thought and conceptions of life. The whole class produces and shapes these out of its material foundation and out of the corresponding social conditions. The individual unit to whom they flow through tradition and education, may fancy that they constitute the true reasons for and premises of his conduct. Although Orleanists and Legitimists, each of these factions, sought to make itself and the other believe that what kept the two apart

was the attachment of each to its respective royal House, nevertheless, facts proved later that it rather was their divided interests that forbade the union of the two royal Houses. As, in private life, the distinction is made between what a man thinks of himself and says, and that which he really is and does, so, all the more, must the phrases and notions of parties in historic struggles be distinguished from their real organism, and their real interests, their notions and their reality. Orleanists and Legitimists found themselves in the republic beside each other with equal claims. Each side wishing, in opposition to the other, to carry out the restoration of its own royal House, meant nothing else than that each of the two great INTERESTS into which the bourgeoisie is divided—Land and Capital—sought to restore its own supremacy and the subordination of the other. We speak of two bourgeois interests because large landed property, despite its feudal coquetry and pride of race, has become completely bourgeois through the development of modern society. Thus did the Tories of England long fancy that they were enthusiastic for the Kingdom, the Church and the beauties of the old English Constitution, until the day of danger wrung from them the admission that their enthusiasm was only for GROUND-RENT.

The coalized royalists carried on their intrigues against each other in the press, in Ems, in Clarmont—outside of the parliament. Behind the scenes, they don again their old Orleanist and Legitimist liveries, and conduct their old tourneys; on the public stage, however, in their public acts, as a great parliamentary party, they dispose of their respective royal Houses with mere courtesies, adjourn “in infinitum” the restoration of the monarchy. Their real business is transacted as PARTY OF ORDER, i.e., under a SOCIAL, not a POLITICAL title; as representatives of the bourgeois social-system; not as knights of traveling princesses, but as the bourgeois class against the other classes; not as royalists against republicans. Indeed, as party of Order they exercised a more unlimited and harder dominion over the other classes of society than ever before either under the restoration or the July monarchy—a thing possible only under the form of a parliamentary republic, because under this form alone could the two large divisions of the French bourgeoisie be united; in other words, only under this form could they place on the order of business the sovereignty of their class, in lieu of the régime of a privileged

faction of the same. If, this notwithstanding, they are seen as the party of Order to insult the republic and express their antipathy for it, it happened not out of royalist traditions only: Instinct taught them that while, indeed, the republic completes their authority, it at the same time undermined their social foundation, in that, without intermediary, without the mask of the crown, without being able to turn aside the national interest by means of its subordinate struggles among its own conflicting elements and with the crown, the republic is compelled to stand up sharp against the subjugated classes, and wrestle with them. It was a sense of weakness that caused them to recoil before the unqualified demands of their own class rule, and to retreat to the less complete, less developed, and, for that very reason, less dangerous forms of the same. As often, on the contrary, as the allied royalists come into conflict with the Pretender who stands before them—with Bonaparte—, as often as they believe their parliamentary omnipotence to be endangered by the Executive, in other words, as often as they must trot out the political title of their authority, they step up as REPUBLICANS, not as ROYALISTS—and this is done from the Orleanist Thiers, who warns the National Assembly that the republic divides them least, down to Legitimist Berryer, who, on December 2, 1851, the scarf of the tricolor around him, harangues the people assembled before the Mayor's building of the Tenth Arrondissement, as a tribune in the name of the Republic; the echo, however, derisively answering back to him: "Henry V.! Henry V.!"¹¹

However, against the allied bourgeois, a coalition was made between the small traders and the workingmen—the so-called SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC party. The small traders found themselves ill rewarded after the June days of 1848; they saw their material interests endangered, and the democratic guarantees, that were to uphold their interests, made doubtful. Hence, they drew closer to the workingmen. On the other hand, their parliamentary representatives—the MOUNTAIN—, after being shoved aside during the dictatorship of the bourgeois republicans, had, during the last half of the term of the constitutive convention, regained their lost popularity through the struggle with Bonaparte and the royalist ministers. They had made an alliance with the Socialist leaders. During February, 1849,

¹¹ The candidate of the Bourbons, or Legitimists, for the throne.

reconciliation banquets were held. A common program was drafted, joint election committees were empanelled, and fusion candidates were set up. The revolutionary point was thereby broken off from the social demands of the proletariat, and a democratic turn given to them; while, from the democratic claims of the small traders' class, the mere political form was rubbed off and the Socialist point was pushed forward. Thus came the SOCIAL DEMOCRACY about. The new MOUNTAIN, the result of this combination, contained, with the exception of some figures from the working class and some Socialist sectarians, the identical elements of the old Mountain, only numerically stronger. In the course of events it had, however, changed, together with the class that it represented. The peculiar character of the Social Democracy is summed up in this: that democratic-republican institutions are demanded as the means, not to remove the two extremes—Capital and Wage-slavery—, but in order to weaken their antagonism and transform them into a harmonious whole. However different the methods may be that are proposed for the accomplishment of this object, however much the object itself may be festooned with more or less revolutionary fancies, the substance remains the same. This substance is the transformation of society upon democratic lines, but a transformation within the boundaries of the small traders' class. No one must run away with the narrow notion that the small traders' class means on principle to enforce a selfish class interest. It believes rather that the special conditions for its own emancipation are the general conditions under which alone modern society can be saved and the class struggle avoided. Likewise must we avoid running away with the notion that the Democratic Representatives are all “shopkeepers,” or enthuse for these. They may—by education and individual standing—be as distant from them as heaven is from earth. That which makes them representatives of the small traders' class is that they do not intellectually leap the bounds which that class itself does not leap in practical life; that, consequently, they are theoretically driven to the same problems and solutions, to which material interests and social standing practically drive the latter. Such, in fact, is at all times the relation of the “political” and the “literary” representatives of a class to the class they represent.

After the foregoing explanations, it goes without saying that, while the Mountain is constantly wrestling for the republic and the so-called “rights of man,”

neither the republic nor the “rights of man” is its real goal, as little as an army, whose weapons it is sought to deprive it of and that defends itself, steps on the field of battle simply in order to remain in possession of its implements of warfare.

The party of Order provoked the Mountain immediately upon the convening of the assembly. The bourgeoisie now felt the necessity of disposing of the democratic small traders’ class, just as a year before it had understood the necessity of putting an end to the revolutionary proletariat.

But the position of the foe had changed. The strength of the proletarian party was on the streets; that of the small traders’ class was in the National Assembly itself. The point was, accordingly, to wheedle them out of the National Assembly into the street, and to have them break their parliamentary power themselves, before time and opportunity could consolidate them. The Mountain jumped with loose reins into the trap.

The bombardment of Rome by the French troops was the bait thrown at the Mountain. It violated Article V. of the Constitution, which forbade the French republic to use its forces against the liberties of other nations; besides, Article IV. forbade all declaration of war by the Executive without the consent of the National Assembly; furthermore, the constitutive assembly had censured the Roman expedition by its resolution of May 8. Upon these grounds, Ledru-Rollin submitted on June 11, 1849, a motion impeaching Bonaparte and his Ministers. Instigated by the wasp-stings of Thiers, he even allowed himself to be carried away to the point of threatening to defend the Constitution by all means, even arms in hand. The Mountain rose as one man, and repeated the challenge. On June 12, the National Assembly rejected the motion to impeach, and the Mountain left the parliament. The events of June 13 are known: the proclamation by a part of the Mountain pronouncing Napoleon and his Ministers “outside the pale of the Constitution”; the street parades of the democratic National Guards, who, unarmed as they were, flew apart at contact with the troops of Changarnier; etc., etc. Part of the Mountain fled abroad, another part was assigned to the High Court of Bourges, and a parliamentary regulation placed the rest under the school-master supervision of the President of the National Assembly. Paris was again put under a state of siege; and the democratic portion of the National Guards was disbanded. Thus the influence of

the Mountain in parliament was broken, together with the power of the small traders' class in Paris.

Lyons, where the 13th of June had given the signal to a bloody labor uprising, was, together with the five surrounding Departments, likewise pronounced in state of siege, a condition that continues down to this moment.¹²

The bulk of the Mountain had left its vanguard in the lurch by refusing their signatures to the proclamation; the press had deserted: only two papers dared to publish the pronunciamiento; the small traders had betrayed their Representatives: the National Guards stayed away, or, where they did turn up, hindered the raising of barricades; the Representatives had duped the small traders: nowhere were the alleged affiliated members from the Army to be seen; finally, instead of gathering strength from them, the democratic party had infected the proletariat with its own weakness, and, as usual with democratic feats, the leaders had the satisfaction of charging "their people" with desertion, and the people had the satisfaction of charging their leaders with fraud.

Seldom was an act announced with greater noise than the campaign contemplated by the Mountain; seldom was an event trumpeted ahead with more certainty and longer beforehand than the "inevitable victory of the democracy." This is evident: the democrats believe in the trombones before whose blasts the walls of Jericho fall together; as often as they stand before the walls of despotism, they seek to imitate the miracle. If the Mountain wished to win in parliament, it should not appeal to arms; if it called to arms in parliament, it should not conduct itself parliamentarily on the street; if the friendly demonstration was meant seriously, it was silly not to foresee that it would meet with a warlike reception; if it was intended for actual war, it was rather original to lay aside the weapons with which war had to be conducted. But the revolutionary threats of the middle class and of their democratic representatives are mere attempts to frighten an adversary; when they have run themselves into a blind alley, when they have sufficiently compromised themselves and are compelled to execute their threats, the thing is done in a hesitating manner that avoids nothing so much as the means to the end,

¹² January, 1852.

and catches at pretexts to succumb. The bray of the overture, that announces the fray, is lost in a timid growl so soon as this is to start; the actors cease to take themselves seriously, and the performance falls flat like an inflated balloon that is pricked with a needle.

No party exaggerates to itself the means at its disposal more than the democratic, none deceives itself with greater heedlessness on the situation. A part of the Army voted for it, thereupon the Mountain is of the opinion that the Army would revolt in its favor. And by what occasion? By an occasion, that, from the standpoint of the troops, meant nothing else than that the revolutionary soldiers should take the part of the soldiers of Rome against French soldiers. On the other hand, the memory of June, 1848, was still too fresh not to keep alive a deep aversion on the part of the proletariat towards the National Guard, and a strong feeling of mistrust on the part of the leaders of the secret societies for the democratic leaders. In order to balance these differences, great common interests at stake were needed. The violation of an abstract constitutional paragraph could not supply such interests. Had not the constitution been repeatedly violated, according to the assurances of the democrats themselves? Had not the most popular papers branded them as a counter-revolutionary artifice? But the democrat—by reason of his representing the middle class, that is to say, a **TRANSITION CLASS**, in which the interests of two other classes are mutually dulled—, imagines himself above all class contrast. The democrats grant that opposed to them stands a privileged class, but they, together with the whole remaining mass of the nation, constitute the “**PEOPLE**.” What they represent is the “people’s rights”; their interests are the “people’s interests.” Hence, they do not consider that, at an impending struggle, they need to examine the interests and attitude of the different classes. They need not too seriously weigh their own means. All they have to do is to give the signal in order to have the “people” fall upon the “oppressors” with all its inexhaustible resources. If, thereupon, in the execution, their interests turn out to be uninteresting, and their power to be impotence, it is ascribed either to depraved sophists, who split up the “undivisible {indivisible?} people” into several hostile camps; or to the army being too far brutalized and blinded to appreciate the pure aims of the democracy as its own best; or to some detail in the execution that wrecks

the whole plan; or, finally, to an unforeseen accident that spoiled the game this time. At all events, the democrat comes out of the disgraceful defeat as immaculate as he went innocently into it, and with the refreshed conviction that he must win; not that he himself and his party must give up their old standpoint, but that, on the contrary, conditions must come to his aid.

For all this, one must not picture to himself the decimated, broken, and, by the new parliamentary regulation, humbled Mountain altogether too unhappy. If June 13 removed its leaders, it, on the other hand, made room for new ones of inferior capacity, who are flattered by their new position. If their impotence in parliament could no longer be doubted, they were now justified to limit their activity to outbursts of moral indignation. If the party of Order pretended to see in them, as the last official representatives of the revolution, all the horrors of anarchy incarnated, they were free to appear all the more flat and modest in reality. Over June 13 they consoled themselves with the profound expression: “If they but dare to assail universal suffrage . . . then . . . then we will show who we are!” Nous verrons.¹³

As to the “Mountaineers,” who had fled abroad, it suffices here to say that Ledru-Rollin—he having accomplished the feat of hopelessly ruining, in barely a fortnight, the powerful party at whose head he stood—, found himself called upon to build up a French government “in partibus;” that his figure, at a distance, removed from the field of action, seemed to gain in size in the measure that the level of the revolution sank and the official prominences of official France became more and more dwarfish; that he could figure as republican Pretender for 1852, and periodically issued to the Wallachians and other peoples circulars in which “despot of the continent,” is threatened with the feats that he and his allies had in contemplation. Was Proudhon wholly wrong when he cried out to these gentlemen: “Vous n’êtes que des blaqueurs”?¹⁴

The party of Order had, on June 13, not only broken up the Mountain, it had also established the SUBORDINATION OF THE CONSTITUTION TO THE MAJORITY DECISIONS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. So, indeed, did the

¹³ We shall see.

¹⁴ You are all fakirs.

republic understand it, to wit, that the bourgeoisie ruled here in parliamentary form, without, as in the monarchy, finding a check in the veto of the Executive power, or the liability of parliament to dissolution. It was a “parliamentary republic,” as Thiers styled it. But if, on June 13, the bourgeoisie secured its omnipotence within the parliament building, did it not also strike the parliament itself, as against the Executive and the people, with incurable weakness by excluding its most popular part? By giving up numerous Deputies, without further ceremony, to the mercies of the public prosecutor, it abolished its own parliamentary inviolability. The humiliating regulation, that it subjected the Mountain to, raised the President of the republic in the same measure that it lowered the individual Representatives of the people. By branding an insurrection in defence of the Constitution as anarchy, and as a deed looking to the overthrow of society, it interdicted to itself all appeal to insurrection whenever the Executive should violate the Constitution against it. And, indeed, the irony of history wills it that the very General, who by order of Bonaparte bombarded Rome, and thus gave the immediate occasion to the constitutional riot of June 13, that OUDINOT, on December 2, 1851, is the one imploringly and vainly to be offered to the people by the party of Order as the General of the Constitution. Another hero of June 13, Vieyra, who earned praise from the tribune of the National Assembly for the brutalities that he had committed in the democratic newspaper offices at the head of a gang of National Guards in the hire of the high finance—this identical Vieyra was initiated in the conspiracy of Bonaparte, and contributed materially in cutting off all protection that could come to the National Assembly, in the hour of its agony, from the side of the National Guard.

June 13 had still another meaning. The Mountain had wanted to place Bonaparte under charges. Their defeat was, accordingly, a direct victory of Bonaparte; it was his personal triumph over his democratic enemies. The party of Order fought for the victory, Bonaparte needed only to pocket it. He did so. On June 14, a proclamation was to be read on the walls of Paris wherein the President, as it were, without his connivance, against his will, driven by the mere force of circumstances, steps forward from his cloisterly seclusion like misjudged virtue, complains of the calumnies of his antagonists, and, while seeming to identify his

own person with the cause of order, rather identifies the cause of order with his own person. Besides this, the National Assembly had subsequently approved the expedition against Rome; Bonaparte, however, had taken the initiative in the affair. After he had led the High Priest Samuel back into the Vatican, he could hope as King David to occupy the Tuileries. He had won the parson-interests over to himself.

The riot of June 13 limited itself, as we have seen, to a peaceful street procession. There were, consequently, no laurels to be won from it. Nevertheless, in these days, poor in heroes and events, the party of Order converted this bloodless battle into a second Austerlitz. Tribune and press lauded the army as the power of order against the popular multitude, and the impotence of anarchy; and Changarnier as the “bulwark of society”—a mystification that he finally believed in himself. Underhand, however, the corps that seemed doubtful were removed from Paris; the regiments whose suffrage had turned out most democratic were banished from France to Algiers; the restless heads among the troops were consigned to penal quarters; finally, the shutting out of the press from the barracks, and of the barracks from contact with the citizens was systematically carried out.

We stand here at the critical turning point in the history of the French National Guard. In 1830, it had decided the downfall of the restoration. Under Louis Philippe, every riot failed, at which the National Guard stood on the side of the troops. When, in the February days of 1848, it showed itself passive against the uprising and doubtful towards Louis Philippe himself, he gave himself up for lost. Thus the conviction cast root that a revolution could not win without, nor the Army against the National Guard. This was the superstitious faith of the Army in bourgeois omnipotence. The June days of 1848, when the whole National Guard, jointly with the regular troops, threw down the insurrection, had confirmed the superstition. After the inauguration of Bonaparte’s administration, the position of the National Guard sank somewhat through the unconstitutional joining of their command with the command of the First Military Division in the person of Changarnier.

As the command of the National Guard appeared here merely an attribute of the military commander-in-chief, so did the Guard itself appear only as an

appendage of the regular troops. Finally, on June 13, the National Guard was broken up, not through its partial dissolution only, that from that date forward was periodically repeated at all points of France, leaving only wrecks of its former self behind. The demonstration of June 13 was, above all, a demonstration of the National Guards. True, they had not carried their arms, but they had carried their uniforms against the Army—and the talisman lay just in these uniforms. The Army then learned that this uniform was but a woolen rag, like any other. The spell was broken. In the June days of 1848, bourgeoisie and small traders were united as National Guard with the Army against the proletariat; on June 13, 1849, the bourgeoisie has the small-traders' National Guard broken up; on December 2, 1851, the National Guard of the bourgeoisie itself vanished, and Bonaparte attested the fact when he subsequently signed the decree for its disbandment. Thus the bourgeoisie had itself broken its last weapon against the army, from the moment when the small traders' class no longer stood as a vassal behind, but as a rebel before it; indeed, it was bound to do so, as it was bound to destroy with its own hands all its means of defence against absolutism, so soon as itself was absolute.

