Contents

Preface vii

Part V THE RISE OF ARTISANAL SOCIALISM 1
Chapter 22 From Jacobinism to Socialism 2
Chapter 23 From Restoration to Revolution 29
Chapter 24 The Revolution of July 1830 52

Part VI THE BARRICADES OF PARIS 71
Chapter 25 The Revolution of February 1848 72
Chapter 26 The Incomplete Revolution 94
Chapter 27 "Defeat of the Revolution!" 118
Chapter 28 The Insurrection of June 1848 144
Chapter 29 Reaction and Revival 168
Chapter 30 Prelude to the Paris Commune 192
Chapter 31 The Paris Commune of 1871 219

Part VII PROLETARIAN SOCIALISMS 253
Chapter 32 The Rise of Proletarian Socialisms 254
Chapter 33 The Social Democratic Interregnum 278

Bibliographical Essay 313
Index 327
For my granddaughter Katya

Preface

This volume, the second of The Third Revolution, deals primarily with the major nineteenth-century uprisings of the French working class, from the Revolution of 1830 through the Revolution of 1848 to the Paris Commune of 1871. It also necessarily examines the origins and history of the International Workingmen’s Association (IWMA) or First International and the Second International, primarily a Marxist social democratic association heavily influenced by the German Social Democratic Party. The increasingly ideological nature of nineteenth-century workers’ movements and the emergence of a modern proletariat and an industrial capitalist class made it necessary for me to explore in some detail the transition from Jacobinism, a radical republican ideology and movement, to various socialisms oriented toward the working class. During the first half of the century a modern class conflict really appeared in both England and France and, with it, various socialist and anarchist ideologies that were already sprouting in the immediate aftermath of the Great French Revolution. Hence, in addition to covering the revolutions themselves, I provide summary accounts of the ideological transition from left-wing Jacobinism to outright socialism.

In a sense, this volume is not only an account of one of the stormiest periods of popular insurrections in modern history but also an account of nineteenth-century France, as seen through the lens of its great revolutionary movements and ideologies. The revolutions of 1830, 1848, and 1871 in Paris were, in great part, extensions of the Revolution of 1789 to 1794, which is also how many of their participants regarded them. In contrast to most conventional historians, I share Roger V. Gould’s view that the June 1848 insurrection of the Parisian workers was the most class-conscious of all nineteenth-century French revolutions, even more than the dramatic Paris Commune of 1871, which was by no means socialist or exclusively working class in character—it was actually less a class revolution than a municipal, political, and patriotic phenomenon, precipitated by the Prussian siege of Paris. But the June
insurrection of 1848 can be seen, as many of its participants saw it, as the “third revolution” that the sans-culottes had hoped to make in 1793.

This volume is also an account of the transition from artisanal socialism to proletarian socialism. The two forms of socialism, while overlapping in many respects, were also different in their goals and methods. Indeed, the book’s narrative pivots on this transition, as well as on the shift from the small handicraft workshop to the modern capital-intensive factory, with the differences in sensibility and politics that the transformation produced. In 1789 and 1830, the militants were primarily artisans, especially journeymen, and by trade were often carpenters, masons, furniture makers (particularly in the Saint-Antoine district of Paris), and printers, rather than factory workers. By the turn of the twentieth century, the leading militant members of the working classes were metalworkers, who retained the independent spirit of skilled artisans while simultaneously forming an integral part of the factory environment. Among the thousands of semiskilled or unskilled and poorly educated proletarians in factories, it was these “artisan-proletarians,” so to speak, who were the most educated, forceful, and independent and to whom the others turned for leadership. They begin to appear as early as June 1848, and as the reader of volume 3 will find, they played a very prominent role in the great revolutionary wave that swept over Russia and Germany between 1917 and 1921.

I share the view of Bernard H. Moss, William H. Sewell, Jr., and other recent historians of the nineteenth-century French working class that ideas of cooperative, indeed collective production and distribution (as distinguished from individualistic forms) became very widespread in Paris in the years after 1830, and especially following the 1848 Revolution. These ideas varied greatly and were often vague in conception, ranging from simple trade unions with guildlike features to cooperatives with egalitarian and collectivist methods of production and distribution. It is highly unlikely that Parisian artisans or even “skilled workers,” as Moss calls them, moved unerringly in the direction of developing collective forms of work. After all, about fifty percent of the enterprises in Paris during the 1840s were owned by artisanal masters, often aided by one or more assistants.

But many of these master craftsmen aspired to secure their independent status against the efforts of merchant capitalists to control them, and against the encroachments of the factory system which, judging from the unsavory English example, threatened one day to proletarianize them as well. The need to defend their trades, or états, from merchant control and industrial competition alike made them eager to unite with their fellow masters in cooperative societies. But it is unlikely that most of these artisan masters aspired to create a full-blown socialist society based on the collective ownership of property.

On the other hand, a large number of artisans were employees rather than employers—indeed, only ten percent of the masters employed ten or more workers—and these ordinary workers or journeymen appear to have been far more open to radical egalitarian ideas about collective property ownership and cooperative production. Thus, the Parisian working class initially had no coherent, let alone shared concept of association and the “organization of work”, from masters to journeymen to outright unskilled proletarians who were little more than laborers, their demands probably varied considerably.

In the 1830s and 1840s, any attempt to establish a truly collectivist basis for industrial production would have encountered great difficulties. But many French artisans devised ingenious schemes for establishing productive associations of a socialistic kind based on their existing workshops. Hence their earliest calls for a new “organization of work” often came down to demands for shared resources for credit; insurance funds to tide individual artisans over in times of unemployment, illness, and old age; and legislation to protect their small workshops against competition from the growing factory system.

In time, however, and in growing numbers, the most sophisticated worker “militants,” comprising both artisans and journeymen laborers, did seek to collectivize most of the French economy. Many historians of the French labor movement maintain that nineteenth-century French craftsmen were genuine proletarians who were fervently committed to collectivist ideas of socialism based on free associations. Marxist historians, on the other hand, regard most of the Parisian craftsmen as “petty bourgeois” remnants of a preindustrial society, whose “associationist” ideas were based on the private ownership of small-scale property. I have accepted neither viewpoint in toto but have tried to steer a middle course between the two. Pace Marx, collectivist goals did emerge among many French artisans after the Revolution of 1830. But these goals were diverse, often confused, and ultimately unworkable within the context of the small-scale production that prevailed in French industry for most of the nineteenth century.

One wing of the collectivist ideology of artisanal socialism called for the nationalization of railroads, banks, and major industrial enterprises, to be managed by the men and women who worked in them. But in the main, French socialists, not to speak of anarchists, were generally more enamored of federalist ideas of association than centralist ones, an affinity that, well into the next century, in conjunction with their commitment to workers’ control of industry, would make them either conscious or intuitive supporters of anarchosyndicalism, with its creed of bottom-up industrial management within the framework of libertarian trade unions. Hence the failure of French Marxists to establish a secure basis in the French working class or to consistently abide by Marx’s views, either during or after his lifetime.

Unlike Moss, I have eschewed the appellations “skilled workers” and
"skilled proletarians" in favor of "artisans" and "artisan proletarians." I believe that what distinguished most Parisian workers from the emerging factory proletariat was primarily their characteristically strong sense of personal independence and self-reliance, not simply their possession of skills. Doubtless, the artisans' independent sensibility was reinforced and partly formed by their skills. But theirs was also a culture and community that harked back to an older era, possessed of civic as well as class consciousness. Revolutions are very territorial events: the class antagonisms they express occur within distinctive communities, with their own cafés, civic halls, squares, and even streets as well as workplaces. In France in particular, a revolution would actually consist of many local revolts, each based in a particular neighborhood. Hence the fatal tendency of French workers, especially Parisians, to scatter to barricades in their own neighborhoods during times of insurrection, instead of organizing a citywide and regional coordination against counterrevolutionary military forces.

It had been my hope to encompass this history of the popular movements in the revolutionary era within two volumes. But as my preparation of the second volume continued, it became clear that a third volume would be required. To have limited The Third Revolution to only two volumes, I discovered, would have obliged me to omit crucial events, ideas, and developments within the revolutionary tradition. I can only hope that the reader finds that this three-volume book has been worth his or her attention and that it evokes a sense of the great events that are fading from memory today—and the lessons they have to teach present and future generations.

The writing of this volume was very often burdened by the formidable problem of factual discrepancies among the various histories upon which I drew. Many accounts, I found, differed on everything from names to dates to sequences of events, as well as omitting important details of the revolutions at the grassroots level. Not even contemporary eyewitnesses and participants agreed on all the basic facts: Lamartine's and Blanc's histories of the February 1848 Revolution, for example, diverged even on simple details regarding major events. These discrepancies, which recurred again and again, obliged me to consult many memoirs, contemporary documents, and other histories before I felt I could make reasonable judgments and present a responsible picture of these nineteenth-century insurrections. Under such circumstances, errors are difficult to avoid, and I can only hope that any that may persist in the pages that follow are minimal and inconsequential.