In the meantime, the party of Order celebrated the recovery of a power that seemed lost in 1848 only in order that, freed from its trammels in 1849, it be found again through invectives against the republic and the Constitution; through the malediction of all future, present and past revolutions, that one included which its own leaders had made; and, finally, in laws by which the press was gagged, the right of association destroyed, and the state of siege regulated as an organic institution. The National Assembly then adjourned from the middle of August to the middle of October, after it had appointed a Permanent Committee for the period of its absence. During these vacations, the Legitimists intrigued with Ems; the Orleanists with Claremont; Bonaparte through princely excursions; the Departmental Councilmen in conferences over the revision of the Constitution;—occurrences, all of which recurred regularly at the periodical vacations of the National Assembly, and upon which I shall not enter until they have matured into events. Be it here only observed that the National Assembly was impolitic in vanishing from the stage for long intervals, and leaving in view, at the head of the republic, only one, however sorry, figure—Louis Bonaparte's—, while, to

the public scandal, the party of Order broke up into its own royalist component parts, that pursued their conflicting aspirations after the restoration. As often as, during these vacations, the confusing noise of the parliament was hushed, and its body was dissolved in the nation, it was unmistakably shown that only one thing was still wanting to complete the true figure of the republic: to make the vacation of the National Assembly permanent, and substitute its inscription—"Liberty, Equality, Fraternity"—by the unequivocal words, "Infantry, Cavalry, Artillery!"

IV.

The National Assembly reconvened in the middle of October. On November 1, Bonaparte surprised it with a message, in which he announced the dismissal of the Barrot-Falloux Ministry, and the framing of a new. Never have lackeys been chased from service with less ceremony than Bonaparte did his ministers. The kicks, that were eventually destined for the National Assembly, Barrot & Company received in the meantime.

The Barrot Ministry was, as we have seen, composed of Legitimists and Orleanists; it was a Ministry of the party of Order. Bonaparte needed that Ministry in order to dissolve the republican constituent assembly, to effect the expedition against Rome, and to break up the democratic party. He had seemingly eclipsed himself behind this Ministry, yielded the reins to the hands of the party of Order, and assumed the modest mask, which, under Louis Philippe, had been worn by the responsible overseer of the newspapers—the mask of “homme de paille.”¹⁵ Now he threw off the mask, it being no longer the light curtain behind which he could conceal, but the Iron Mask, which prevented him from revealing his own physiognomy. He had instituted the Barrot Ministry in order to break up the republican National Assembly in the name of the party of Order; he now dismissed it in order to declare his own name independent of the parliament of the party of Order.

There was no want of plausible pretexts for this dismissal. The Barrot Ministry had neglected even the forms of decency that would have allowed the President of the republic to appear as a power along with the National Assembly. For instance, during the vacation of the National Assembly, Bonaparte published a letter to Edgar Ney, in which he seemed to disapprove the liberal attitude of the Pope, just as, in opposition to the constitutive assembly, he had published a letter, in which he praised Oudinot for his attack upon the Roman republic; when the National Assembly came to vote on the budget for the Roman expedition, Victor Hugo, out of

¹⁵ Man of straw.

pretended liberalism, brought up that letter for discussion; the party of Order drowned this notion of Bonaparte's under exclamations of contempt and incredulity, as though notions of Bonaparte could not possibly have any political weight;—and none of the Ministers took up the gauntlet for him. On another occasion, Barrot, with his well-known hollow pathos, dropped, from the speakers' tribune in the Assembly, words of indignation upon the “abominable machinations,” which, according to him, went on in the immediate vicinity of the President. Finally, while the Ministry obtained from the National Assembly a widow's pension for the Duchess of Orleans, it denied every motion to raise the Presidential civil list,—and, in Bonaparte, be it always remembered, the Imperial Pretender was so closely blended with the impecunious adventurer, that the great idea of his being destined to restore the Empire was ever supplemented by that other, to wit, that the French people was destined to pay his debts.

The Barrot-Falloux Ministry was the first and last parliamentary Ministry that Bonaparte called into life. Its dismissal marks, accordingly, a decisive period. With the Ministry, the party of Order lost, never to regain, an indispensable post to the maintenance of the parliamentary régime,—the handle to the Executive power. It is readily understood that, in a country like France, where the Executive disposes over an army of more than half a million office-holders, and, consequently, keeps permanently a large mass of interests and existences in the completest dependence upon itself; where the Government surrounds, controls, regulates, supervises and guards society, from its mightiest acts of national life, down to its most insignificant motions: from its common life, down to the private life of each individual; where, due to such extraordinary centralization, this body of parasites acquires a ubiquity and omniscience, a quickened capacity for motion and rapidity that finds an analogon only in the helpless lack of self-reliance, in the unstrung weakness of the body social itself;—that in such a country the National Assembly lost, with the control of the ministerial posts, all real influence, unless it simultaneously simplified the administration; if possible, reduced the army of office-holders; and, finally, allowed society and public opinion to establish its own organs, independent of government censorship. But the MATERIAL INTEREST of the French bourgeoisie is most intimately bound up in maintenance of just such a large and

extensively ramified governmental machine. There the bourgeoisie provides for its own superfluous membership; and supplies, in the shape of government salaries, what it can not pocket in the form of profit, interest, rent and fees. On the other hand, its POLITICAL INTERESTS daily compel it to increase the power of repression, i.e., the means and the personnel of the government; it is at the same time forced to conduct an uninterrupted warfare against public opinion, and, full of suspicion, to hamstring and lame the independent organs of society—whenever it does not succeed in amputating them wholly. Thus the bourgeoisie of France was forced by its own class attitude, on the one hand, to destroy the conditions for all parliamentary power, its own included, and, on the other, to render irresistible the Executive power that stood hostile to it.

The new Ministry was called the d'Hautpoul Ministry. Not that General d'Hautpoul had gained the rank of Ministerial President. Along with Barrot, Bonaparte abolished this dignity, which, it must be granted, condemned the President of the republic to the legal nothingness of a constitutional king, of a constitutional king at that, without throne and crown, without sceptre and without sword, without irresponsibility, without the imperishable possession of the highest dignity in the State, and, what was most untoward of all—without a civil list. The d'Hautpoul Ministry numbered only one man of parliamentary reputation, the Jew Fould, one of the most notorious members of the high finance. To him fell the portfolio of finance. Turn to the Paris stock quotations, and it will be found that from November 1, 1849, French stocks fall and rise with the falling and rising of the Bonapartist shares. While Bonaparte had thus found his ally in the Bourse, he at the same time took possession of the Police through the appointment of Carlier as Prefect of Police.

But the consequences of the change of Ministry could reveal themselves only in the course of events. So far, Bonaparte had taken only one step forward, to be all the more glaringly driven back. Upon his harsh message, followed the most servile declarations of submissiveness to the National Assembly. As often as the Ministers made timid attempts to introduce his own personal hobbies as bills, they themselves seemed unwilling and compelled only by their position to run the comic errands, of whose futility they were convinced in advance. As often as Bonaparte blabbed out

his plans behind the backs of his Ministers, and sported his “idées napoléoniennes,”¹⁶ his own Ministers disavowed him from the speakers’ tribune in the National Assembly. His aspirations after usurpation seemed to become audible only to the end that the ironical laughter of his adversaries should not die out. He deported himself like an unappreciated genius, whom the whole world takes for a simpleton. Never did he enjoy in fuller measure the contempt of all classes than at this period. Never did the bourgeoisie rule more absolutely; never did it more boastfully display the insignia of sovereignty.

It is not here my purpose to write the history of its legislative activity, which is summed up in two laws passed during this period: the law re-establishing the duty on wine, and the laws on education, to suppress infidelity. While the drinking of wine was made difficult to the Frenchmen, all the more bounteously was the water of pure life poured out to them. Although in the law on the duty on wine the bourgeoisie declares the old hated French tariff system to be inviolable, it sought, by means of the laws on education, to secure the old good will of the masses that made the former bearable. One wonders to see the Orleanists, the liberal bourgeois, these old apostles of Voltairianism and of eclectic philosophy, entrust the supervision of the French intellect to their hereditary enemies, the Jesuits. But, while Orleanists and Legitimists could part company on the question of the Pretender to the crown, they understood full well that their joint reign dictated the joining of the means of oppression of two distinct epochs: that the means of subjugation of the July monarchy had to be supplemented with and strengthened by the means of subjugation of the restoration. The farmers, deceived in all their expectations, more than ever ground down by the low scale of the price of corn, on the one hand, and, on the other, by the growing load of taxation and mortgages, began to stir in the Departments. They were answered by the systematic baiting of the school masters, whom the Government subjected to the clergy; by the systematic baiting of the Mayors, whom it subjected to the Prefects; and by a system of espionage to which all were subjected. In Paris and the large towns, the reaction itself carries the physiognomy of its own epoch: it irritates more than it crows; in the country, it

¹⁶ Napoleonic ideas.

becomes low, mean, petty, tiresome, vexatious,—in a word, it becomes “gensdarme.” It is easily understood how three years of the gensdarme régime, sanctified by the régime of the clergyman, was bound to demoralize unripe masses.

Whatever the mass of passion and declamation, that the party of Order expended from the speakers’ tribune in the National Assembly against the minority, its speech remained monosyllabic, like that of the Christian, whose speech was to be “Aye, aye; nay, nay.” It was monosyllabic, whether from the tribune or the press; dull as a conundrum, whose solution is known beforehand. Whether the question was the right of petition or the duty on wine, the liberty of the

press or free trade, clubs or municipal laws, protection of individual freedom or the regulation of national economy, the slogan returns ever again, the theme is monotonously the same, the verdict is ever ready and unchanged: SOCIALISM! Even bourgeois liberalism is pronounced socialistic; socialistic, alike, is pronounced popular education; and, likewise, socialistic national financial reform. It was socialistic to build a railroad where already a canal was; and it was socialistic to defend oneself with a stick when attacked with a sword.

This was not a mere form of speech, a fashion, nor yet party tactics. The bourgeoisie perceives correctly that all the weapons, which it forged against feudalism, turn their edges against itself; that all the means of education, which it brought forth, rebel against its own civilization; that all the gods, which it made,



Louis Bonaparte Caricature

“In his own circles he is quite accurately referred to as the melancholy parrot.”

From Mirecourt’s biography of Napoleon III

(By William Scholz, *Kladdersadatsch*, 1860)

have fallen away from it. It understands that all its so-called citizens' rights and progressive organs assail and menace its class rule, both in its social foundation and its political superstructure—consequently, have become “socialistic.” It justly scents in this menace and assault the secret of SOCIALISM, whose meaning and tendency it estimates more correctly than the spurious, so-called Socialism, is capable of estimating itself, and which, consequently, is unable to understand how it is that the bourgeoisie obdurately shuts up its ears to it, alike whether it sentimentally whines about the sufferings of humanity; or announces in Christian style the millennium and universal brotherhood; or twaddles humanistically about the soul, culture and freedom; or doctrinally hatches out a system of harmony and well-being for all classes. What, however, the bourgeoisie does not understand is the consequence that its own parliamentary régime, its own political reign, is also of necessity bound to fall under the general ban of “socialistic.” So long as the rule of the bourgeoisie is not fully organized, has not acquired its purely political character, the contrast with the other classes cannot come into view in all its sharpness; and, where it does come into view, it cannot take that dangerous turn that converts every conflict with the Government into a conflict with Capital. When, however, the French bourgeoisie began to realize in every pulsation of society a menace to “peace,” how could it, at the head of society, pretend to uphold the régime of unrest, its own régime, the parliamentary régime, which, according to the expression of one of its own orators, lives in struggle, and through struggle? The parliamentary régime lives on discussion,—how can it forbid discussion? Every single interest, every single social institution is there converted into general thoughts, is treated as a thought,—how could any interest or institution claim to be above thought, and impose itself as an article of faith? The orators' conflict in the tribune calls forth the conflict of the rowdies in the press; the debating club in parliament is necessarily supplemented by debating clubs in the salons and the bar-rooms; the representatives, who are constantly appealing to popular opinion, justify popular opinion in expressing its real opinion in petitions. The parliamentary régime leaves everything to the decision of majorities,—how can the large majorities beyond parliament be expected not to wish to decide? If, from above, they hear the fiddle screeching, what else is to be expected than that those below should dance?

Accordingly, by now persecuting as SOCIALIST what formerly it had celebrated as LIBERAL, the bourgeoisie admits that its own interest orders it to raise itself above the danger of self government; that, in order to restore rest to the land, its own bourgeois parliament must, before all, be brought to rest; that, in order to preserve its social power unhurt, its political power must be broken; that the private bourgeois can continue to exploit the other classes and rejoice in “property,” “family,” “religion” and “order” only under the condition that his own class be condemned to the same political nullity of the other classes; that, in order to save their purse, the crown must be knocked off their heads, and the sword, that was to shield them, must at the same time be hung over their heads as a sword of Damocles.

In the domain of general bourgeois interests, the National Assembly proved itself so barren, that, for instance, the discussion over the Paris-Avignon railroad, opened in the winter of 1850, was not yet ripe for a vote on December 2, 1851. Wherever it did not oppress or was reactionary, the bourgeoisie was smitten with incurable barrenness.

While Bonaparte’s Ministry either sought to take the initiative of laws in the spirit of the party of Order, or even exaggerated their severity in their enforcement and administration, he, on his part, sought to win popularity by means of childishly silly propositions, to exhibit the contrast between himself and the National Assembly, and to hint at a secret plan, held in reserve and only through circumstances temporarily prevented from disclosing its hidden treasures to the French people. Of this nature was the proposition to decree a daily extra pay of four sous to the under-officers; so, likewise, the proposition for a “word of honor” loan bank for workingmen. To have money given and money borrowed—that was the perspective that he hoped to cajole the masses with. Presents and loans—to that was limited the financial wisdom of the slums, the high as well as the low; to that were limited the springs which Bonaparte knew how to set in motion. Never did {a} Pretender speculate more dully upon the dullness of the masses.

Again and again did the National Assembly fly into a passion at these unmistakable attempts to win popularity at its expense, and at the growing danger that this adventurer, lashed on by debts and unrestrained by reputation, might

venture upon some desperate act. The strained relations between the party of Order and the President had taken on a threatening aspect, when an unforeseen event threw him back, rueful, into its arms. We mean the supplementary elections of March, 1850. These elections took place to fill the vacancies created in the National Assembly, after June 13, by imprisonment and exile. Paris elected only Social-Democratic candidates; it even united the largest vote upon one of the insurgents of June, 1848,—Deflotte. In this way the small traders' world of Paris, now allied with the proletariat, revenged itself for the defeat of June 13, 1849. It seemed to have disappeared from the field of battle at the hour of danger only to step on it again at a more favorable opportunity, with increased forces for the fray, and with a bolder war cry. A circumstance seemed to heighten the danger of this electoral victory. The Army voted in Paris for a June insurgent against Lahitte, a Minister of Bonaparte's, and, in the Departments, mostly for the candidates of the Mountain, who, there also, although not as decisively as in Paris, maintained the upper hand over their adversaries.

Bonaparte suddenly saw himself again face to face with the revolution. As on January 29, 1849, as on June 13, 1849, on May 10, 1850, he vanished again behind the party of Order. He bent low; he timidly apologized; he offered to appoint any Ministry whatever at the behest of the parliamentary majority; he even implored the Orleanist and Legitimist party leaders—the Thiers, Berryers, Broglies, Molés, in short, the so-called burgraves—to take hold of the helm of State in person. The party of Order did not know how to utilize this opportunity, that was never to return. Instead of boldly taking possession of the proffered power, it did not even force Bonaparte to restore the Ministry, dismissed on November 1; it contented itself with humiliating him with its pardon, and with affiliating Mr. Baroche to the d'Hautpoul Ministry. This Baroche had, as Public Prosecutor, stormed before the High Court at Bourges, once against the revolutionists of May 15, another time against the Democrats of June 13, both times on the charge of “attentats” against the National Assembly. None of Bonaparte's Ministers contributed later more towards the degradation of the National Assembly; and, after December 2, 1851, we meet him again as the comfortably installed and dearly paid Vice-President of the Senate. He had spat into the soup of the revolutionists for Bonaparte to eat it.

On its part, the Social Democratic party seemed only to look for pretexts in order to make its own victory doubtful, and to dull its edge. Vidal, one of the newly elected Paris representatives, was returned for Strassburg also. He was induced to decline the seat for Paris and accept the one for Strassburg. Thus, instead of giving a definite character to their victory at the hustings, and thereby compel the party of Order forthwith to contest it in parliament; instead of thus driving the foe to battle at the season of popular enthusiasm and of a favorable temper in the Army, the democratic party tired out Paris with a new campaign during the months of March and April; it allowed the excited popular passions to wear themselves out in this second provisional electoral play; it allowed the revolutionary vigor to satiate itself with constitutional successes, and lose its breath in petty intrigues, hollow declamation and sham moves; it gave the bourgeoisie time to collect itself and make its preparations; finally, it allowed the significance of the March elections to find a sentimentally weakening commentary at the subsequent April election in the victory of Eugene Sue. In one word, it turned the 10th of March into an April Fool.

The parliamentary majority perceived the weakness of its adversary. Its seventeen burgraves—Bonaparte had left to it the direction of and responsibility for the attack—, framed a new election law, the moving of which was entrusted to Mr. Faucher, who had applied for the honor. On May 8, he introduced the new law, whereby universal suffrage was abolished; a three years' residence in the election district imposed as a condition for voting; and, finally, the proof of this residence made dependent, for the workingman, upon the testimony of his employer.

As revolutionarily as the democrats had agitated and stormed during the constitutional struggles, so constitutionally did they, now, when it was imperative to attest, arms in hand, the earnestness of their late electoral victories, preach order, "majestic calmness," lawful conduct, i.e., blind submission to the will of the counter-revolution, which revealed itself as law. During the debate, the Mountain put the party of Order to shame by maintaining the passionless attitude of the law-abiding burger, who upholds the principle of law against revolutionary passions; and by twitting the party of Order with the fearful reproach of proceeding in a revolutionary manner. Even the newly elected deputies took pains to prove by their decent and thoughtful deportment what an act of misjudgment it was to decry them

as anarchists, or explain their election as a victory of the revolution. The new election law was passed on May 31. The Mountain contented itself with smuggling a protest into the pockets of the President of the Assembly. To the election law followed a new press law, whereby the revolutionary newspaper press was completely done away with. It had deserved its fate. The “National” and the “Presse,” two bourgeois organs, remained after this deluge the extreme outposts of the revolution.