I owe my greatest debt in writing volume 2 of The Third Revolution, once again, to my companion and colleague, Janet Biehl, who helped immensely with the research and edited the manuscript with great astuteness, care, and dedication. Her enormous support and assistance were indispensable in the preparation of this book.

Several staff members of the Bailey-Howe Library at the University of Vermont in Burlington were also very helpful. Not only did Dean Leary and June Trayah go out of their way to make available books from the library's excellent collection, but Craig Chalone and Rebecca Gould actually brought some of them to my home after their working hours in the dead of a Vermont winter. Being seriously disabled, I could not pick them up myself. Fred G. Hill of the Fletcher Free Library did me a similar kindness and managed to acquire several indispensable but difficult-to-find books through the interlibrary loan system for me. To all of these kind Vermonters, I owe my warmest gratitude. Finally, I wish to express my immense debt to Jane Greenwood, my editor at Cassell, for her generous support for the book, and for making it possible for me to go to a third volume. I also remember with fondness my former editor, Steve Cook, for his interest in and encouragement of the entire project.

Murray Bookchin
Burlington, Vermont
May 18, 1997
PART V

THE RISE OF
ARTISANAL
SOCIALISM
The influence of the French Revolution did not end with the fall of the Robespierists on July 28, 1794—or, by the revolutionary calendar, with the tenth of Thermidor in Year Two of the Republic. Among a minority of radical conspirators, the Great Revolution, as it came to be called, was to haunt the Napoleonic era and the Bourbon Restoration that followed it. Although it was given a grisly image by the returning monarchy and nobility and clergy as the incarnation of terror and bloody civil war, the Revolution lived on among beleaguered republicans, and later among socialists, as a valiant attempt to create a new era of freedom for the oppressed masses of France and even for humanity as a whole.

Indeed, as I have noted, it remained an imperishable source of lessons for revolutionaries of every kind who, well into the twentieth century, would model their strategies on the attainments and failings of 1789 to 1794. Later generations of revolutionaries would sing the “Marseillaise” as an international hymn at gatherings throughout Europe, and they would employ the term citizen (until it was supplanted by comrade among socialists and anarchists) as a form of address in correspondence, manifestos, and public orations well into the nineteenth century. In nearly all Western European countries, self-designated Jacobins were to proclaim a stridently republican ideology and establish Jacobin-type societies.

But some of these societies took their views beyond the expansive principles of legal equality embodied in the “Constitution of ’93.” They began to demand not only personal equality but economic equality as well, in what came to be known as red republicanism. Such advances over a strictly political Jacobinism consisted of notions of distributive economic justice, according to which wealth was to be equitably shared within the existing system of property ownership.

In this respect, the political and economic outlook of nineteenth-century red republicans did not go much beyond that of the radical English Levellers of two centuries earlier. The good society, according to Levellers and red republicans alike, was to consist of small-scale producers, such as peasants and artisans, each of whom was entitled to the basic means of life according to traditional principles of “natural law,” such as those advocated by Colonel Rainborough in the Putney debates.* Economic inequities, radical Levellers and red republicans argued, could be eliminated by sharing the resources of society in a just manner, especially by providing a material competence—commonly, a parcel of land—to every poor man and his family. Every “he,” as Rainborough put it, should enjoy the right in a free society to secure a beneficent future as an independent food cultivator or even as a small entrepreneur.

Neither the Levellers nor the red republicans, however, challenged the existence of private property as such. Quite to the contrary, they believed property should be freed of medieval encumbrances that impeded its equitable distribution among the peasantry and the urban poor. What they opposed was the system of privilege, based on birth and the purchase of titles, that formed the social infrastructure of the ancien régime.

These views, of course, were not socialist. They did not call for the collective ownership of property or demand that the products of labor be distributed according to needs. The red republicans, even more decidedly than the Levellers, desired an economically as well as politically equitable society in which artisans, owning their own tools, and peasants, owning their own plots of land, would gain the full rewards of their labor without the exploitation of a propertyless class. In short, they desired a social order that would equalize the ownership of property rather than collectivize it, guaranteeing full economic and political liberty for all.

This basically individualistic system of small-scale production, carefully tuned by a friendly state and/or by cooperatively managed credit institutions to foster equality in the ownership of the means of production, was to become very popular among artisans early in the nineteenth century in Britain and especially in France, whose economy was mainly structured around handicraft production and a peasant agrarian society. Its most famous advocate was Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, whose ideas and influence we shall examine in due course.

Inasmuch as many of these French artisans had to cooperate to defend themselves against the invasion of their markets by cheaper factory goods and to find ample credit to tide themselves over difficult times, they early formed associations or corporations for mutual aid. Such corporations were no more socialist in the present-day sense of the word than, for example, contemporary trade unions or credit unions; but the very fact that they seemed like authentic producers’ cooperatives easily induced social thinkers in the last century to view them as a form of socialism. And in fact, these corporations often engaged

* See volume 1 of The Third Revolution, pp. 112-16.
in many common activities, ranging from the innocently festive to the militantly defensive, that imparted to them a seemingly socialist character. Indeed, as they became a sort of programmatic movement, with forceful demands for the rectification of serious injustices, they were often pejoratively called socialists. Thus, following the custom of the day, they may conveniently be included under the general rubric of artisanal socialism.

The earliest authentic artisanal socialists, however, were those artisans and theorists who demanded more than the equitable ownership of private property.* They began to challenge the existence of private property as such, calling for the collective ownership of the means of production wherever feasible. (Prudently and for sound political reasons, these early authentic socialists exempted from collectivization the peasantry, which viewed its ownership of family plots as a sacred right.) As to the distribution of goods produced, these socialists initially believed that the produce of their work should be shared according to the labor contributed by each artisan.

Still, other socialists, who by the 1840s were to be called communists, believed in a more ethical system of labor and distribution, one that would avoid the inequities produced by unavoidable differences in individuals’ abilities to contribute their labor to the common society and in individuals’ needs. Guided by the maxim “From each according to his (or her) abilities, to each according to his (or her) needs,” the communists held that a truly egalitarian society had to take full account of the different physical capacities and needs of its members. Accordingly, the distribution of goods should be based not on the labor expended by a worker in the process of production but on the specific needs that he or she had to satisfy—needs that inevitably varied according to the producer’s familial and personal responsibilities.

CONTINUITIES AND DISCONTINUITIES

During the course of the nineteenth century, the artisanal world of small shops and handicraft production in which these ideas evolved was gradually replaced by the proletarian world of large factories and machine production, giving rise to a class of mainly unskilled machine operatives. Given the emergence of factories that were too large to be owned by a single craftsman, socialism had to change its “scale,” so to speak. Socialist ideologies appeared that emphasized the integration of production on a regional and national level. Socialization soon began to mean the complete takeover of the economy either by the state (nationalization) or by worker-controlled, confederally organized trade unions (syndicalism). Particularly after the Paris Commune of 1871, artisanal socialism steadily gave way, albeit never completely, to proletarian socialism, with corresponding changes in the forms of organization that workers favored and by which their revolutionary leaders hoped to change society.

The strategies that artisanal and proletarian socialists used in their struggles for social change commonly stood in marked contrast to each other. Aside from their corporations, artisans normally belonged to clubs and often to secret societies. They tended to denigrate parliamentary activity, even where they were allowed to vote, and turned to direct action in the form of crowd assaults against the police and military. In periods of serious crisis, they often reared barricades and engaged in outright insurrection. Their organizations were generally transitory; they appeared and disappeared with changes in political and economic conditions.

By contrast, proletarians tended to form trade unions and political parties. When major social crises produced insurrectionary situations, and even in periods of social revolution, industrial workers generally functioned through mass parties, labor unions, and councils, which were often extensions of their coordinating strike committees. Where artisans built barricades, proletarians created paramilitary organizations. Where artisans tended to confine their insurrections to their own neighborhoods, proletarians, united by their factories, rose on a citywide, regional, and national scale, preceded by general strikes that in some cases paralyzed an entire country. These differences in strategy and forms of organization between artisans and proletarians, to be sure, were by no means ironclad. As early as the 1820s, and especially in the 1830s, French artisans took recourse not only to insurrections but to strikes on an increasing scale, and they organized trade unions as well as clubs to pursue their ends. Nor did they eschew the use of political organizations to elect deputies to parliamentary bodies.