We have seen how, during March and April, the democratic leaders did everything to involve the people of Paris in a sham battle, and how, after May 8, they did everything to keep it away from a real battle. We may not here forget that the year 1850 was one of the most brilliant years of industrial and commercial prosperity; consequently, that the Parisian proletariat was completely employed. But the election law of May 31, 1850, excluded them from all participation in political power; it cut the field of battle itself from under them; it threw the workingmen back into the state of pariahs, which they had occupied before the February revolution. In allowing themselves, in sight of such an occurrence, to be led by the democrats, and in forgetting the revolutionary interests of their class through temporary comfort, the workingmen abdicated the honor of being a conquering power; they submitted to their fate; they proved that the defeat of June, 1848, had incapacitated them from resistance for many a year to come; finally, that the historic process must again, for the time being, proceed over their heads. As to the small traders’ democracy, which, on June 13, had cried out: “If they but dare to assail, universal suffrage . . . then . . . then we will show who we are!”—they now consoled themselves with the thought that the counter-revolutionary blow, which had struck them, was no blow at all, and that the law of May 31 was no law. On May 2, 1852, according to them, every Frenchman would appear at the hustings, in one hand the ballot, in the other the sword. With this prophecy they set their hearts at ease. Finally, the Army was punished by its superiors for the elections of May and April, 1850, as it was punished for the election of May 29, 1849. This time, however, it said to itself determinately: “The revolution shall not cheat us a third time.”

The law of May 31, 1850, was the “coup d’état” of the bourgeoisie. All its

previous conquests over the revolution had only a temporary character: They became uncertain the moment the National Assembly stepped off the stage; they depended upon the accident of general elections, and the history of the elections since 1848 proved irrefutably that, in the same measure as the actual reign of the bourgeoisie gathered strength, its moral reign over the masses wore off. Universal suffrage pronounced itself on May 10 pointedly against the reign {of the} bourgeoisie; the bourgeoisie answered with the banishment of universal suffrage. The law of May 31 was, accordingly, one of the necessities of the class struggle. On the other hand, the constitution required a minimum of two million votes for the valid election of the President of the republic. If none of the Presidential candidates polled this minimum, then the National Assembly was to elect the President out of the three candidates polling the highest votes. At the time that the constitutive body made this law, ten million voters were registered on the election rolls. In its opinion, accordingly, one-fifth of the qualified voters sufficed to make a choice for President valid. The law of May 31 struck at least three million voters off the rolls, reduced the number of qualified voters to seven millions, and yet, notwithstanding, it kept the lawful minimum at two millions for the election of a President. Accordingly, it raised the lawful minimum from a fifth to almost a third of the qualified voters, i.e., it did all it could to smuggle the Presidential election out of the hands of the people into those of the National Assembly. Thus, by the election law of May 31, the party of Order seemed to have doubly secured its empire, in that it placed the election of both the National Assembly and the President of the republic in the keeping of the stable portion of society.

V.

The strife immediately broke out again between the National Assembly and Bonaparte, so soon as the revolutionary crisis was weathered, and universal suffrage was abolished.

The Constitution had fixed the salary of Bonaparte at 600,000 francs. Barely half a year after his installation, he succeeded in raising this sum to its double: Odillon Barrot had wrung from the constitutive assembly a yearly allowance of 600,000 francs for so-called representation expenses. After June 13, Bonaparte hinted at similar solicitations, to which, however, Barrot then turned a deaf ear. Now, after May 31, he forthwith utilized the favorable moment, and caused his ministers to move a civil list of three millions in the National Assembly. A long adventurous, vagabond career had gifted him with the best developed antennae for feeling out the weak moments when he could venture upon squeezing money from his bourgeois. He carried on regular blackmail. The National Assembly had maimed the sovereignty of the people with his aid and his knowledge: he now threatened to denounce its crime to the tribunal of the people, if it did not pull out its purse and buy his silence with three millions annually. It had robbed three million Frenchmen of the suffrage: for every Frenchmen thrown "out of circulation," he demanded a franc "in circulation." He, the elect of six million, demanded indemnity for the votes he had been subsequently cheated of. The Committee of the National Assembly turned the importunate fellow away. The Bonapartist press threatened: Could the National Assembly break with the President of the republic at a time when it had broken definitely and on principle with the mass of the nation? It rejected the annual civil list, but granted, for this once, an allowance of 2,160,000 francs. Thus it made itself guilty of the double weakness of granting the money, and, at the same time, showing by its anger that it did so only unwillingly. We shall presently see to what use Bonaparte put the money. After this aggravating after-play, that followed upon the heels of the abolition of universal suffrage, and in which Bonaparte exchanged his humble attitude of the days of the crisis of March and April for one of defiant impudence towards the usurping parliament, the National Assembly

adjourned for three months, from August 11, to November 11. It left behind in its place a Permanent Committee of 18 members that contained no Bonapartist, but did contain a few moderate republicans. The Permanent Committee of the year 1849 had numbered only men of order and Bonapartists. At that time, however, the party of Order declared itself in permanence against the revolution; now the parliamentary republic declared itself in permanence against the President. After the law of May 31, only this rival still confronted the party of Order.

When the National Assembly reconvened in November, 1850, instead of its former petty skirmishes with the President, a great headlong struggle, a struggle for life between the two powers seemed to have become inevitable.

As in the year 1849, the party of Order had, during this year's vacation, dissolved into its two separate factions, each occupied with its own restoration intrigues, which had received new impetus from the death of Louis Philippe. The Legitimist King, Henry V{.}, had even appointed a regular Ministry, that resided in Paris, and in which sat members of the Permanent Committee. Hence, Bonaparte was, on his part, justified in making tours through the French Departments, and—according to the disposition of the towns that he happened to be gladdening with his presence—some times covertly, other times more openly blabbing out his own restoration plans, and gaining votes for himself. On these excursions, which the large official “Moniteur” and the small private “Moniteurs” of Bonaparte were, of course, bound to celebrate as triumphal marches, he was constantly accompanied by affiliated members of the “Society of December 10.” This society dated from the year 1849. Under the pretext of founding a benevolent association, the slum-proletariat of Paris was organized into secret sections, each section led by Bonapartist agents, with a Bonapartist General at the head of all. Along with ruined roués of questionable means of support and questionable antecedents, along with the foul and adventures-seeking dregs of the bourgeoisie, there were vagabonds, dismissed soldiers, discharged convicts, runaway galley slaves, sharpers, jugglers, lazzaroni, pickpockets, sleight-of-hand performers, gamblers, procurers, keepers of disorderly houses, porters, literati, organ grinders, rag pickers, scissors grinders, tinkers, beggars—in short, that whole undefined, dissolute, kicked-about mass that the Frenchmen style “la Bohème.” With this kindred element, Bonaparte formed the

stock of the “Society of December 10,” a “benevolent association,” in so far as, like Bonaparte himself, all its members felt the need of being benevolent to themselves at the expense of the toiling nation. The Bonaparte, who here constitutes himself CHIEF OF THE SLUM-PROLETARIAT; who only here finds again in plenteous form the interests which he personally pursues; who, in this refuse, offal and wreck of all classes, recognizes the only class upon which he can depend unconditionally;—this is the real Bonaparte, the Bonaparte without qualification. An old and crafty roué, he looks upon the historic life of nations, upon their great and public acts, as comedies in the ordinary sense, as a carnival, where the great costumes, words and postures serve only as masks for the pettiest chicaneries. So, on the occasion of his expedition against Strassburg when a trained Swiss vulture impersonated the Napoleonic eagle; so, again, on the occasion of his raid upon Boulogne, when he stuck a few London lackeys into French uniform: they impersonated the army¹⁷; and so now, in his “Society of December 10,” he collects 10,000 loafers who are to impersonate the people as Snug the Joiner does the lion. At a period when the bourgeoisie itself is playing the sheerest comedy, but in the most solemn manner in the world, without doing violence to any of the pedantic requirements of French dramatic etiquette, and is itself partly deceived by, partly convinced of, the solemnity of its own public acts, the adventurer, who took the comedy for simple comedy, was bound to win. Only after he has removed his solemn opponent, when he himself takes seriously his own role of emperor, and, with the Napoleonic mask on, imagines he impersonates the real Napoleon, only then does he become the victim of his own peculiar conception of history—the serious clown, who no longer takes history for a comedy, but a comedy for history. What the national work-shops were to the socialist workingmen, what the “Gardes mobiles” were to the bourgeois republicans, that was to Bonaparte the “Society of December 10,”—a force for partisan warfare peculiar to himself. On his journeys, the divisions of the Society, packed away on the railroads, improvised an audience for him, performed public enthusiasm, shouted “vive l’Empereur,” insulted and clubbed the

¹⁷ Under the reign of Louis Philippe, Bonaparte made two attempts to restore the throne of Napoleon: one in October, 1836, in an expedition from Switzerland upon Strassburg; and one in August, 1840, in an expedition from England upon Boulogne.

republicans,—all, of course, under the protection of the police. On his return stages to Paris, this rabble constituted his vanguard, it forestalled or dispersed counter-demonstrations. The “Society of December 10” belonged to him, it was his own handiwork, his own thought. Whatever else he appropriates, the power of circumstances places in his hands; whatever else he does, either circumstances do for him, or he is content to copy from the deeds of others; but he, posing before the citizens with the official phrases about “Order,” “Religion,” “Family,” “Property,” and, behind him, the secret society of skipjacks and picaroons, the society of disorder, of prostitution, and of theft,—that is Bonaparte himself as the original author; and the history of the “Society of December 10” is his own history. Now, then, it happened that Representatives belonging to the party of Order occasionally got under the clubs of the Decembrists. Nay, more. Police Commissioner Yon, who had been assigned to the National Assembly, and was charged with the guardianship of its safety, reported to the Permanent Committee upon the testimony of one Alais, that a Section of the Decembrists had decided on the murder of General Changarnier and of Dupin, the President of the National Assembly, and had already settled upon the men to execute the decree. One can imagine the fright of Mr. Dupin. A parliamentary inquest over the “Society of December 10,” i.e., the profanation of the Bonapartist secret world, now seemed inevitable. Just before the reconvening of the National Assembly, Bonaparte circumspectly dissolved his Society, of course, on paper only. As late as the end of 1851, Police Prefect Carlier vainly sought, in an exhaustive memorial, to move him to the real dissolution of the Decembrists.

The “Society of December 10” was to remain the private army of Bonaparte until he should have succeeded in converting the public Army into a “Society of December 10.” Bonaparte made the first attempt in this direction shortly after the adjournment of the National Assembly, and he did so with the money which he had just wrung from it. As a fatalist, he lives devoted to the conviction that there are certain Higher Powers, whom man, particularly the soldier, cannot resist. First among these Powers he numbers cigars and champagne, cold poultry and garlic-sausage. Accordingly, in the apartments of the Elysée, he treated first the officers and under-officers to cigars and champagne, to cold poultry and garlic-sausage. On

October 3, he repeats this manoeuvre with the rank and file of the troops by the review of St. Maur; and, on October 10, the same manoeuvre again, upon a larger scale, at the army parade of Satory. The Uncle bore in remembrance the campaigns of Alexander in Asia; the Nephew bore in remembrance the triumphal marches of Bacchus in the same country. Alexander was, indeed, a demi-god; but Bacchus was a full-fledged god, and the patron deity, at that, of the “Society of December 10.”

After the review of October 3, the Permanent Committee summoned the Minister of War, d’Hautpoul, before it. He promised that such breaches of discipline should not recur. We have seen how, on October 10th, Bonaparte kept d’Hautpoul’s word. At both reviews Changarnier had commanded as Commander-in-chief of the Army of Paris. He, at once member of the Permanent Committee, Chief of the National Guard, the “Savior” of January 29, and June 13, the “Bulwark of Society,” candidate of the Party of Order for the office of President, the suspected Monk of two monarchies,—he had never acknowledged his subordination to the Minister of War, had ever openly scoffed at the republican Constitution, and had pursued Bonaparte with a protection that was ambiguously distinguished. Now he became zealous for the discipline in opposition to Bonaparte. While, on October 10, a part of the cavalry cried: “Vive Napoléon! Vivent les saucissons;”¹⁸ Changarnier saw to it that at least the infantry, which filed by under the command of his friend Neumeyer, should observe an icy silence. In punishment, the Minister of War, at the instigation of Bonaparte, deposed General Neumeyer from his post in Paris, under the pretext of providing for him as Commander-in-chief of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Military Divisions. Neumeyer declined the exchange, and had, in consequence, to give his resignation. On his part, Changarnier published on November 2, an order, wherein he forbade the troops to indulge, while under arms, in any sort of political cries or demonstrations. The papers devoted to the Elysée interests attacked Changarnier; the papers of the party of Order attacked Bonaparte; the Permanent Committee held frequent secret sessions, at which it was repeatedly proposed to declare the fatherland in danger; the Army seemed divided into two hostile camps, with two hostile staffs: one at the Elysée, where Bonaparte, the other at the Tuileries, where Changarnier resided. All that seemed wanting for

¹⁸ Long live Napoleon! Long live the sausages!

the signal of battle to sound was the convening of the National Assembly. The French public looked upon the friction between Bonaparte and Changarnier in the light of the English journalist, who characterized it in these words: "The political servant girls of France are mopping away the glowing lava of the revolution with old mops, and they scold each other while doing their work."

Meanwhile Bonaparte hastened to depose the Minister of War, d'Hautpoul; to expedite him heels over head to Algiers; and to appoint in his place General Schramm as Minister of War. On November 12, he sent to the National Assembly a message of American excursiveness, overloaded with details, redolent of order, athirst for conciliation, resignful to the Constitution, dealing with all and everything, only not with the burning questions of the moment. As if in passing, he dropped the words that according to the express provisions of the Constitution, the President alone disposes over the Army. The message closed with the following high-sounding protestations:

"France demands, above all things, peace. . . . Alone bound by an oath, I shall keep myself within the narrow bounds marked out by it to me....As to me, elected by the people, and owing my power to it alone, I shall always submit to its lawfully expressed will. Should you at this session decide upon the revision of the Constitution, a Constitutional Convention will regulate the position of the Executive power. If you do not, then, the people will, in 1852, solemnly announce its decision. But, whatever the solution may be that the future has in store, let us arrive at an understanding to the end that never may passion, surprise or violence decide over the fate of a great nation. . . . That which, above all, bespeaks my attention is, not who will, in 1852, rule over France, but to so devote the time at my disposal that the interval may pass by without agitation and disturbance. I have straightforwardly opened my heart to you, you will answer my frankness with your confidence, my good efforts with your co-operation. God will do the rest."

The honnête, hypocritically temperate, commonplace-virtuous language of the bourgeoisie reveals its deep meaning in the mouth of the self-appointed ruler of the "Society of December 10," and of the picnic-hero of St. Maur and Satory.

The burgraves of the party of Order did not for a moment deceive themselves on the confidence that this unbosoming deserved. They were long blasé on oaths; they numbered among themselves veterans and virtuosi of perjury. The passage about the army did not, however, escape them. They observed with annoyance that the message, despite its prolix enumeration of the lately enacted laws, passed, with affected silence, over the most important of all, the election law, and, moreover, in case no revision of the Constitution was held, left the choice of the President, in 1852, with the people. The election law was the ball-and-chain to the feet of the party of Order, that hindered them from walking, and now assuredly from storming. Furthermore, by the official disbandment of the “Society of December 10,” and the dismissal of the Minister of War, d’Hautpoul, Bonaparte had, with his own hands, sacrificed the scape-goats on the altar of the fatherland. He had turned off the expected collision. Finally, the party of Order itself anxiously sought to avoid every decisive conflict with the Executive, to weaken and to blur it over. Fearing to lose its conquests over the revolution, it let its rival gather the fruits thereof. “France demands, above all things, peace,”—with this language had the party of Order been apostrophizing the revolution, since February; with this language did Bonaparte’s message now apostrophize the party of Order: “France demands, above all things, peace.” Bonaparte committed acts that aimed at usurpation, but the party of Order committed a “disturbance of the peace,” if it raised the hue and cry, and explained them hypochondriacally. The sausages of Satory were mouse-still when nobody talked about them;—“France demands, above all things, peace.” Accordingly, Bonaparte demanded that he be let alone; and the parliamentary party was lamed with a double fear: the fear of re-conjuring up the revolutionary disturbance of the peace, and the fear of itself appearing as the disturber of the peace in the eyes of its own class, of the bourgeoisie. Seeing that, above all things, France demanded peace, the party of Order did not dare, after Bonaparte had said “peace” in his message, to answer “war.” The public, who had promised to itself the pleasure of seeing great scenes of scandal at the opening of the National Assembly, was cheated out of its expectations. The opposition deputies, who demanded the submission of the minutes of the Permanent Committee over the October occurrences, were outvoted. All debate that might excite was fled from on principle. The labors of the National

Assembly during November and December, 1850, were without interest.

Finally, toward the end of December, began a guerilla warfare about certain prerogatives of the parliament. The movement sank into the mire of petty chicaneries on the prerogative of the two powers, since, with the abolition of universal suffrage, the bourgeoisie had done away with the class struggle.

A judgment for debt had been secured against Mauguin, one of the Representatives. Upon inquiry by the President of the Court, the Minister of Justice, Rouher, declared that an order of arrest should be made out without delay. Mauguin was, accordingly, cast into the debtors' prison. The National Assembly bristled up when it learned of the "attentat." It not only ordered his immediate release, but had him forcibly taken out of Clichy the same evening by its own greffier. In order, nevertheless, to shield its belief in the "sacredness of private property," and also with the ulterior thought of opening, in case of need, an asylum for troublesome Mountainers, it declared the imprisonment of a Representative for debt to be permissible upon its previous consent. It forgot to decree that the President also could be locked up for debt. By its act, it wiped out the last semblance of inviolability that surrounded the members of its own body.