But the transition from artisanal to proletarian socialism belongs to a later chapter. In the early nineteenth century artisanal socialists had yet to decipher such problems as their relationship to the ruling elites of their time, the nature of exploitation, and the role of classes in creating a new society. Their theorists viewed the formation of a cooperative world almost entirely as a problem of moral suasion. They were convinced that the wealthy had to be persuaded by ethical arguments to foster the various socialistic schemes that abounded after the French Revolution. The good offices of the rich and powerful, they believed, were necessary to bring

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* For a fuller discussion of artisanal socialism, see Chapter 24. As G.D.H. Cole observes, the word socialism in the early nineteenth century acquired a family of meanings. Minimally, it meant “collective regulation of men’s affairs on a cooperative basis.” Socialists at that time might make no reference to class conflict, for example, and “they all attacked the undue inequality of property and income and they demanded the regulation and limitation of property rights—which did not necessarily mean its abolition.” G.D.H. Cole, A History of Socialist Thought, vol. 1: The Forerunners (London: Macmillan, 1961), pp. 4-5.
about social change—hence the importance of offering compelling examples of cooperative living and production as a means to gain the backing of elites.

Obviously, this view of social change discouraged the spread of class consciousness, still less notions of class struggle. In the eyes of early socialist theorists, the old and new potentates of the world were expected to lend their support and wisdom to the innovation of socialist schemes that in fact were expressly opposed to their interests. Various socialist theorists even tried to find a place for the old elites in their new world, whether as the financiers of socialist projects, administrators of socialist schemes, or even as the potential leaders of a socialist society. Hence the early socialist theorists emphasized not class struggle but one or another form of class reconciliation—where the existence of class exploitation was acknowledged at all.

Thus, with such amiable views toward the wealthy and powerful, the utmost confusion existed among early socialists about how the owners of private property acquired their profits. Did they do it by overcharging consumers? By exacting interest from borrowers who needed credit to buy raw materials and pay wages? By working their hired laborers to the limits of their physical endurance (an explanation that conflicted with the desire of many socialist theorists to foster class harmony)? By reaping surpluses from sound agricultural practices? Or simply as just rewards for their contribution to the productive process? These were some of the more popular notions that the economists of the day floated for public consideration and that many early socialists incorporated into their analyses.

The ideological transition from Jacobinism to socialism was greatly complicated by republican myths and conspiratorial organizations. The prevailing radical ideology during the Bourbon Restoration, especially in the 1820s, was still republican—and in many countries it remained so for the rest of the century. Monarchies and aristocracies still appeared as the principal obstacles to political reform, as they would up to the First World War. The distinction between republican and socialist aims was not as immediately clear, at that time, as it is in retrospect. The largely republican rhetoric of the French Revolution colored the oratory and literature of red republicans and socialists alike. Indeed, for a time the two movements engaged together in the same uprisings and conspiracies and their members often belonged to the same secret societies.

Adding to the confusion, some minimally socialistic ideas could be coaxed out of the Great Revolution itself. Saint-Just's proposal, in Ventôse (February and March) 1794, that the property of "recognized enemies" of the republic be sequestered and distributed among "indigent patriots," later seemed like a socialistic willingness to redistribute property. But these Ventôse Laws, which the Convention enacted some four months before their sponsor was brought to the guillotine, proved unworkable, especially since enormous difficulties stood in the way of determining which enemies were “recognized” and which patriots were "indigent." Nor were these laws socialistic in nature: they involved a simple transfer of property from a very limited number of "enemies" to a very large number of poor, which left only a pittance to each eligible patriot. The Ventôse Laws could better be regarded as a form of charity for the impoverished masses.

Far more socialistic in nature were the demands of Gracchus Babeuf and his supporters who formed the "the Conspiracy of the Equals" during the spring of 1796, in the wake of the Great Revolution. The "Manifesto of the Equals," written in April by Sylvain Maréchal as a definitive statement of their aims, represented a sharp discontinuity with the French Revolution, even as it resonated with all the Jacobin verbal flourishes of 1793. "The French Revolution is only the herald of another revolution," declared Maréchal in the spirited language of the time, one "far greater, far more solemn, which will be the last of them all." The Constitution of 1793, the manifesto concluded, "was a great de facto step toward real equality; never had anything come so near to real equality. Yet even this latter Constitution did not reach the goal and bring about the common welfare, the great principle of which it nevertheless solemnly consecrated."