It will be remembered that, upon the testimony of one Allais, Police Commissioner Yon had charged a Section of Decembrists with a plan to murder Dupin and Changarnier. With an eye upon that, the questors proposed at the very first session, that the parliament organize a police force of its own, paid for out of the private budget of the National Assembly itself, and wholly independent of the Police Prefects. The Minister of the Interior, Baroche, protested against this trespass on his preserves. A miserable compromise followed, according to which the Police Commissioner of the Assembly was to be paid out of its own private budget and was to be subject to the appointment and dismissal of its own questors, but only upon previous agreement with the Minister of the Interior. In the meantime Allais had been prosecuted by the Government. It was an easy thing, in Court, to present his testimony in the light of a mystification, and, through the mouth of the Public Prosecutor, to throw Dupin, Changarnier, Yon, together with the whole National Assembly, into a ridiculous light. Thereupon, on December 29, Minister Baroche writes a letter to Dupin, in which he demands the dismissal of Yon. The Committee

of the National Assembly decides to keep Yon in office; nevertheless, the National Assembly, frightened by its own violence in the affair of Mauguin, and accustomed, every time it has shied a blow at the Executive, to receive back from it two in exchange, does not sanction this decision. It dismisses Yon in reward for his zeal in office, and robs itself of a parliamentary prerogative, indispensable against a person who does not decide by night to execute by day, but decides by day and executes by night.

We have seen how, during the months of November and December, under great and severe provocations, the National Assembly evaded and refused the combat with the Executive power. Now we see it compelled to accept it on the smallest occasions. In the affair of Mauguin, it confirms in principle the liability of a Representative to imprisonment for debt, but to itself reserves the power of allowing the principle to be applied only to the Representatives whom it dislikes,—and for this infamous privilege we see it wrangling with the Minister of Justice. Instead of utilizing the alleged murder plan to the end of fastening an inquest upon the “Society of December 10,” and of exposing Bonaparte beyond redemption before France and Europe in his true figure, as the head of the slum-proletariat of Paris, it allows the collision to sink to a point where the only issue between itself and the Minister of the Interior is, Who has jurisdiction over the appointment and dismissal of a Police Commissioner? Thus we see the party of Order, during this whole period, compelled by its ambiguous position to wear out and fritter away its conflict with the Executive power in small quarrels about jurisdiction, in chicaneries, in pettifogging, in boundary disputes, and to turn the stalest questions of form into the very substance of its activity. It dares not accept the collision at the moment when it involves a principle, when the Executive power has really given itself a blank, and when the cause of the National Assembly would be the cause of the nation. It would thereby have issued to the nation an order of march; and it feared nothing so much as that the nation should move. Hence, on these occasions, it rejects the motions of the Mountain, and proceeds to the order of the day. After the issue has in this way lost all magnitude, the Executive power quietly awaits the moment when it can take it up again upon small and insignificant occasions; when, so to say, the issue offers only a parliamentary local interest. Then does the repressed valor of the party of

Order break forth, then it tears away the curtain from the scene, then it denounces the President, then it declares the republic to be in danger,—but then all its pathos appears stale, and the occasion for the quarrel a hypocritical pretext, or not at all worth the effort. The parliamentary tempest becomes a tempest in a tea-pot, the struggle an intrigue, the collision a scandal. While the revolutionary classes gloat with sardonic laughter over the humiliation of the National Assembly—they, of course, being as enthusiastic for the prerogatives of the parliament as that body is for public freedom—the bourgeoisie, outside of the parliament, does not understand how the bourgeoisie, inside of the parliament, can squander its time with such petty bickerings, and can endanger peace by such wretched rivalries with the President. It is puzzled at a strategy that makes peace the very moment everybody expects battles, and that attacks the very moment everybody believes peace has been concluded.

On December 20, Pascal Duprat interpellated the Minister of the Interior on the “Goldbar Lottery.” This lottery was a “Daughter from Elysium”; Bonaparte, together with his faithful, had given her birth; and Police Prefect Carlier had placed her under his official protection, although the French law forbade all lotteries, with the exception of raffles for benevolent purposes. Seven million tickets, a franc a piece, and the profit ostensibly destined to the shipping of Parisian vagabonds to California. Golden dreams were to displace the Socialist dreams of the Parisian proletariat; the tempting prospect of a prize was to displace the doctrinal right to labor. Of course, the workingmen of Paris did not recognize in the lustre of the Californian gold bars the lack-lustre francs that had been wheedled out of their pockets. In the main, however, the scheme was an unmitigated swindle. The vagabonds, who meant to open Californian gold mines without taking the pains to leave Paris, were Bonaparte himself and his Round Table of desperate insolvents. The three millions granted by the National Assembly were rioted away; the Treasury had to be refilled somehow or another. In vain did Bonaparte open a national subscription, at the head of which he himself figured with a large sum, for the establishment of so-called “cites ouvrières”.¹⁹ The hard-hearted bourgeois

¹⁹ Work cities.

waited, distrustful, for the payment of his own shares; and, as this, of course, never took place, the speculation in Socialist castles in the air fell flat. The gold bars drew better. Bonaparte and his associates did not content themselves with putting into their own pockets part of the surplus of the seven millions over and above the bars that were to be drawn; they manufactured false tickets; they sold, of Number 10 alone, fifteen to twenty lots—a financial operation fully in the spirit of the “Society of December 10”! The National Assembly did not here have before it the fictitious President of the Republic, but Bonaparte himself in flesh and blood. Here it could catch him in the act, not in conflict with the Constitution, but with the penal code. When, upon Duprat’s interpellation, the National Assembly went over to the order of the day, this did not happen simply because Girardin’s motion to declare itself “satisfied” reminded the party of Order of its own systematic corruption: the bourgeois, above all the bourgeois who has been inflated into a statesman, supplements his practical meanness with theoretical pompousness. As statesman, he becomes, like the Government facing him, a superior being, who can be fought only in a higher, more exalted manner.

Bonaparte—who, for the very reason of his being a “bohemian,” a princely slum-proletarian, had over the scampish bourgeois the advantage that he could carry on the fight after the Assembly itself had carried him with its own hands over the slippery ground of the military banquets, of the reviews, of the “Society of December 10,” and, finally, of the penal code—now saw that the moment had arrived when he could move from the seemingly defensive to the offensive. He was but little troubled by the intermediate and trifling defeats of the Minister of Justice, of the Minister of War, of the Minister of the Navy, of the Minister of Finance, whereby the National Assembly indicated its growling displeasure. Not only did he prevent the Ministers from resigning, and thus recognizing the subordination of the executive power to the Parliament; he could now accomplish what during the vacation of the National Assembly he had commenced, the separation of the military power from the Assembly—the DEPOSITION OF CHANGARNIER.

An Elysée paper published an order, issued during the month of May, ostensibly to the First Military Division, and, hence, proceeding from Changarnier, wherein the officers were recommended, in case of an uprising, to give no quarter to



Louis Bonaparte Caricature

Napoleon III and Wilhelm I of Prussia

"Two fellows like us
Represent harmony, indeed,
We sing the same song,
And the same melody.

"We stand for liberty,
And especially order—
To preserve them we've police
And a standing army.

"We talk the same language,
And agree completely;
Yes, two fellows like us
Are not easily found!"

(From Vienna *Kikeriki*, 1870)

the traitors in their own ranks, to shoot them down on the spot, and to refuse troops to the National Assembly, should it make a requisition for such. On January 3, 1851, the Cabinet was interpellated on this order. The Cabinet demands for the examination of the affair at first three months, then one week, finally only twenty-four hours' time. The Assembly orders an immediate explanation. Changarnier rises and declares that this order never existed; he adds that he would ever hasten to respond to the calls of the National Assembly, and that, in case of a collision, they could count upon him. The Assembly receives his utterances with inexpressible applause, and decrees a vote of confidence to him. It thereby resigns its own powers; it decrees its own impotence and the omnipotence of the Army by committing itself to the private protection of a general. But the general, in turn, deceives himself when he places at the Assembly's disposal and against Bonaparte a power that he holds only as a fief from that same Bonaparte, and when, on his part, he expects protection from this

Parliament, from his protégé, itself needful of protection. But Changarnier has faith in the mysterious power with which since January, 1849, he had been clad by the bourgeoisie. He takes himself for the Third Power, standing beside the other Powers of Government. He shares the faith of all the other heroes, or rather saints, of this epoch, whose greatness consists but in the interested good opinion that their own party holds of them, and who shrink into every-day figures so soon as circumstances invite them to perform miracles. Infidelity is, indeed, the deadly enemy of these supposed heroes and real saints. Hence their virtuously proud indignation at the unenthusiastic wits and scoffers.

That same evening the Ministers were summoned to the Elysée; Bonaparte presses the removal of Changarnier; five Ministers refuse to sign the order; the “Moniteur” announces a Ministerial crisis; and the party of Order threatens the formation of a Parliamentary army under the command of Changarnier. The party of Order had the constitutional power hereto. It needed only to elect Changarnier President of the National Assembly in order to make a requisition for whatever military forces it needed for its own safety. It could do this all the more safely, seeing that Changarnier still stood at the head of the Army and of the Parisian National Guard, and only lay in wait to be summoned, together with the Army. The Bonapartist press did not even dare to question the right of the National Assembly to issue a direct requisition for troops;—a legal scruple, that, under the given circumstances, did not promise success. That the Army would have obeyed the orders of the National Assembly is probable, when it is considered that Bonaparte had to look eight days all over Paris to find two generals—Baraguay d’Hilliers and St. Jean d’Angley—who declared themselves ready to countersign the order cashiering Changarnier. That, however, the party of Order would have found in its own ranks and in the parliament the requisite vote for such a decision is more than doubtful, when it is considered that, eight days later, 286 votes pulled away from it, and that, as late as December, 1851, at the last decisive hour, the Mountain rejected a similar proposition. Nevertheless, the burgraves might still have succeeded in driving the mass of their party to an act of heroism, consisting in feeling safe behind a forest of bayonets, and in accepting the services of the Army, which found itself deserted in its camp. Instead of this, the Messieurs Burgraves betook themselves to

the Elysée on the evening of January 6, with the view of inducing Bonaparte, by means of politic words and considerations, to drop the removal of Changarnier. Him whom we must convince we recognize as the master of the situation. Bonaparte, made to feel secure by this step, appoints on January 12 a new Ministry, in which the leaders of the old, Fould and Baroche, are retained. St. Jean d'Angley becomes Minister of War; the "Moniteur" announces the decree cashiering Changarnier; his command is divided up between Baraguay d'Hilliers, who receives the First Division, and Perrot, who is placed over the National Guard. The "Bulwark of Society" is turned down; and, although no dog barks over the event, in the Bourses the stock quotations rise.

By repelling the Army, that, in Changarnier's person, put itself at its disposal, and thus irrevocably stood up against the President, the party of Order declares that the bourgeoisie has lost its vocation to reign. Already there was no parliamentary Ministry. By losing, furthermore, the handle to the Army and to the National Guard, what instrument of force was there left to the National Assembly in order to maintain both the usurped power of the parliament over the people, and its constitutional power over the President? None. All that was left to it was the appeal to peaceful principles, that itself had always explained as "general rules" merely, to be prescribed to third parties, and only in order to enable itself to move all the more freely. With the removal of Changarnier, with the transfer of the military power to Bonaparte, closes the first part of the period that we are considering, the period of the struggle between the party of Order and the Executive power. The war between the two powers is now openly declared; it is conducted openly; but only after the party of Order has lost both arms and soldiers. Without a Ministry, without an army, without a people, without the support of public opinion; since its election law of May 31, no longer the representative of the sovereign nation; sans eyes, sans ears, sans teeth, sans everything, the National Assembly had gradually converted itself into a French Parliament of olden days, that must leave all action to the Government, and content itself with growling remonstrances "post festum."²⁰

²⁰ After the act is done; after the feast.

The party of Order receives the new Ministry with a storm of indignation. General Bedeau calls to mind the mildness of the Permanent Committee during the vacation, and the excessive prudence with which it had renounced the privilege of disclosing its minutes. Now, the Minister of the Interior himself insists upon the disclosure of these minutes, that have now, of course, become dull as stagnant waters, reveal no new facts, and fall without making the slightest effect upon the blasé public. Upon Remusat's proposition, the National Assembly retreats into its Committees, and appoints a "Committee on Extraordinary Measures." Paris steps all the less out of the ruts of its daily routine, seeing that business is prosperous at the time, the manufactories busy, the prices of cereals low, provisions abundant, the savings banks receiving daily new deposits. The "extraordinary measures," that the parliament so noisily announced, fizzle out on January 18 in a vote of lack of confidence against the Ministry, without General Changarnier's name being even mentioned. The party of Order was forced to frame its motion in that way so as to secure the votes of the republicans, because, of all the acts of the Ministry, Changarnier's dismissal only was the very one they approved, while the party of Order cannot, in fact, condemn the other Ministerial acts which it had itself dictated.

The January 18 vote of lack of confidence was decided by 415 ayes against 286 nays. It was, accordingly, put through by a coalition of the uncompromising Legitimists and Orleanists with the pure republicans and the Mountain. Thus it revealed the fact that, in its conflicts with Bonaparte, the party of Order had lost, not only the Ministry, not only the Army, but also its independent parliamentary majority; that a troop of Representatives had deserted its camp out of a fanatic zeal for harmony, out of fear of fight, out of lassitude, out of family considerations for the salaries of relatives in office, out of speculations on vacancies in the Ministry (Odillon Barrot), or out of that unmitigated selfishness that causes the average bourgeois to be ever inclined to sacrifice the interests of his class to this or that private motive. The Bonapartist Representatives belonged from the start to the party of Order only in the struggle against the revolution. The leader of the Catholic party, Montalembert, already then threw his influence in the scale of Bonaparte, since he despaired of the vitality of the parliamentary party. Finally, the leaders of

this party itself, Thiers and Berryer—the Orleanist and the Legitimist—were compelled to proclaim themselves openly as republicans; to admit that their heart favored royalty, but their head the republic; that their parliamentary republic was the only possible form for the rule of the bourgeoisie. Thus were they compelled to brand, before the eyes of the bourgeois class itself, as an intrigue—as dangerous as it was senseless—the restoration plans, which they continued to pursue indefatigably behind the back of the parliament.

The January 18 vote of lack of confidence struck the Ministers, not the President. But it was not the Ministry, it was the President who had deposed Changarnier. Should the party of Order place Bonaparte himself under charges? On account of his restoration hankerings? These only supplemented their own. On account of his conspiracy at the military reviews and of the “Society of December 10”? They had long since buried these subjects under simple orders of business. On account of the discharge of the hero of January 29 and June 13, of the man who, in May, 1850, threatened, in case of a riot, to set Paris on fire at all its four corners? Their allies of the Mountain and Cavaignac did not even allow them to console the fallen “Bulwark of Society” with an official testimony of their sympathy. They themselves could not deny the constitutional right of the President to remove a General. They stormed only because he made an unparliamentary use of his constitutional right. Had they not themselves constantly made an unconstitutional use of their parliamentary prerogative, notably by the abolition of universal suffrage? Consequently they were reminded to move exclusively within parliamentary bounds. Indeed, it required that peculiar disease, a disease that, since 1848, has raged over the whole continent, “Parliamentary Idiocy,”—that fetters those whom it infects to an imaginary world, and robs them of all sense, all remembrance, all understanding of the rude outside world;—it required this “Parliamentary Idiocy” in order that the party of Order, which had, with its own hands, destroyed all the conditions for parliamentary power, and, in its struggle with the other classes, was obliged to destroy them, still to consider its parliamentary victories as victories, and to imagine it hit the President by striking his Ministers. They only afforded him an opportunity to humble the National Assembly anew in the eyes of the nation. On January 20, the “Moniteur” announced

that the dismissal of the whole Ministry was accepted. Under the pretext that none of the parliamentary parties had any longer the majority—as proved by the January 18 vote, that fruit of the coalition between Mountain and royalists—, and, in order to await the re-formation of a majority, Bonaparte appointed a so-called transition Ministry, of whom no member belonged to the parliament—altogether wholly unknown and insignificant individuals; a Ministry of mere clerks and secretaries. The party of Order could now wear itself out in the game with these puppets; the Executive power no longer considered it worth the while to be seriously represented in the National Assembly. By this act Bonaparte concentrated the whole executive power all the more securely in his own person; he had all the freer elbow-room to exploit the same to his own ends, the more his Ministers became mere supernumeraries.

The party of Order, now allied with the Mountain, revenged itself by rejecting the Presidential endowment project of 1,800,000 francs, which the chief of the “Society of December 10” had compelled his Ministerial clerks to present to the Assembly. This time a majority of only 102 votes carried the day; accordingly, since January 18, 27 more votes had fallen off; the dissolution of the party of Order was making progress. Lest any one might for a moment be deceived touching the meaning of its coalition with the Mountain, the party of Order simultaneously scorned even to consider a motion, signed by 189 members of the Mountain, for a general amnesty to political criminals. It was enough that the Minister of the Interior, one Baissé, declared that the national tranquility was only in appearance, in secret there reigned deep agitation, in secret ubiquitous societies were organized, the democratic papers were preparing to re-appear, the reports from the Departments were unfavorable, the fugitives of Geneva conducted a conspiracy via Lyon through the whole of Southern France, France stood on the verge of an industrial and commercial crisis, the manufacturers of Roubaix were working shorter hours, the prisoners of Belle Isle had mutinied;—it was enough that even a mere Baissé should conjure up the “Red Spectre” for the party of Order to reject without discussion a motion that would have gained for the National Assembly a tremendous popularity, and thrown Bonaparte back into its arms. Instead of allowing itself to be intimidated by the Executive power with the perspective of

fresh disturbances, the party of Order should rather have allowed a little elbow-room to the class struggle, in order to secure the dependence of the Executive upon itself. But it did not feel itself equal to the task of playing with fire.

Meanwhile, the so-called transition Ministry vegetated along until the middle of April. Bonaparte tired out and fooled the National Assembly with constantly new Ministerial combinations. Now he seemed to intend constructing a republican Ministry, with Lamartine and Billault; then, a parliamentary one, with the inevitable Odillon Barrot, whose name must never be absent when a dupe is needed; then again, a Legitimist, with Batismenil and Benoist d'Azy; and yet again, an Orleanist, with Malleville. While thus throwing the several factions of the party of Order into strained relations with one another, and alarming them all with the prospect of a republican Ministry, together with the thereupon inevitable restoration of universal suffrage, Bonaparte simultaneously raises in the bourgeoisie the conviction that his sincere efforts for a parliamentary Ministry are wrecked upon the irreconcilable antagonism of the royalist factions. All the while the bourgeoisie was clamoring louder and louder for a "strong Government," and was finding it less and less pardonable to leave France "without an administration," in proportion as a general commercial crisis seemed to be under way and making recruits for Socialism in the cities, as did the ruinously low price of grain in the rural districts. Trade became daily duller; the unemployed hands increased perceptibly; in Paris, at least 10,000 workingmen were without bread; in Rouen, Muehlhausen, Lyons, Roubaix, Tourcoign, St. Etienne, Elbeuf, etc., numerous factories stood idle. Under these circumstances Bonaparte could venture to restore, on April 11, the Ministry of January 18: Messieurs Rouher, Fould, Baroche, etc., reinforced by Mr. Léon Faucher, whom the constitutive assembly had, during its last days, unanimously, with the exception of five Ministerial votes, branded with a vote of censure for circulating false telegraphic dispatches. Accordingly, the National Assembly had won a victory on January 18 over the Ministry, it had, for the period of three months, been battling with Bonaparte, and all this merely to the end that, on April 11, Fould and Baroche should be able to take up the Puritan Faucher as third in their ministerial league.

In November, 1849, Bonaparte had satisfied himself with an

UNPARLIAMENTARY, in January, 1851, with an OUTSIDE PARLIAMENTARY, on April 11, he felt strong enough to form an ANTI-PARLIAMENTARY Ministry, that harmoniously combined within itself the votes of lack of confidence of both assemblies—the constitutive and the legislative, the republican and the royalist. This ministerial progression was a thermometer by which the parliament could measure the ebbing temperature of its own life. This had sunk so low by the end of April, that, at a personal interview, Persigny could invite Changarnier to go over to the camp of the President. Bonaparte, he assured Changarnier, considered the influence of the National Assembly to be wholly annihilated, and already the proclamation was ready, that was to be published after the steadily contemplated, but again accidentally postponed “coup d’état.” Changarnier communicated this announcement of its death to the leaders of the party of Order; but who was there to believe a bed-bug bite could kill? The parliament, however beaten, however dissolved, however death-tainted it was, could not persuade itself to see, in the duel with the grotesque chief of the “Society of December 10,” anything but a duel with a bed-bug. But Bonaparte answered the party of Order as Agesilaus did King Agis: “I seem to you an ant; but shall one day be a lion.”

VI.

The coalition with the Mountain and the pure republicans, to which the party of Order found itself condemned in its fruitless efforts to keep possession of the military and to reconquer supreme control over the Executive power, proved conclusively that it had forfeited its independent parliamentary majority. The calendar and clock merely gave, on May 29, the signal for its complete dissolution. With May 29 commenced the last year of the life of the National Assembly. It now had to decide for the unchanged continuance or the revision of the Constitution. But a revision of the Constitution meant not only the definitive supremacy of either the bourgeoisie or the small traders' democracy, of either democracy or proletarian anarchy, of either a parliamentary republic or Bonaparte, it meant also either Orleans or Bourbon! Thus fell into the very midst of the parliament the apple of discord, around which the conflict of interests, that cut up the party of Order into hostile factions, was to kindle into an open conflagration. The party of Order was a combination of heterogeneous social substances. The question of revision raised a political temperature, in which the product was reduced to its original components.

The interest of the Bonapartists in the revision was simple: they were above all concerned in the abolition of Article 45, which forbade Bonaparte's re-election and the prolongation of his term. Not less simple seemed to be the position of the republicans: they rejected all revision, seeing in that only a general conspiracy against the republic; as they disposed over more than one-fourth of the votes in the National Assembly, and, according to the Constitution, a three-fourths majority was requisite to revise and to call a revisory convention, they needed only to count their own votes to be certain of victory. Indeed, they were certain of it.

Over and against these clear-cut positions, the party of Order found itself tangled in inextricable contradictions. If it voted against the revision, it endangered the "status quo," by leaving to Bonaparte only one expedient—that of violence and handing France over, on May 2, 1852, at the very time of election, a prey to revolutionary anarchy, with a President whose authority was at an end, with a parliament that the party had long ceased to own, and with a people that it meant

to reconquer. If it voted constitutionally for a revision, it knew that it voted in vain, and would constitutionally have to go under before the veto of the republicans. If, unconstitutionally, it pronounced a simple majority binding, it could hope to control the revolution only in case it surrendered unconditionally to the domination of the Executive power: it then made Bonaparte master of the Constitution, of the revision and of itself. A merely partial revision, prolonging the term of the President, opened the way to imperial usurpation; a general revision, shortening the existence of the republic, threw the dynastic claims into an inevitable conflict: the conditions for a Bourbon and those for an Orleanist restoration were not only different, they mutually excluded each other.

The parliamentary republic was more than a neutral ground on which the two factions of the French bourgeoisie—Legitimists and Orleanists, large landed property and manufacture—could lodge together with equal rights. It was the indispensable condition for their common reign, the only form of government in which their common class interest could dominate both the claims of their separate factions and all the other classes of society. As royalists, they relapsed into their old antagonism: into the struggle for the overlordship of either landed property or of money; and the highest expression of this antagonism, its personification, were the two kings themselves, their dynasties. Hence the resistance of the party of Order to the recall of the Bourbons.

The Orleanist Representative Creton moved periodically in 1849, 1850 and 1851 the repeal of the decree of banishment against the royal families; as periodically did the parliament present the spectacle of an Assembly of royalists who stubbornly shut to their banished kings the door through which they could return home. Richard III. murdered Henry VI. with the remark that he was too good for this world, and belonged in heaven. They declared France too bad to have her kings back again. Forced by the power of circumstances, they had become republicans, and repeatedly sanctioned the popular mandate that exiled their kings from France.

The revision of the Constitution, and circumstances compelled its consideration, at once made uncertain not only the republic itself, but also the joint reign of the two bourgeois factions; and it revived, with the possibility of the monarchy, both the

rivalry of interests which these two factions had alternately allowed to preponderate, and the struggle for the supremacy of the one over the other. The diplomats of the party of Order believed they could allay the struggle by a combination of the two dynasties through a so-called fusion of the royalist parties and their respective royal houses. The true fusion of the restoration and the July monarchy was, however, the parliamentary republic, in which the Orleanist and Legitimist colors were dissolved, and the bourgeois species vanished in the plain bourgeois, in the bourgeois genus. Now, however, the plan was to turn the Orleanist Legitimist, and the Legitimist Orleanist. The kingship, in which their antagonism was personified, was to incarnate their unity; the expression of their exclusive faction interests was to become the expression of their common class interest; the monarchy was to accomplish what only the abolition of two monarchies—the republic—could and did accomplish. This was the philosophers' stone, for the finding of which the doctors of the party of Order were breaking their heads. As though the Legitimate monarchy ever could be the monarchy of the industrial bourgeoisie, or the bourgeois monarchy the monarchy of the hereditary landed aristocracy! As though landed property and industry could fraternize under one crown, where the crown could fall only upon one head, the head of the older or the younger brother! As though industry could at all deal upon a footing of equality with landed property, so long as landed property did not decide itself to become industrial. If Henry V. were to die to-morrow, the Count of Paris would not, therefore, become the King of the Legitimists, unless he ceased to be the King of the Orleanists. Nevertheless, the fusion philosophers, who became louder in the measure that the question of revision stepped to the fore, who had provided themselves with a daily organ in the "Assemblée Nationale," who, even at this very moment (February, 1852) are again at work, explained the whole difficulty by the opposition and rivalries of the two dynasties. The attempts to reconcile the family of Orleans with Henry V., begun since the death of Louis Philippe, but, as all these dynastic intrigues, carried on only during the vacation of the National Assembly, between acts, behind the scenes, more as a sentimental coquetry with the old superstition than as a serious affair, were now raised by the party of Order to the dignity of a great State question, and were conducted upon the public stage, instead

of, as heretofore, in the amateurs' theater. Couriers flew from Paris to Venice, from Venice to Claremont, from Claremont to Paris. The Duke of Chambord issues a manifesto in which he announces, not his own, but the "national" restoration, "with the aid of all the members of his family." The Orleanist Salvandy throws himself at the feet of Henry V. The Legitimist leaders Berryer, Benoit d'Azy, St. Priest travel to Claremont, to persuade the Orleans; but in vain. The fusionists learn too late that the interests of the two bourgeois factions neither lose in exclusiveness nor gain in pliancy where they sharpen to a point in the form of family interests, of the interests of the two royal houses. When Henry V. recognized the Count of Paris as his successor—the only success that the fusion could at best score—the house of Orleans acquired no claim that the childlessness of Henry V. had not already secured to it; but, on the other hand, it lost all the claims that it had conquered by the July revolution. It renounced its original claims, all the titles, that, during a struggle nearly one hundred years long, it had wrested from the older branch of the Bourbons; it bartered away its historic prerogative, the prerogative of its family-tree. Fusion, accordingly, amounted to nothing else than the resignation of the house of Orleans, its Legitimist resignation, a repentful return from the Protestant State Church into the Catholic;—a return, at that, that did not even place it on the throne that it had lost, but on the steps of the throne on which it was born. The old Orleanist Ministers Guizot, Duchatel, etc., who likewise hastened to Claremont, to advocate the fusion, represented in fact only the nervous reaction of the July monarchy; despair, both in the citizen kingdom and the kingdom of citizens; the superstitious believe in legitimacy as the last amulet against anarchy. Mediators, in their imagination, between Orleans and Bourbon, they were in reality but apostate Orleanists, and as such were they received by the Prince of Joinville. The virile, bellicose part of the Orleanists, on the contrary—Thiers, Baze, etc.—, persuaded the family of Louis Philippe all the easier that, seeing every plan for the immediate restoration of the monarchy presupposed the fusion of the two dynasties, and every plan for fusion the resignation of the house of Orleans, it corresponded, on the contrary, wholly with the tradition of its ancestors to recognize the republic for the time being, and to wait until circumstances permitted the conversion of the Presidential chair into a throne. Joinville's candidacy was set afloat as a rumor,

public curiosity was held in suspense, and a few months later, after the revision was rejected, openly proclaimed in September.

Accordingly, the essay of a royalist fusion between Orleanists and Legitimists did not miscarry only, it broke up their parliamentary fusion, the republican form that they had adopted in common, and it decomposed the party of Order into its original components. But the wider the breach became between Venice and Claremont, the further they drifted away from each other, and the greater the progress made by the Joinville agitation, all the more active and earnest became the negotiations between Faucher, the Minister of Bonaparte, and the Legitimists.

The dissolution of the party of Order went beyond its original elements. Each of the two large factions fell in turn into new fragments. It was as if all the old political shades, that formerly fought and crowded one another within each of the two circles—be it that of the Legitimists or that of the Orleanists—, had been thawed out like dried infusoria by contact with water; as if they had recovered enough vitality to build their own groups and assert their own antagonisms. The Legitimists dreamed they were back amidst the quarrels between the Tuileries and the Pavillion Marsan, between Villèle and Polignac; the Orleanists lived anew through the golden period of the tourneys between Guizot, Molé, Broglie, Thiers, and Odillon Barrot.

That portion of the party of Order—eager for a revision of the Constitution but disagreed upon the extent of revision—made up of the Legitimists under Berryer and Falloux and of those under Laroche Jaquelein, together with the tired-out Orleanists under Molé, Broglie, Montalembert and Odillon Barrot, united with the Bonapartist Representatives in the following indefinite and loosely drawn motion{:}

“The undersigned Representatives, with the end in view of restoring to the nation the full exercise of her sovereignty, move that the Constitution be revised.”

At the same time, however, they unanimously declared through their spokesman, Tocqueville, that the National Assembly had not the right to move the abolition of the republic, that right being vested only in a Constitutional

Convention. For the rest, the Constitution could be revised only in a “legal” way, that is to say, only in case a three-fourths majority decided in favor of revision, as prescribed by the Constitution. After a six days’ stormy debate, the revision was rejected on July 19, as was to be foreseen. In its favor 446 votes were cast, against it 278. The resolute Orleanists, Thiers, Changarnier, etc., voted with the republicans and the Mountain.

Thus the majority of the parliament pronounced itself against the Constitution, while the Constitution itself pronounced itself for the minority, and its decision binding. But had not the party of Order on May 31, 1850, had it not on June 13, 1849, subordinated the Constitution to the parliamentary majority? Did not the whole republic they had been hitherto having rest upon the subordination of the Constitutional clauses to the majority decisions of the parliament? Had they not left to the democrats the Old Testament superstitious belief in the letter of the law, and had they not chastised the democrats therefor. At this moment, however, revision meant nothing else than the continuance of the Presidential power, as the continuance of the Constitution meant nothing else than the deposition of Bonaparte. The parliament had pronounced itself for him, but the Constitution pronounced itself against the parliament. Accordingly, he acted both in the sense of the parliament when he tore up the Constitution, and in the sense of the Constitution when he chased away the parliament.

The parliament pronounced the Constitution, and, thereby, also, its own reign, “outside of the pale of the majority”; by its decision, it repealed the Constitution, and continued the Presidential power, and it at once declared that neither could the one live nor the other die so long as itself existed. The feet of those who were to bury it stood at the door. While it was debating the subject of revision, Bonaparte removed General Baraguay d’Hilliers, who showed himself irresolute, from the command of the First Military Division, and appointed in his place General Magnan, the conqueror of Lyon, the hero of the December days, one of his own creatures, who, already under Louis Philippe, on the occasion of the Boulogne expedition, had somewhat compromised himself in his favor.

By its decision on the revision, the party of Order proved that it knew neither how to rule nor how to obey; neither how to live nor how to die; neither how to bear

with the republic nor how to overthrow it; neither how to maintain the Constitution nor how to throw it overboard; neither how to co-operate with the President nor how to break with him. From what quarter did it, then, look to for the solution of all the existing perplexities? From the calendar, from the course of events. It ceased to assume the control of events. It, accordingly, invited events to don its authority and also the power to which, in its struggle with the people, it had yielded one attribute after another until it finally stood powerless before the same. To the end that the Executive be able all the more freely to formulate his plan of campaign against it, strengthen his means of attack, choose his tools, fortify his positions, the party of Order decided, in the very midst of this critical moment, to step off the stage, and adjourn for three months, from August 10 to November 4.

Not only was the parliamentary party dissolved into its two great fractions, not only was each of these dissolved within itself, but the party of Order, inside of the parliament, was at odds with the party of Order, outside of the parliament. The learned speakers and writers of the bourgeoisie, their tribunes and their press, in short, the ideologists of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie itself, the representatives and the represented, stood estranged from, and no longer understood one another.

The Legitimists in the provinces, with their cramped horizon and their boundless enthusiasm, charged their parliamentary leaders Berryer and Falloux with desertion to the Bonapartist camp, and with apostacy from Henry V. Their lily-mind²¹ believed in the fall of man, but not in diplomacy.

More fatal and completer, though different, was the breach between the commercial bourgeoisie and its politicians. It twitted them, not as the Legitimists did theirs, with having apostatized from their principle, but, on the contrary, with adhering to principles that had become useless.

I have already indicated that, since the entry of Fould in the Ministry, that portion of the commercial bourgeoisie that had enjoyed the lion's share in Louis Philippe's reign, to wit, the aristocracy of finance, had become Bonapartist. Fould not only represented Bonaparte's interests at the Bourse, he represented also the

²¹ An allusion to the lilies of the Bourbon coat-of-arms.

interests of the Bourse with Bonaparte. A passage from the London “Economist,” the European organ of the aristocracy of finance, described most strikingly the attitude of this class. In its issue of February 1, 1851, its Paris correspondent writes: “Now we have it stated from numerous quarters that France wishes above all things for repose. The President declares it in his message to the Legislative Assembly; it is echoed from the tribune; it is asserted in the journals; it is announced from the pulpit; it is demonstrated by the sensitiveness of the public funds at the least prospect of disturbance, and their firmness the instant it is made manifest that the Executive is far superior in wisdom and power to the factious ex-officials of all former governments.”

In its issue of November 29, 1851, the “Economist” declares, editorially: “The President is now recognized as the guardian of order on every Stock Exchange of Europe.” Accordingly, the ARISTOCRACY OF FINANCE condemned the parliamentary strife of the party of Order with the Executive as a “disturbance of order,” and hailed every victory of the President over its reputed representatives as a “victory of order.” Under “aristocracy of finance” must not, however, be understood merely the large bond negotiators and speculators in government securities, of whom it may be readily understood that their interests and the interests of the Government coincide. The whole modern money trade, the whole banking industry, is most intimately interwoven with the public credit. Part of their business capital requires to be invested in interest-bearing government securities that are promptly convertible into money; their deposits, i.e., the capital placed at their disposal and by them distributed among merchants and industrial establishments, flow partly out of the dividends on government securities. The whole money market, together with the priests of this market, is part and parcel of this “aristocracy of finance” at every epoch when the stability of the government is to them synonymous with “Moses and his prophets.” This is so even before things have reached the present stage when every deluge threatens to carry away the old governments themselves.

But the INDUSTRIAL BOURGEOISIE also, in its fanaticism for order, was annoyed at the quarrels of the Parliamentary party of Order with the Executive. Thiers, Anglas, Sainte Beuve, etc., received, after their vote of January 18, on the occasion of the discharge of Changarnier, public reprimands from their

constituencies, located in the industrial districts, branding their coalition with the Mountain as an act of high treason to the cause of order. Although, true enough, the boastful, vexatious and petty intrigues, through which the struggle of the party of Order with the President manifested itself, deserved no better reception, yet notwithstanding, this bourgeois party, that expects of its representatives to allow the military power to pass without resistance out of the hands of their own Parliament into those of an adventurous Pretender, is not worth even the intrigues that were wasted in its behalf. It showed that the struggle for the maintenance of their public interests, of their class interests, of their political power only incommoded and displeased them, as a disturbance of their private business.