Giving reality to this "great principle," according to the manifesto, would involve nothing less than creating a "REPUBLIC OF EQUALS," in which all discrepancies of wealth would be abolished by establishing "the COMMUNITY OF GOODS! No more individual ownership of land: the land belongs to no one. We are demanding, we desire, communal enjoyment of the fruits of the earth: the fruits belong to all."

This was heady language indeed. If doubts remain among historians of socialism that the Babouvists demanded the eventual abolition of property society, they may be dispelled by Babeuf's own defense at his trial, after the Babouvist conspiracy was betrayed and its leaders arrested. As Babeuf read into his trial record passages from his periodical, Tribune of the People, he unequivocally asserted:

The sole means of arriving at [the Republic of Equals] is to establish a common administration; to suppress private property; to place every man of talent in the line of work he knows best; to oblige him to deposit the fruit of his work in the common store, to establish a simple administration of needs, which, keeping a record of all individuals and all the things that are available to them, will distribute these available goods with the most scrupulous equality, and will see to it that they make their way into the home of every citizen.

But Babeuf's appeal for socialism and even communism was stillborn; after the suppression of the conspiracy, these ideas fell victim to the social and
political amnesia that gripped most of France during the Napoleonic and Restoration years. It was not until the 1830s, more than a generation after Babeuf was executed by the Thermidorian Directory, that socialism arose in Europe as a lasting concept, and even then the word socialism was not minted in the country of the Great Revolution—rather, it first appeared in print in England in 1827, in a periodical committed to Robert Owen’s vision of a new society. During the Restoration, from 1815 to 1830, French radicals were still largely occupied with various neo-Jacobin republican conspiracies against the Bourbons.

Although Babeuf’s conspiracy was largely forgotten after its leaders were executed or imprisoned, one of the last surviving Babouvists, Philippe Buonarotti, published in 1828 a two-volume documentary history of the Conspiracy of Equals—the Histoire de la conspiration pour l’égalité, dite de Babeuf—that catapulted the plot and its drama into public attention and stimulated the development of revolutionary socialist ideas in France, in contrast to the tamer notions that artisanal and similar socialist theorists were propagating. Buonarotti, a fiery Italian of noble ancestry, had been caught up in the Great Revolution while studying law in Paris and was granted French citizenship by the Convention in 1793. Although he subsequently became involved in the Babeuf conspiracy, he was spared the guillotine after its suppression and was imprisoned. Eventually he went into exile in Geneva, but he remained a volatile insurrectionary whose ideas melded old political enraged sentiments with new artisanal socialist ideas. For nearly thirty years, the massive cultural and political backlash against revolutionary activity notwithstanding, he actively participated in Italian and French republican conspiracies.

Buonarotti lived long enough to gain the awe of young romantic revolutionaries of all kinds—republican and nationalist as well as socialist—as they began to proliferate once again in the late 1820s. His book may not have been the kindling that fed the socialistic fire that burned in the breast of French revolutionaries of all kinds—republican and nationalist as well as socialist—when they began to develop revolutionary socialist ideas in France, in contrast to the tamer notions that artisanal and similar socialist theorists were propagating. Buonarotti, a fiery Italian of noble ancestry, had been caught up in the Great Revolution while studying law in Paris and was granted French citizenship by the Convention in 1793. Although he subsequently became involved in the Babeuf conspiracy, he was spared the guillotine after its suppression and was imprisoned. Eventually he went into exile in Geneva, but he remained a volatile insurrectionary whose ideas melded old political enraged sentiments with new artisanal socialist ideas. For nearly thirty years, the massive cultural and political backlash against revolutionary activity notwithstanding, he actively participated in Italian and French republican conspiracies.

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LABORIST RADICALISM IN BRITAIN

To the socialist ideologies that were percolating in France in the early nineteenth century, British radicals added a new and more theoretically sophisticated dimension. In the 1790s many self-styled Jacobins in England had demonstratively hailed the French Revolution from across the Channel, but Britain’s own first steps toward socialism were drawn from uniquely English sources, reflecting a significantly different economic and social dispensation. Where early French economic theorists such as the Physiocrats, living in a predominantly agrarian and preindustrial society, appropriately regarded agriculture as the source of value and material surpluses, British economic theorists, faced with an era of industrial growth, adopted a labor theory of value. So pervasive was this orientation in English economic theory that many economists in Britain may properly be called “laborists,” as George Lichtheim called them.3 The centrality that English economics gave to labor can be traced from William Petty in the late seventeenth century to Adam Smith in the eighteenth, but it was David Ricardo a generation later, living in the full tide of the Industrial Revolution, who drew from laborist theorists their broad social and economic implications.