The bourgeois dignitaries of the provincial towns, the magistrates, commercial judges, etc., with hardly any exception, received Bonaparte everywhere on his excursions in the most servile manner, even when, as in Dijon, he attacked the National Assembly and especially the party of Order without reserve.

Business being brisk, as still at the beginning of 1851, the commercial bourgeoisie stormed against every Parliamentary strife, lest business be put out of temper. Business being dull, as from the end of February, 1851, on, the bourgeoisie accused the Parliamentary strifes as the cause of the stand-still, and clamored for quiet in order that business may revive. The debates on revision fell just in the bad times. Seeing the question now was the to be or not to be of the existing form of government, the bourgeoisie felt itself all the more justified in demanding of its Representatives that they put an end to this tormenting provisional status, and preserve the “status quo.” This was no contradiction. By putting an end to the provisional status, it understood its continuance, the indefinite putting off of the moment when a final decision had to be arrived at. The “status quo” could be preserved in only one of two ways: either by the prolongation of Bonaparte’s term of office or by his constitutional withdrawal and the election of Cavaignac. A part of the bourgeoisie preferred the latter solution, and knew no better advice to give their Representatives than to be silent, to avoid the burning point. If their Representatives did not speak, so argued they, Bonaparte would not act. They desired an ostrich Parliament that would hide its head, in order not to be seen. Another part of the bourgeoisie preferred that Bonaparte, being once in the

Presidential chair, be left in the Presidential chair, in order that every thing might continue to run in the old ruts. They felt indignant that their Parliament did not openly break the Constitution and resign without further ado.

The General Councils of the Departments, these provisional representative bodies of the large bourgeoisie, who had adjourned during the vacation of the National Assembly since August 25, pronounced almost unanimously for revision, that is to say, against the Parliament and for Bonaparte.

Still more unequivocally than in its falling out with its Parliamentary Representatives, did the bourgeoisie exhibit its wrath at its literary Representatives, its own press. The verdicts of the bourgeois juries, inflicting excessive fines and shameless sentences of imprisonment for every attack of the bourgeois press upon the usurping aspirations of Bonaparte, for every attempt of the press to defend the political rights of the bourgeoisie against the Executive power, threw, not France alone, but all Europe into amazement.

While, on the one hand, as I have indicated, the Parliamentary party of Order ordered itself to keep the peace by screaming for peace; and while it pronounced the political rule of the bourgeoisie irreconcilable with the safety and the existence of the bourgeoisie, by destroying with its own hands in its struggle with the other classes of society all the conditions for its own, the Parliamentary, régime; on the other hand, the mass of the bourgeoisie, outside of the Parliament, urged Bonaparte—by its servility towards the President, by its insults to the Parliament, by the brutal treatment of its own press—to suppress and annihilate its speaking and writing organs, its politicians and its literati, its orators' tribune and its press, to the end that, under the protection of a strong and unhampered Government, it might ply its own private pursuits in safety. It declared unmistakably that it longed to be rid of its own political rule, in order to escape the troubles and dangers of ruling.

And this bourgeoisie, that had rebelled against even the Parliamentary and literary contest for the supremacy of its own class, that had betrayed its leaders in this contest, it now has the effrontery to blame the proletariat for not having risen in its defence in a bloody struggle, in a struggle for life! Those bourgeois, who at every turn sacrificed their common class interests to narrow and dirty private

interests, and who demanded a similar sacrifice from their own Representatives, now whine that the proletariat has sacrificed their ideal-political to its own material interests! This bourgeois class now strikes the attitude of a pure soul, misunderstood and abandoned, at a critical moment, by the proletariat, that has been misled by the Socialists. And its cry finds a general echo in the bourgeois world. Of course, I do not refer to German cross-road politicians and kindred blockheads. I refer, for instance, to the “Economist,” which, as late as November 29, 1851, that is to say, four days before the “coup d’état{,}” pronounced Bonaparte the “Guardian of Order” and Thiers and Berryer “Anarchists,” and as early as December 27, 1851, after Bonaparte had silenced those very Anarchists, cries out about the treason committed by “the ignorant, untrained and stupid proletaires against the skill, knowledge, discipline, mental influence, intellectual resources and moral weight of the middle and upper ranks.” The stupid, ignorant and contemptible mass was none other than the bourgeoisie itself.

France had, indeed, experienced a sort of commercial crisis in 1851. At the end of February, there was a falling off of exports as compared with 1850; in March, business languished and factories shut down; in April, the condition of the industrial departments seemed as desperate as after the February days; in May, business did not yet pick up; as late as June 28, the reports of the Bank of France revealed through a tremendous increase of deposits and an equal decrease of loans on exchange notes, the stand-still of production; not until the middle of October did a steady improvement of business set in. The French bourgeoisie accounted for this stagnation of business with purely political reasons; it imputed the dull times to the strife between the Parliament and the Executive power, to the uncertainty of a provisional form of government, to the alarming prospects of May 2, 1852. I shall not deny that all these causes did depress some branches of industry in Paris and in the Departments. At any rate, this effect of political circumstances was only local and trifling. Is there any other proof needed than that the improvement in business set in at the very time when the political situation was growing worse, when the political horizon was growing darker, and when at every moment a stroke of lightning was expected out of the Elysée—in the middle of October? The French bourgeois, whose “skill, knowledge, mental influence and intellectual resources”

reach no further than his nose, could, moreover, during the whole period of the Industrial Exposition in London, have struck with his nose the cause of his own business misery. At the same time that, in France, the factories were being closed, commercial failures broke out in England. While the industrial panic reached its height during April and May in France, in England the commercial panic reached its height in April and May. The same as the French, the English woolen industries suffered, and, as the French, so did the English silk manufacture. Though the English cotton factories went on working, it, nevertheless, was not with the same old profit of 1849 and 1850. The only difference was this: that in France, the crisis was an industrial, in England it was a commercial one; that while in France the factories stood still, they spread themselves in England, but under less favorable circumstances than they had done during the years just previous; that, in France, the export, in England, the import trade suffered the heaviest blows. The common cause, which, as a matter of fact, is not to be looked for within the bounds of the French political horizon, was obvious. The years 1849 and 1850 were years of the greatest material prosperity, and of an overproduction that did not manifest itself until 1851. This was especially promoted at the beginning of 1851 by the prospect of the Industrial Exposition; and, as special causes, there were added, first, the failure of the cotton crop of 1850 and 1851; second, the certainty of a larger cotton crop than was expected; first, the rise, then the sudden drop; in short, the oscillations of the cotton market. The crop of raw silk in France had been below the average. Finally, the manufacture of woolen goods had received such an increment since 1849, that the production of wool could not keep step with it, and the price of the raw material rose greatly out of proportion to the price of the manufactured goods. Accordingly, we have here in the raw material of three staple articles a threefold material for a commercial crisis. Apart from these special circumstances, the seeming crisis of the year 1851 was, after all, nothing but the halt that overproduction and overspeculation make regularly in the course of the industrial cycle, before pulling all their forces together in order to rush feverishly over the last stretch, and arrive again at their point of departure—the GENERAL COMMERCIAL CRISIS. At such intervals in the history of trade, commercial failures break out in England, while, in France, industry itself is stopped, partly

because it is compelled to retreat through the competition of the English, that, at such times becomes resistless in all markets, and partly because, as an industry of luxuries, it is affected with preference by every stoppage in trade. Thus, besides the general crises, France experiences her own national crises, which, however, are determined by and conditioned upon the general state of the world's market much more than by local French influences. It will not be devoid of interest to contrast the prejudgment of the French bourgeois with the judgment of the English bourgeois. One of the largest Liverpool firms writes in its yearly report of trade for 1851: "Few years have more completely disappointed the expectations entertained at their beginning than the year that has just passed; instead of the great prosperity, that was unanimously looked forward to, it proved itself one of the most discouraging years during the last quarter of a century. This applies, of course, only to the mercantile, not to the industrial classes. And yet, surely there were grounds at the beginning of the year from which to draw a contrary conclusion: the stock of products was scanty, capital was abundant, provisions cheap, a rich autumn was assured, there was uninterrupted peace on the continent and no political and financial disturbances at home; indeed, never were the wings of trade more unshackled. . . . What is this unfavorable result to be ascribed to? We believe to excessive trade in imports as well as exports. If our merchants do not themselves rein in their activity, nothing can keep us going, except a panic every three years."

Imagine now the French bourgeois, in the midst of this business panic, having his trade-sick brain tortured, buzzed at and deafened with rumors of a "coup d'état" and the restoration of universal suffrage; with the struggle between the Legislature and the Executive; with the Fronde warfare between Orleanists and Legitimists; with communistic conspiracies in southern France; with alleged Jacqueries²² in the Departments of Nièvre and Cher; with the advertisements of the several candidates for President; with "social solutions" huckstered about by the journals; with the threats of the republicans to uphold, arm in hand, the Constitution and universal suffrage; with the gospels, according to the emigrant heroes "in partibus," who announced the destruction of the world for May 2,—imagine that, and one can

²² Peasant revolts.

understand how the bourgeois, in this unspeakable and noisy confusion of fusion, revision, prorogation, constitution, conspiracy, coalition, emigration, usurpation and revolution, blurts out at his parliamentary republic: “RATHER AN END WITH FRIGHT, THAN A FRIGHT WITHOUT END!”



Louis Bonaparte Caricature

The Hearse

Napoleon III depicted as mass murderer

(By Wilhelm Scholz, *Kladderadatsch*, 1870)

Bonaparte understood this cry. His perspicacity was sharpened by the growing anxiety of the creditors' class, who, with every sunset, that brought nearer the day of payment, the 2d of May, 1852, saw in the motion of the stars a protest against their earthly drafts. They had become regular astrologers. The National Assembly had cut off Bonaparte's hope of a constitutional prolongation of his term; the candidature of the Prince of Joinville tolerated no further vacillation.

If ever an event cast its shadow before it long before its occurrence, it was Bonaparte's "coup d'état." Already on January 29, 1849, barely a month after his election, he had made to Changarnier a proposition to that effect. His own Prime Minister, Odillon Barrot, had covertly, in 1849, and Thiers openly, in the winter of 1850, revealed the scheme of the "coup d'état." In May, 1851, Persigny had again sought to win Changarnier over to the "coup," and the "Messenger de l'Assemblée" newspaper had published this conversation. At every parliamentary storm, the Bonapartist papers threatened a "coup," and the nearer the crisis approached, all the louder grew their tone. At the orgies, that Bonaparte celebrated every night with a swell mob of males and females, every time the hour of midnight drew nigh and plenteous libations had loosened the tongues and heated the minds of the revelers, the "coup" was resolved upon for the next morning. Swords were then drawn, glasses clinked, the Representatives were thrown out at the windows, the imperial mantle fell upon the shoulders of Bonaparte, until the next morning again

drove away the spook, and astonished Paris learned, from not very reserved Vestals and indiscreet Paladins, the danger it had once more escaped. During the months of September and October, the rumors of a “coup d’état” tumbled close upon one another’s heels. At the same time the shadow gathered color, like a confused daguerreotype. Follow the issues of the European daily press for the months of September and October, and items like this will be found literally:

“Rumors of a ‘coup’ fill Paris. The capital, it is said, is to be filled with troops by night, and the next morning decrees are to be issued dissolving the National Assembly, placing the Department of the Seine in state of siege, restoring universal suffrage, and appealing to the people. Bonaparte is rumored to be looking for Ministers to execute these illegal decrees.”

The newspaper correspondence that brought this news always close[d] ominously with “postponed.” The “coup” was ever the fixed idea of Bonaparte. With this idea he had stepped again upon French soil. It had such full possession of him that he was constantly betraying and blabbing it out. He was so weak that he was as constantly giving it up again. The shadow of the “coup” had become so familiar a spectre to the Parisians, that they refused to believe it when it finally did appear in flesh and blood. Consequently, it was neither the reticent backwardness of the chief of the “Society of December 10,” nor an unthought of surprise of the National Assembly that caused the success of the “coup.” When it succeeded, it did so despite his indiscretion and with its anticipation—a necessary, unavoidable result of the development that had preceded.

On October 10, Bonaparte announced to his Ministers his decision to restore universal suffrage; on the 16th they handed in their resignations; on the 26th Paris learned of the formation of the Thorigny Ministry. The Prefect of Police, Carlier, was simultaneously replaced by Maupas; and the chief of the First Military Division[,} Magnan, concentrated the most reliable regiments in the capital. On November 4, the National Assembly re-opened its sessions. There was nothing left for it to do but to repeat, in short recapitulation, the course it had traversed, and to prove that it had been buried only after it had expired.

The first post that it had forfeited in the struggle with the Executive was the

Ministry. It had solemnly to admit this loss by accepting as genuine the Thorigny Ministry, which was but a pretence. The Permanent Committee had received Mr. Giraud with laughter when he introduced himself in the name of the new Ministers. So weak a Ministry for so strong a measure as the restoration of universal suffrage! The question, however, then was to do nothing IN, everything AGAINST the parliament.

On the very day of its re-opening, the National Assembly received the message from Bonaparte demanding the restoration of universal suffrage and the repeal of the law of May 31, 1850. On the same day, his Ministers introduced a decree to that effect. The Assembly promptly rejected the motion of urgency made by the Ministers, but repealed the law itself, on November 13, with 355 votes against 348. Thus it once more tore to pieces its own mandate, once more certified to the fact that it had transformed itself from a freely chosen representative body of the nation into the usurpatory parliament of a class; it once more admitted that it had itself severed the muscles that connected the parliamentary head with the body of the nation.

While the Executive power appealed from the National Assembly to the people by its motion for the restoration of universal suffrage, the Legislative power appealed from the people to the Army by its "Quaestors' Bill." This bill was to establish its right to immediate requisitions for troops, to build up a parliamentary army. By thus appointing the Army umpire between itself and the people, between itself and Bonaparte; by thus recognizing the Army as the decisive power in the State, the National Assembly was constrained to admit that it had long given up all claim to supremacy. By debating the right to make requisitions for troops, instead of forthwith collecting them, it betrayed its own doubts touching its own power. By subsequently rejecting the "Quaestors' Bill," it publicly confessed its impotence. This bill fell through with a minority of 108 votes; the Mountain had, accordingly, thrown the casting {deciding?} vote. It now found itself in the predicament of Buridan's donkey, not, indeed, between two sacks of hay, forced to decide which of the two was the more attractive, but between two showers of blows, forced to decide which of the two was the harder: fear of Changarnier, on one side, fear of Bonaparte, on the other. It must be admitted the position was not a heroic one.

On November 18, an amendment was moved to the Act, passed by the party of Order, on municipal elections to the effect that, instead of three years, a domicile of one year should suffice. The amendment was lost by a single vote—but this vote, it soon transpired, was a mistake. Owing to the divisions within its own hostile factions, the party of Order had long since forfeited its independent parliamentary majority. I{t} now showed that there was no longer any majority in the parliament. The National Assembly had become impotent even to decide. Its atomic parts were no longer held together by any cohesive power; it had expended its last breath, it was dead.

Finally, the mass of the bourgeoisie outside of the parliament, was once more solemnly to confirm its rupture with the bourgeoisie inside of the parliament a few days before the catastrophe. Thiers, as a parliamentary hero conspicuously smitten by that incurable disease—Parliamentary Idiocy—, had hatched out jointly with the Council of State, after the death of the parliament, a new parliamentary intrigue in the shape of a “Responsibility Law,” that was intended to lock up the President within the walls of the Constitution. The same as, on September 15, Bonaparte bewitched the fishwives, like a second Massaniello, on the occasion of laying the corner-stone for the Market of Paris,—though, it must be admitted, one fishwife was equal to seventeen burgraves in real power—; the same as, after the introduction of the “Quaestors’ Bill,” he enthused the lieutenants, who were being treated at the Elysée;—so, likewise, did he now, on November 25, carry away with him the industrial bourgeoisie, assembled at the Circus, to receive from his hands the prize-medals that had been awarded at the London Industrial Exposition. I here reproduce the typical part of his speech, from the “Journal des Débats”:

“With such unhopd for successes, I am justified to repeat how great the French republic would be if she were only allowed to pursue her real interests, and reform her institutions, instead of being constantly disturbed in this by demagogues, on one side, and, on the other, by monarchic hallucinations. (Loud, stormy and continued applause from all parts of the amphitheater). The monarchic hallucinations hamper all progress and all serious departments of industry. Instead of progress, we have struggle only. Men, formerly the most zealous supporters of royal authority and

prerogative, become the partisans of a convention that has no purpose other than to weaken an authority that is born of universal suffrage. (Loud and prolonged applause.) We see men, who have suffered most from the revolution and complained bitterest of it, provoking a new one for the sole purpose of putting fetters on the will of the nation....I promise you peace for the future.” (Bravo! Bravo! Stormy bravos.)

Thus the industrial bourgeoisie shouts its servile “Bravo!” to the “coup d’état” of December 2, to the destruction of the parliament, to the downfall of their own reign, to the dictatorship of Bonaparte. The roar of the applause of November 25 was responded to by the roar of cannon on December 4, and the house of Mr. Sallandrouze, who had been loudest in applauding, was the one demolished by most of the bombs.

Cromwell, when he dissolved the Long Parliament, walked alone into its midst, pulled out his watch in order that the body should not continue to exist one minute beyond the term fixed for it by him, and drove out each individual member with gay and humorous invectives. Napoleon, smaller than his prototype, at least went on the 18th Brumaire into the legislative body, and, though in a tremulous voice, read to it its sentence of death. The second Bonaparte, who, moreover, found himself in possession of an executive power very different from that of either Cromwell or Napoleon, did not look for his model in the annals of universal history, but in the annals of the “Society of December 10,” in the annals of criminal jurisprudence. He robs the Bank of France of twenty-five million francs; buys General Magnan with one million and the soldiers with fifteen francs and a drink a piece; comes secretly together with his accomplices like a thief by night; has the houses of the most dangerous leaders in the parliament broken into; Cavaignac, Lamorcière, Leflô, Changarnier, Charras, Thiers, Baze, etc., taken out of their beds; the principal places of Paris, the building of the parliament included, occupied with troops; and, early the next morning, loud-sounding placards posted on all the walls proclaiming the dissolution of the National Assembly and of the Council of State, the restoration of universal suffrage, and the placing of the Department of the Seine under the state of siege. In the same way he shortly after sneaked into the “Moniteur” a false document, according to which influential parliamentary names had grouped

themselves around him in a Committee of the Nation.

Amidst cries of “Long live the Republic!” the rump-parliament, assembled at the Mayor’s building of the Tenth Arrondissement, and composed mainly of Legitimists and Orleanists, resolves to depose Bonaparte; it harangues in vain the gaping mass gathered before the building, and is finally dragged first, under the escort of African sharpshooters, to the barracks of Orsay, and then bundled into convicts’ wagons, and transported to the prisons of Mazas, Ham and Vincennes. Thus ended the party of Order, the Legislative Assembly and the February revolution.

Before hastening to the end, let us sum up shortly the plan of its history:

I.—FIRST PERIOD. From February 24 to May 4, 1848. February period. Prologue. Universal fraternity swindle.

II.—SECOND PERIOD. Period in which the republic is constituted, and of the Constitutive National Assembly.

1. May 4 to June 25, 1848. Struggle of all the classes against the proletariat. Defeat of the proletariat in the June days.

2. June 25 to December 10, 1848. Dictatorship of the pure bourgeois republicans. Drafting of the Constitution. The state of siege hangs over Paris. The bourgeois dictatorship set aside on December 10 by the election of Bonaparte as President.

3. December 20, 1848, to May 29, 1849. Struggle of the Constitutive Assembly with Bonaparte and with the united party of Order. Death of the Constitutive Assembly. Downfall of the republican bourgeoisie.

III.—THIRD PERIOD. Period of the constitutional republic and of the Legislative National Assembly.

1. May 29 to June 13, 1849. Struggle of the small traders’ middle class with the bourgeoisie and with Bonaparte. Defeat of the small traders’ democracy.

2. June 13, 1849, to May, 1850. Parliamentary dictatorship of the party of Order. Completes its reign by the abolition of universal suffrage, but loses the parliamentary Ministry.

3. May 31, 1850, to December 2, 1851. Struggle between the

parliamentary bourgeoisie and Bonaparte.

a. May 31, 1850, to January 12, 1851. The parliament loses the supreme command over the Army.

b. January 12 to April 11, 1851. The parliament succumbs in the attempts to regain possession of the administrative power. The party of Order loses its independent parliamentary majority. Its coalition with the republicans and the Mountain.

c. April 11 to October 9, 1851. Attempts at revision, fusion and prorogation. The party of Order dissolves into its component parts. The breach between the bourgeois parliament and the bourgeois press, on the one hand, and the bourgeois mass, on the other, becomes permanent.

d. October 9 to December 2, 1851. Open breach between the parliament and the executive power. It draws up its own decree of death, and goes under, left in the lurch by its own class, by the Army, and by all the other classes. Downfall of the parliamentary régime and of the reign of the bourgeoisie. Bonaparte's triumph. Parody of the imperialist restoration.

VII.

The SOCIAL REPUBLIC appeared as a mere phrase, as a prophecy on the threshold of the February Revolution; it was smothered in the blood of the Parisian proletariat during the days of 1848; but it stalks about as a spectre throughout the following acts of the drama. The DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC next makes its bow; it goes out in a fizzle on June 13, 1849, with its runaway small traders; but, on fleeing, it scatters behind it all the more bragging announcements of what it means to do. The PARLIAMENTARY REPUBLIC, together with the bourgeoisie, then appropriates the whole stage; it lives its life to the full extent of its being; but the 2d of December, 1851, buries it under the terror-stricken cry of the allied royalists: "Long live the Republic!"

The French bourgeoisie reared up against the reign of the working proletariat;—it brought to power the slum-proletariat, with the chief of the "Society of December 10" at its head. It kept France in breathless fear over the prospective terror of "red anarchy";—Bonaparte discounted the prospect when, on December 4, he had the leading citizens of the Boulevard Montmartre and the Boulevard des Italiens shot down from their windows by the grog-inspired "Army of Order." It made the apotheosis of the sabre;—now the sabre rules it. It destroyed the revolutionary press;—now its own press is annihilated. It placed public meetings under police surveillance;—now its own salons are subject to police inspection. It disbanded the democratic National Guards;—now its own National Guard is disbanded. It instituted the state of siege;—now itself is made subject thereto. It supplanted the jury by military commissions;—now military commissions supplant its own juries. It subjected the education of the people to the parsons' interests;—the parsons' interests now subject it to their own system. It ordered transportations without trial;—now itself is transported without trial. It suppressed every movement of society with physical force;—now every movement of its own class is suppressed by physical force. Out of enthusiasm for the gold bag, it rebelled against its own political leaders and writers;—now, its political leaders and writers are set aside, but the gold bag is plundered, after the mouth of the bourgeoisie has

been gagged and its pen broken. The bourgeoisie tirelessly shouted to the revolution, in the language of St. Orsenius to the Christians: “Fuge, Tace, Quiesce!”—flee, be silent, submit!—; Bonaparte shouts to the bourgeoisie: “Fuge, Tace, Quiesce!”—flee, be silent, submit!

The French bourgeoisie had long since solved Napoleon’s dilemma: “Dans cinquante ans l’Europe sera républicaine ou cosaque.”²³ It found the solution in the “république cosaque.”²⁴ No Circe distorted with wicked charms the work of art of the bourgeois republic into a monstrosity. That republic lost nothing but the appearance of decency. The France of to-day was ready-made within the womb of the Parliamentary republic. All that was wanted was a bayonet thrust, in order that the bubble burst, and the monster leap forth to sight.

Why did not the Parisian proletariat rise after the 2d of December?

The downfall of the bourgeoisie was as yet merely decreed; the decree was not yet executed. Any earnest uprising of the proletariat would have forthwith revived this bourgeoisie, would have brought on its reconciliation with the army, and would have insured a second June rout to the workingmen.

On December 4, the proletariat was incited to fight by Messrs. Bourgeois & Small-Trader. On the evening of that day, several legions of the National Guard promised to appear armed and uniformed on the place of battle. This arose from the circumstance that Messrs. Bourgeois & Small-Trader had got wind that, in one of his decrees of December 2, Bonaparte abolished the secret ballot, and ordered them to enter the words “Yes” or “No” after their names in the official register. Bonaparte took alarm at the stand taken on December 4. During the night he caused placards to be posted on all the street corners of Paris, announcing the restoration of the secret ballot. Messrs. Bourgeois & Small-Trader believed they had gained their point. The absentees, the next morning, were Messieurs. Bourgeois & Small-Trader.

During the night of December 1 and 2, the Parisian proletariat was robbed of its leaders and chiefs of barricades by a raid of Bonaparte’s. An army without officers, disinclined by the recollections of June, 1848 and 1849, and May, 1850, to fight under the banner of the Montagnards, it left to its vanguard, the secret

²³ Within fifty years Europe will be either republican or Cossack.

²⁴ Cossack republic.

societies, the work of saving the insurrectionary honor of Paris, which the bourgeoisie had yielded to the soldiery so submissively that Bonaparte was later justified in disarming the National Guard upon the scornful ground that he feared their arms would be used against themselves by the Anarchists!

“C’est le triomphe complet et définitif du Socialism!”²⁵ Thus did Guizot characterize the 2d of December. But, although the downfall of the parliamentary republic carries with it the germ of the triumph of the proletarian revolution, its immediate and tangible result was the triumph of Bonaparte over the parliament, of the Executive over the Legislative power, of force without phrases over the force of phrases. In the parliament, the nation raised its collective will to the dignity of law, i.e., it raised the law of the ruling class to the dignity of its collective will. Before the Executive power, the nation abdicates all will of its own, and submits to the orders of an outsider, of Authority. In contrast with the Legislative, the Executive power expresses the heteronomy of the nation in contrast with its autonomy. Accordingly, France seems to have escaped the despotism of a class only in order to fall under the despotism of an individual, under the authority, at that, of an individual without authority. The struggle seems to settle down to the point where all classes drop down on their knees, equally impotent and equally dumb.

All the same, the revolution is thoroughgoing. It still is on its passage through purgatory. It does its work methodically. Down to December 2, 1851, it had fulfilled one-half of its programme; it now fulfills the other half. It first ripens the power of the Legislature into fullest maturity in order to be able to overthrow it. Now that it has accomplished that, the revolution proceeds to ripen the power of the Executive into equal maturity; reduces this power to its purest expression; isolates it; places it before itself as the sole subject for reproof in order to concentrate against it all the revolutionary forces of destruction. When the revolution shall have accomplished this second part of its preliminary programme, Europe will jump up from her seat to exclaim: “Well hast thou grubbed, old mole!”

This Executive power, with its tremendous bureaucratic and military organization; with its wide-spreading and artificial machinery of government—an

²⁵ It is the complete and definite triumph of Socialism.

army of office-holders, half a million strong, together with a military force of another million men—; this fearful body of parasites, that coils itself like a snake around French society, stopping all its pores, originated at the time of the absolute monarchy, along with the decline of feudalism, which it helped to hasten. The princely privileges of the landed proprietors and cities were transformed into so many attributes of the Executive power; the feudal dignitaries into paid office-holders; and the confusing design of conflicting medieval seigniories, into the well regulated plan of a government, whose work is subdivided and centralized as in the factory. The first French revolution, having as a mission to sweep away all local, territorial, urban and provincial special privileges, with the object of establishing the civic unity of the nation, was bound to develop what the absolute monarchy had begun—the work of centralization, together with the range, the attributes and the menials of government. Napoleon completed this governmental machinery. The Legitimist and the July Monarchy contribute nothing thereto, except a greater subdivision of labor, that grew in the same measure as the division and subdivision of labor within bourgeois society raised new groups and interests, i.e., new material for the administration of government. Each COMMON interest was in turn forthwith removed from society, set up against it as a higher COLLECTIVE interest, wrested from the individual activity of the members of society, and turned into a subject for governmental administration,—from the bridges, the school house and the communal property of a village community, up to the railroads, the national wealth and the national University of France. Finally, the parliamentary republic found itself, in its struggle against the revolution, compelled, with its repressive measures, to strengthen the means and the centralization of the government. Each overturn, instead of breaking up, carried this machine to higher perfection. The parties, that alternately wrestled for supremacy, looked upon the possession of this tremendous governmental structure as the principal spoils of their victory.

Nevertheless, under the absolute monarchy, during the first revolution, and under Napoleon, the bureaucracy was only the means whereby to prepare the class rule of the bourgeoisie; under the restoration, under Louis Philippe, and under the parliamentary republic, it was the instrument of the ruling class, however eagerly this class strained after autocracy. Not before the advent of the second Bonaparte

does the government seem to have made itself fully independent. The machinery of government has by this time so thoroughly fortified itself against society, that the chief of the “Society of December 10” is thought good enough to be at its head; a fortune-hunter, run in from abroad, is raised on its shield by a drunken soldiery, bought by himself with liquor and sausages, and whom he is forced ever again to throw sops to. Hence the timid despair, the sense of crushing humiliation and degradation that oppresses the breast of France and makes her to choke. She feels dishonored.

And yet the French Government does not float in the air. Bonaparte represents an economic class, and that the most numerous in the commonweal of France—the ALLOTMENT FARMER.²⁶

As the Bourbons are the dynasty of large landed property, as the Orleans are the dynasty of money, so are the Bonapartes the dynasty of the farmer, i.e., of the French masses. Not the Bonaparte, who threw himself at the feet of the bourgeois parliament, but the Bonaparte, who swept away the bourgeois parliament, is the elect of this farmer class. For three years the cities had succeeded in falsifying the meaning of the election of December 10, and in cheating the farmer out of the restoration of the Empire. The election of December 10, 1848, is not carried out until the “coup d’état” of December 2, 1851.

The allotment farmers are an immense mass, whose individual members live in identical conditions, without, however, entering into manifold relations with one another. Their method of production isolates them from one another, instead of drawing them into mutual intercourse. This isolation is promoted by the poor means of communication in France, together with the poverty of the farmers themselves. Their field of production, the small allotment of land that each cultivates, allows no room for a division of labor, and no opportunity for the application of science; in other words, it shuts out manifoldness of development, diversity of talent, and the luxury of social relations. Every single farmer family is almost self-sufficient; itself produces directly the greater part of what it consumes;

²⁶ The first French Revolution distributed the bulk of the territory of France, held at the time by the feudal lords, in small patches among the cultivators of the soil. This allotment of lands created the French farmer class.

and it earns its livelihood more by means of an interchange with nature than by intercourse with society. We have the allotted patch of land, the farmer and his family; alongside of that another allotted patch of land, another farmer and another family. A bunch of these makes up a village; a bunch of villages makes up a Department. Thus the large mass of the French nation is constituted by the simple addition of equal magnitudes—much as a bag with potatoes constitutes a potato-bag. In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of the other classes, and that place them in an attitude hostile toward the latter, they constitute a class; in so far as there exists only a local connection among these farmers, a connection which the individuality and exclusiveness of their interests prevent from generating among them any unity of interest, national connections, and political organization, they do not constitute a class. Consequently, they are unable to assert their class interests in their own name, be it by a parliament or by convention. They can not represent one another, they must themselves be represented. Their representative must at the same time appear as their master, as an authority over them, as an unlimited governmental power, that protects them from the other class, and that, from above, bestows rain and sunshine upon them. Accordingly, the political influence of the allotment farmer finds its ultimate expression in an Executive power that subjugates the commonweal to its own autocratic will.

Historic tradition has given birth to the superstition among the French farmers that a man named Napoleon would restore to them all manner of glory. Now, then, an individual turns up, who gives himself out as that man because, obedient to the “Code Napoléon,” which provides that “La recherche de la paternité est interdite,”²⁷ he carries the name of Napoleon.²⁸ After a vagabondage of twenty years, and a series of grotesque adventures, the myth is verified, and that man becomes the Emperor of the French. The rooted thought of the Nephew becomes a reality because it coincided with the rooted thought of the most numerous class among the French.

“But,” I shall be objected to, “what about the farmers’ uprisings over half

²⁷ The inquiry into paternity is forbidden.

²⁸ L.N. Bonaparte is said to have been an illegitimate son.

France, the raids of the Army upon the farmers, the wholesale imprisonment and transportation of farmers?”

Indeed, since Louis XIV., France has not experienced such persecutions of the farmer on the ground of “demagogic machinations.”

But this should be well understood: The Bonaparte dynasty does not represent the revolutionary, it represents the conservative farmer; it does not represent the farmer, who presses beyond his own economic conditions, his little allotment of land, it represents him rather who would confirm these conditions; it does not represent the rural population, that, thanks to its own inherent energy, wishes, jointly with the cities, to overthrow the old order, it represents, on the contrary, the rural population that, hide-bound in the old order, seeks to see itself, together with its allotments, saved and favored by the ghost of the Empire; it represents, not the intelligence, but the superstition of the farmer; not his judgment, but his bias; not his future, but his past; not his modern Cevennes;²⁹ but his modern Vendée.³⁰

The three years’ severe rule of the parliamentary republic had freed a part of the French farmers from the Napoleonic illusion, and, though even only superficially, had revolutionized them. The bourgeoisie threw them, however, violently back every time that they set themselves in motion. Under the parliamentary republic, the modern wrestled with the traditional consciousness of the French farmer. The process went on in the form of a continuous struggle between the school teachers and the parsons;—the bourgeoisie knocked the school teachers down. For the first time, the farmer made an effort to take an independent stand in the government of the country; this manifested itself in the prolonged conflicts of the Mayors with the Prefects,—the bourgeoisie deposed the Mayors. Finally, during the period of the parliamentary republic, the farmers of several localities rose against their own product, the Army;—the bourgeoisie punished them with states of siege and executions. And this is the identical bourgeoisie, that now howls over the “stupidity of the masses,” over the “vile multitude,” which, it claims,

²⁹ The Cevennes were the theater of the most numerous revolutionary uprisings of the farmer class.

³⁰ La Vendée was the theater of protracted reactionary uprisings of the farmer class under the first Revolution.

betrayed it to Bonaparte. Itself has violently fortified the imperialism of the farmer class; it firmly maintained the conditions that constitute the birthplace of this farmer-religion. Indeed, the bourgeoisie has every reason to fear the stupidity of the masses—so long as they remain conservative; and their intelligence—so soon as they become revolutionary.

In the revolts that took place after the “coup d’état,” a part of the French farmers protested, arms in hand, against their own vote of December 10, 1848. The school house had, since 1848, sharpened their wits. But they had bound themselves over to the nether world of history, and history kept them to their word. Moreover, the majority of this population was still so full of prejudices that, just in the “reddest” Departments, it voted openly for Bonaparte. The National Assembly prevented, as it thought, this population from walking; the farmers now snapped the fetters which the cities had struck upon the will of the country districts. In some places they even indulged the grotesque hallucination of a “Convention together with a Napoleon.”

After the first revolution had converted the serf farmers into freeholders, Napoleon fixed and regulated the conditions under which, unmolested, they could exploit the soil of France, that had just fallen into their hands, and expiate the youthful passion for property. But that which now bears the French farmer down is that very allotment of land; it is the partition of the soil, the form of ownership, which Napoleon had consolidated. These are the material conditions that turned the French feudal peasant into a small or allotment farmer, and Napoleon into an Emperor. Two generations have sufficed to produce the inevitable result: the progressive deterioration of agriculture, and the progressive encumbering of the agriculturist. The “Napoleonic” form of ownership, which, at the beginning of the nineteenth century was the condition for the emancipation and enrichment of the French rural population, has, in the course of the century, developed into the law of their enslavement and pauperism. Now, then, this very law is the first of the “idées Napoléoniennes,” which the second Bonaparte must uphold. If he still shares with the farmers the illusion of seeking, not in the system of the small allotment itself, but outside of that system, in the influence of secondary conditions, the cause of their ruin, his experiments are bound to burst like soap-bubbles against the modern

system of production.