The notion that labor is the source of all “wealth,” as the laborist theorists put it, could lead to very radical conclusions. By enhancing the centrality of the worker, laborist theory gained a tremendous explanatory power that was more appropriate for socialist ideas than earlier, more simplistic notions. Indeed, before Ricardo, English socialism had been little more than a moral theory that enjoined the exploited and their exploiters to behave with a decent regard for each other’s needs. This largely subjectivistic approach nourished very naive and reformist notions of social change. Most “utopian socialists,” as later generations of socialists would call them, were content to appeal to employers, the state, and even despots to institute various reforms and gradualist strategies, often in ways that were simply patronizing to the “lower orders” and in awe of their social “betters.”

Ricardo, who as a man of wealth was anything but a social radical, imparted to the labor theory of value a degree of theoretical consistency that none of his predecessors had achieved. Not only did he conceive of labor as a commodity, much like any other commodity on the market, but he cast the labor theory of value in terms of subsistence. As a commodity, he said, a worker’s labor was worth no more than the minimum costs of maintaining that worker in everyday life and of reproducing future workers for the production of agrarian and industrial commodities (leaving aside wage fluctuations that may arise from supply and demand and other factors). To use Ricardo’s own formulations in his pivotal 1817 work, The Principles of Political Economy and Taxation, the “natural price” of labor is precisely what is “necessary to enable the labourers, one with another, to subsist and to perpetuate their race, without either increase or diminution.” Hence the value of labor—that is, the wages to which laborers are entitled—depends “on the quantity of food, necessities, and conveniences [that] become essential to him from habit.”
Followed to its logical conclusion, this "iron law of wages," as it came to be called, meant that poverty was a systemic—and endemic—condition of capitalist society. Poverty, in effect, was caused not merely by the greed of the rich; it stemmed above all from compelling laws of the marketplace, including those described in Malthusian theory that maintain that surplus population always drives wages down to the barest minimum needed to keep the labor force alive.

Although socialists were very critical of Ricardo's implicit justification for the existence of poverty, his subsistence theory of wages provided them with the means by which they could construct a highly impressive case against capitalism. Without abandoning their moral condemnation of the self-seeking bourgeoisie, especially as the Industrial Revolution and all its horrors began to crest in Britain, they could now support their demands for a complete reordering of society along cooperative lines by pointing to trends inherent within capitalism as such. Armed with this analysis, socialists influenced by Ricardo's labor theory, or "left Ricardians," could now demystify the hidden nature of capitalist exploitation. They could dispel the characteristic claim of capitalists to the profits that accrued in their factories and banks as a form of fairly earned "remuneration"—the "wages" of capital—for the services they provided to the economy. Ricardo's laborist theory created the basis for understanding that wage labor, as a distinct social relationship between the capitalist and the proletarian, was not only exploitative but necessarily resulted in the impoverishment, indeed the destitution, of the industrial worker.

Even among radicals who had studied Ricardo's works, to be sure, these ideas remained somewhat hazy: they were not to be fully clarified until Marx brilliantly synthesized English economic theory with French socialist ideas, while in France itself, no such argument existed until these theories crossed the Channel. But awareness, among early British socialists, of the unique features of capitalism was growing, as a result of new economic developments. Far more than any country in the early part of the century, Britain was witnessing a steady erosion in the status of traditional artisans, the substitution of machines for handwork, and the undermining of the family cottage industry by the factory system—in short, the Industrial Revolution. Unavoidably, these basic changes in British society—and the searingly harsh social conditions they generated—obliged early British socialists to transcend the political limits of Jacobinism. But it was above all the early appearance of the Industrial Revolution in England that profoundly influenced the rise of socialism, and not only at home, where its impact—the degradation of the proletariat—was immediate, but in time on the continent, where capitalist social relations were poised to penetrate as well, wreaking a similar transformation on continental working classes.
the traditional spinning wheel. Five more years then had to pass before Richard Arkwright, in 1769, patented the water-powered spinning frame, which, based on the rotary motion of two sets of rollers, could produce a finer and tighter thread. The water frame allowed for the use of as many as four hundred spindles, which could produce inexpensively in England the fine handspun yarn and cloth that fashion-conscious Britons had previously had to import from India.