The economic development of the allotment system has turned bottom upward the relation of the farmer to the other classes of society. Under Napoleon, the parceling out of the agricultural lands into small allotments supplemented in the country the free competition and the incipient large production of the cities. The farmer class was the ubiquitous protest against the aristocracy of land, just then overthrown. The roots that the system of small allotments cast into the soil of France, deprived feudalism of all nutriment. Its boundary-posts constituted the natural buttress of the bourgeoisie against every stroke of the old overlords. But in the course of the nineteenth century, the City Usurer stepped into the shoes of the Feudal Lord, the Mortgage substituted the Feudal Duties formerly yielded by the soil, bourgeois Capital took the place of the aristocracy of Landed Property. The farmer allotments are now only a pretext that allows the capitalist class to draw profit, interest and rent from agricultural lands, and to leave to the farmer himself the task of seeing to it that he knock out his wages. The mortgage indebtedness that burdens the soil of France imposes upon the French farmer class the payment of an interest as great as the annual interest on the whole British national debt. In this slavery of capital, whither its development drives it irresistibly, the allotment system has transformed the mass of the French nation into troglodytes. Sixteen million farmers (women and children included), house in hovels most of which have only one opening, some two, and the few most favored ones three. Windows are to a house what the five senses are to the head. The bourgeois social order, which, at the beginning of the century, placed the State as a sentinel before the newly instituted allotment, and that manured this with laurels, has become a vampire that sucks out its heart-blood and its very brain, and throws it into the alchemist's pot of capital. The "Code Napoléon" is now but the codex of execution, of sheriff's sales and of intensified taxation. To the four million (children, etc., included) official paupers, vagabonds, criminals and prostitutes, that France numbers, must be added five million souls who hover over the precipice of life, and either sojourn in the country itself, or float with their rags and their children from the country to the cities, and from the cities back to the country. Accordingly, the interests of the farmers are no longer, as under Napoleon, in harmony but in conflict with the interests of the

bourgeoisie, i.e., with capital; they find their natural allies and leaders among the urban proletariat, whose mission is the overthrow of the bourgeois social order. But the “strong and unlimited government”—and this is the second of the “idées Napoléoniennes,” which the second Napoleon has to carry out—, has for its mission the forcible defence of this very “material” social order, a “material order” that furnishes the slogan in Bonaparte’s proclamations against the farmers in revolt.

Along with the mortgage, imposed by capital upon the farmer’s allotment, this is burdened by taxation. Taxation is the fountain of life to the bureaucracy, the Army, the parsons and the court, in short to the whole apparatus of the Executive power. A strong government and heavy taxes are identical. The system of ownership, involved in the system of allotments, lends itself by nature for the groundwork of a powerful and numerous bureaucracy: it produces an even level of conditions and of persons over the whole surface of the country; it, therefore, allows the exercise of an even influence upon all parts of this even mass from a high central point downwards; it annihilates the aristocratic gradations between the popular masses and the Government; it, consequently, calls from all sides for the direct intervention of the Government and for the intervention of the latter’s immediate organs; and, finally, it produces an unemployed excess of population, that finds no room either in the country or in the cities, that, consequently, snatches after public office as a sort of dignified alms, and provokes the creation of further offices. With the new markets, which he opened at the point of the bayonet, and with the plunder of the continent, Napoleon returned to the farmer class with interest the taxes wrung from them. These taxes were then a goad to the industry of the farmer, while now, on the contrary, they rob his industry of its last source of support, and completely sap his power to resist poverty. Indeed, an enormous bureaucracy, richly gallooned and well fed is that “idée Napoléonienne” that above all others suits the requirements of the second Bonaparte. How else should it be, seeing he is forced to raise alongside of the actual classes of society, an artificial class, to which the maintenance of his own régime must be a knife-and-fork question? One of his first financial operations was, accordingly, the raising of the salaries of the government employés to their former standard, and the creation of new sinecures.



Louis Bonaparte Caricature

"Clothes do not make the man."

Napoleon III contrasted with Napoleon I.

(By Faustin, 1870) the parson appears merely as the anointed bloodhound of the earthly police,—yet another "idée Napoléonienne." The expedition against Rome will next time take place in France, but in a reverse sense from that of M. de Montalembert.

Finally, the culminating point of the "idées Napoléoniennes" is the preponderance of the Army. The Army was the "point of honor" with the allotment farmers: it was themselves turned into masters, defending abroad their newly established property, glorifying their recently conquered nationality, plundering and revolutionizing the world. The uniform was their State costume; war was their poetry; the allotment, expanded and rounded up in their phantasy, was the fatherland; and patriotism became the ideal form of property. But the foe, against

Another "idée Napoléonienne" is the rule of the parsons as an instrument of government. But while the new-born allotment {farmer}, in harmony with society, in its dependence upon the powers of nature, and in its subordination to the authority that protected it from above, was naturally religious, the debt-broken allotment, on the contrary, at odds with society and authority, and driven beyond its own narrow bounds, becomes as naturally irreligious. Heaven was quite a pretty gift thrown in with the narrow strip of land that had just been won, all the more as it makes the weather; it, however, becomes an insult from the moment it is forced upon the farmer as a substitute for his allotment. Then

whom the French farmer must now defend his property, are not the Cossacks, they are the sheriffs and the tax collectors. The allotment no longer lies in the so-called fatherland, but in the register of mortgages. The Army itself no longer is the flower of the youth of the farmers, it is the swamp-blossom of the slum-proletariat of the farmer class. It consists of “remplaçants,” substitutes, just as the second Bonaparte himself is but a “remplaçant,” a substitute, for Napoleon. Its feats of heroism are now performed in raids instituted against farmers and in the service of the police;—and when the internal contradictions of his own system shall drive the chief of the “Society of December 10” across the French frontier, that Army will, after a few bandit-raids, gather no laurels but only hard knocks.

It is evident that all the “idées Napoléoniennes” are the ideas of the undeveloped and youthfully fresh allotment; they are an absurdity for the allotment that now survives. They are only the hallucinations of its death struggle; words turned to hollow phrases, spirits turned to spooks. But this parody of the Empire was requisite in order to free the mass of the French nation from the weight of tradition, and to elaborate sharply the contrast between Government and Society. Along with the progressive decay of the allotment, the governmental structure, reared upon it, breaks down. The centralization of Government, required by modern society, rises only upon the ruins of the military and bureaucratic governmental machinery that was forged in contrast to feudalism.

The conditions of the French farmers’ class solve to us the riddle of the general elections of December 20 and 21, that led the second Bonaparte to the top of {Mt.} Sinai, not to receive, but to decree laws.

The bourgeoisie had now, manifestly, no choice but to elect Bonaparte. When, at the Council of Constance, the puritans complained of the sinful life {lives?} of the Popes, and moaned about the need of a reform in morals, Cardinal d’Ailly thundered into their faces: “Only the devil in his own person can now save the Catholic Church, and you demand angels.” So, likewise, did the French bourgeoisie cry out after the “coup d’état”: “Only the chief of the ‘Society of December 10’ can now save bourgeois society; only theft can save property, only perjury religion, only bastardy the family, only disorder order!”

Bonaparte, as autocratic Executive power, fulfills his mission to secure

“bourgeois order.” But the strength of this bourgeois order lies in the middle class. He feels himself the representative of the middle class, and issues his decrees in that sense. Nevertheless, he is something only because he has broken the political power of this class, and daily breaks it anew. Hence, he feels himself the adversary of the political and the literary power of the middle class. But, by protecting their material, he nourishes anew their political power. Consequently, the cause must be kept alive, but the result, wherever it manifests itself, swept out of existence. But this procedure is impossible without slight mistakings of causes and effects, seeing that both, in their mutual action and reaction, lose their distinctive marks. Thereupon, new decrees, that blur the line of distinction. Bonaparte, furthermore, feels himself, as against the bourgeoisie, the representative of the farmer and the people in general, who, within bourgeois society, is to render the lower classes of society happy. To this end, new decrees, intended to exploit the “true Socialists,” together with their governmental wisdom. But, above all, Bonaparte feels himself the chief of the “Society of December 10,” the representative of the slum-proletariat, to which he himself, his immediate surroundings, his Government, and his army alike belong, the main object with all of whom is to be good to themselves, and draw Californian tickets out of the national treasury. And he affirms his chieftainship of the “Society of December 10” with decrees, without decrees, and despite decrees.

This contradictory mission of the man explains the contradictions of his own Government, and that confused groping about, that now seeks to win, then to humiliate now this class and then that, and finishes by arraying against itself all the classes whose actual insecurity constitutes a highly comical contrast with the imperious, categoric style of the Government acts, copied closely from the Uncle.

Industry and commerce, i.e., the business of the middle class, are to be made to blossom in hot-house style under the “strong Government.” Loans for a number of railroad grants. But the Bonapartist slum-proletariat is to enrich itself. Speculation is carried on with railroad concessions on the Bourse by the initiated; but no capital is forthcoming for the railroads. The bank then pledges itself to make advances upon railroad stock; but the bank is itself to be exploited; hence, it must be cajoled; it is released of the obligation to publish its reports weekly. Then follows a leonine treaty between the bank and the Government. The people are to be occupied: public

works are ordered; but the public works raise the tax rates upon the people; thereupon the taxes are reduced by an attack upon the national bond-holders through the conversion of the five per cent. “rentes”³¹ into four-and-a-halves. Yet the middle class must again be tipped: to this end, the tax on wine is doubled for the people, who buy it at retail, and is reduced to one-half for the middle class, that drink it at wholesale. Genuine labor organizations are dissolved, but promises are made of future wonders to accrue from organization. The farmers are to be helped: mortgage-banks are set up that must promote the indebtedness of the farmer and the concentration of property; but again, these banks are to be utilized especially to the end of squeezing money out of the confiscated estates of the House of Orleans; no capitalist will listen to this scheme, which, moreover, is not mentioned in the decree; the mortgage bank remains a mere decree. Etc., etc.

Bonaparte would like to appear as the patriarchal benefactor of all classes; but he can give to none without taking from the others. As was said of the Duke of Guise, at the time of the Fronde, that he was the most obliging man in France because he had converted all his estates into bonds upon himself for his Parisians, so would Napoleon like to be the most obliging man of France and convert all property and all labor of France into a personal bond upon himself. He would like to steal the whole of France to make a present thereof to France, or rather to be able to purchase France back again with French money;—as chief of the “Society of December 10,” he must purchase that which is to be his. All the State institutions, the Senate, the Council of State, the Legislature, the Legion of Honor, the Soldiers’ decorations, the public baths, the public buildings, the railroads, the General Staff of the National Guard, exclusive of the rank and file, the confiscated estates of the House of Orleans,—all are converted into institutions for purchase and sale. Every place in the Army and the machinery of Government becomes a purchasing power. The most important thing, however, in this process, whereby France is taken to be given back to herself, are the percentages that, in the transfer, drop into the hands of the chief and the members of the “Society of December 10.” The witticism with which the Countess of L., the mistress of de Morny, characterized the confiscations

³¹ [The name of the French national bonds.](#)

of the Orleanist estates: “C’est le premier vol de l’aigle,”³² fits every flight of the eagle that is rather a crow. He himself and his followers daily call out to themselves, like the Italian Carthusian monk in the legend does to the miser, who displayfully counted the goods on which he could live for many years to come: “Tu fai conto sopra i beni, bisogna prima far il conto sopra gli anni.”³³ In order not to make a mistake in the years, they count by minutes. A crowd of fellows, of the best among whom all that can be said is that one knows not whence he comes—a noisy, restless “Bohème,” greedy after plunder, that crawls about in gallooned frocks with the same grotesque dignity as Soulonque’s³⁴ Imperial dignitaries—, thronged the court, crowded the ministries, and pressed upon the head of the Government and of the Army. One can picture to himself this upper crust of the “Society of December 10” by considering that Véron Crevel³⁵ is their preacher of morality, and Granier de Cassagnac their thinker. When Guizot, at the time he was Minister, employed this Granier on an obscure sheet against the dynastic opposition, he used to praise him with the term: “C’est le roi des drôles.”³⁶ It were a mistake to recall the days of the Regency or of Louis XV. by the court and the kit of Louis Bonaparte’s: “Often did France have a mistress-administration, but never yet an administration of kept men.”³⁷

Harassed by the contradictory demands of his situation, and compelled, like a sleight-of-hands performer, to keep, by means of constant surprises, the eyes of the public riveted upon himself as the substitute of Napoleon, compelled, consequently, every day to accomplish a sort of “coup” on a small scale, Bonaparte throws the whole bourgeois social system into disorder; he broaches everything that seemed unbroachable by the revolution of 1848; he makes one set of people patient under the revolution, and another anxious for it; and he produces anarchy itself in the name of order, by rubbing off from the whole machinery of Government the veneer

³² “It is the first flight of the eagle.” The French word “vol” means theft as well as flight.

³³ “You count your property, you should rather count the years left to you.”

³⁴ Soulonque was the negro Emperor of the short-lived negro Empire of Hayti.

³⁵ Crevel is a character of Balzac, drawn after Dr. Véron, the Proprietor of the “Constitutional” newspaper, as a type of the dissolute Parisian Philistine.

³⁶ “He is the king of the clowns.”

³⁷ Madame de Girardin.

of sanctity, by profanating it, by rendering it at once nauseating and laughable. He rehearses in Paris the cult of the sacred coat of Trier with the cult of the Napoleonic Imperial mantle. But, when the Imperial mantle shall have finally fallen upon the shoulders of Louis Bonaparte, then will also the iron statue of Napoleon drop down from the top of the Vendôme column.³⁸

³⁸ A prophecy that a few years later, after Bonaparte's coronation as Emperor, was literally fulfilled. By order of the Emperor Louis Napoleon, the military statue of the first Napoleon that originally surmounted the Vendôme column, was taken down and replaced by one of first Napoleon in imperial robes.

GLOSSARY

BOURBONS (Legitimists): Royalist party of large landed proprietors, who ruled France during Restoration, after overthrow of Napoleon I. 1814–1830. Pretender to throne 1848, “Henry V.”

CODE NAPOLEON: French code of civil law promulgated in 1804, under Napoleon I. It was a blending of the old French common law with the more radical laws of the Revolution, and dealt with property, inheritance, contracts, obligations, etc.

CONSTITUENT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (May, 1848, to May, 1849): Provisional body charged with drawing up Constitution. Dominated from May to December, 1848, by bourgeois (“pure”) Republicans, who, in coming to power, had forced out proletarians and petty bourgeois. A reformist party, recruited from lower tier of capitalists. Weakened by election of Louis Bonaparte to the Presidency in December, 1848, and finally forced to dissolve by Party of Order.

DECEMBRISTS (Society of December 10): Organization of slum proletarians headed by Louis Bonaparte. Named for date of his election to Presidency, December 10, 1848.

EIGHTEENTH BRUMAIRE: According to the calendar of the French Revolution this was the name of the date (November 9, 1799) of the *coup d'état* of Napoleon I. Applied here to *coup d'état* of his nephew, Louis Bonaparte.

FEBRUARY DAYS (1848): Early days, actually prologue, of Revolution. The proletariat enjoyed a brief triumph, but was suppressed by bourgeois parties, headed by “pure” Republicans.

FEBRUARY REVOLUTION: Revolution of 1848, which began in February of that

year with the overthrow of Louis Philippe. With the assumption of power by various factions in turn, the Revolution became increasingly reactionary, until it culminated in the *coup d'état* of Louis Bonaparte and the Second Empire.

GIRONDINS: Moderate Republicans of French Revolution of 1789, who held power for a time, but were superseded by the Jacobins. So called because many of them came from the Department of the Gironde.

JACOBINS: Radical Democrats of first French Revolution (1789). Named for Jacobin convent where they held meetings.

JUNE INSURRECTION: Attempted uprising of proletariat in June, 1848, brutally put down by bourgeois Republicans.

JULY MONARCHY: Period from 1830 to 1848, when France was ruled by Louis Philippe, Orleanist king.

LEGISLATIVE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: June, 1849, to December, 1851. Dominated at first by Party of Order (reactionary), which, by a ruse, broke power of Mountain (petty bourgeois and workers) in June, 1849. Assembly struggled with Bonaparte for power, with various coalitions being formed within it, but was finally defeated by Bonaparte in December, 1851.

LEGITIMISTS: See Bourbons.

LUMPENPROLETARIAT: Marx's term for vagabonds, convicts, gamblers, adventurers and other such slum elements.

MOBILE GUARD: A sort of storm troopers—"elite of the slums drilled for butchery."

MOUNTAIN: Small traders' democracy; petty bourgeois; later this element united with workers to form Social Democratic party in Legislative National Assembly.

(The name “Mountain” was copied from first French Revolution.)

NATIONAL GUARD: Militia of Paris. Usually independent of, and antagonistic to, regular army, but for a time, during Revolution of 1848, united with army under Changarnier.

ORLEANISTS: Royalist party representing upper tier of capitalists (aristocracy of finance and large industrialists). Ruled France during July Monarchy (1830-1848) under Louis Philippe.

PARTY OF ORDER: Reactionary party of royalists, Bonapartists and rigid Republicans, united in Legislative National Assembly. They defeated bourgeois Republicans and forced Constituent National Assembly to dissolve; forced their only strong opposition, the new Mountain (petty bourgeois and proletarians) out by a trick, and enjoyed a virtual dictatorship of Assembly for a time. In its struggle with Bonaparte, the party tried various coalitions, but was eventually ousted.

PEASANTS: Agricultural Workers and petty landholders, strongly reactionary; influenced election of Bonaparte to Presidency in 1848 and his triumph in December, 1851. They had received land allotments from Napoleon I and held his name in superstitious reverence

PROLETARIAT: Urban workers in Paris and other large cities. Their attempt to assert themselves in the early days of the February Revolution was ruthlessly put down by bourgeoisie. They later united with petty bourgeois to form new Mountain, whose power in Assembly was destroyed by a trick of the Party of Order (June, 1849).

REPUBLICANS: Moderate anti-monarchist party, reformist. Called variously “pure,” “bourgeois,” “tricolor,” etc., Republicans. Dominated Constituent National Assembly from May to December, 1848.

RESTORATION: Period after overthrow of Napoleon 1811–1830, when Bourbons (Legitimists) ruled France.

ROYALISTS: Two factions, each with its own Pretender. Bourbons, favoring “Henry V” for king, and Orleanists, favoring Louis Philippe. These factions united in bourgeois Party of Order in Legislative National Assembly and struggled with Bonaparte for power from 1849 to 1851.

SOCIETY OF DECEMBER 10: See Decembrists above.

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