It was not until a decade later that Hargreaves's spinning jenny and Arkwright's water frame were improved still further by Samuel Crompton's spinning mule in 1779. Now the English textile industry had a surplus of thread but not enough mechanized weavers to turn it into cloth. Until mechanized weaving machines came into use, mechanically spun thread was still woven by artisans using handlooms. Indeed, the intervals between each successive but partial technical innovation were filled by using the labor of many traditional artisans and cottage workers. Small producers who wholly or partly finished machine-produced commodities were thus long indispensable to the operations of large mills. Some six years after Crompton, in 1785, Edmund Cartwright finally patented the power loom, which, after important refinements, laid the basis for the mechanization of the entire cotton cloth industry.

None of these inventions could have been sufficient to assure England's industrial hegemony if the prime mover had been only water power, an unreliable source of energy that limited factory sites to streams that were often remote from commercial centers and ports. This crucial problem was ultimately resolved by James Watt's modern steam engine, patented in 1769, which in time was to become the pulsating heart of factories, locomotives, and steamships. Yet Watt's steam engine was still too inefficient and fragile, even decades after it had been invented, to completely free factories from their reliance on water power. Indeed, many of the eighteenth-century inventions, in their original form, were very cumbersome and crude and constantly in need of repair. Mining operations were plagued by flooded pits, and cheap steel long remained unavailable, despite improvements in smelting.

Not until the next century did further improvements, especially more sophisticated techniques of instrumentation, make these innovations eminently feasible and economically predominant. Indeed, it was not until the 1830s, a century after Kay's flying shuttle and some sixty years after Watt's steam engine, that modern industry in England finally arrived. By that decade more than 270,000 operatives were producing cotton goods, many in factories in Lancashire and Yorkshire. Still another generation had to pass before the new system crowded out nearly all handworkers and cottage producers—by which time England had earned its title "the workshop of the world."

The technological changes introduced by the Industrial Revolution produced major changes in the class configuration of England as well. For some four or five generations before the Industrial Revolution triumphed, the traditional working class had been divided among masters, journeymen, and apprentices: now it underwent a sweeping metamorphosis. "Workers" included not only artisans (preindustrial journeymen as well as masters), who worked in fairly small installations with tools and hand-operated machines, but industrial workers who were unskilled adjuncts of huge, highly rationalized, capital-intensive factories, closely supervised by foremen and managers.

Although both artisans and proletarians were regarded as workers and although both assumed the name proletariat (particularly in France), their interests, behavioral patterns, and degree of militancy diverged markedly. Generally artisans, working outside the industrial environment, had a certain latitude in determining their working hours, and they enjoyed a degree of independence in producing a fairly complete product—imparting to them a sense of craftmanship and pride that was denied to factory proletarians. Not surprisingly, these artisans opposed the encroaching industrial system with a militancy that was rare among early factory proletarians, many of whom were more subdued and deferential toward factory owners.

A similar differentiation occurred within the "bourgeoisie." Initially meaning "burgher" or city dweller, the word bourgeoisie in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was increasingly applied to professionals, merchants, financiers, and well-to-do retailers who enjoyed a comfortable income and held property—especially land—in amounts that now set them apart from ordinary city dwellers. Within even this fairly amorphous category, the Industrial Revolution slowly produced another cleavage. The new industrial class, which more appropriately should be called capitalists, began to develop interests that were separate from—indeed, in collision with—those of the traditional bourgeoisie. The term bourgeoisie was thus more appropriately applied to nonindustrial upper classes—until a capitalist ruling class with shared social interests emerged that encompassed financiers and merchants as well as industrialists.*

These distinctions are far from semantic quibbles. The social metabolism of the early nineteenth century was profoundly guided by struggles between craftsmen, landed bourgeois, merchants, proletarians, and industrial capitalists.

* In this connection, Marx and Engels, in their early writings, used a vocabulary that was more anticipatory of future developments than it was applicable in their day. In the mid-nineteenth century on the continent, artisans predominated in manufacturing and industrial proletarians were still comparatively rare, yet Marx often used the word proletariat to refer to the working class even when its was still artisanal. By the same token, he used the word bourgeoisie even at a time when the "bourgeoisie" was more invested in land than in industry. In the 1870s, especially after his fights with the followers of Proudhon, Marx used these terms with greater discrimination.
As new situations arose, these strata variously worked with each other at some times and opposed each other at other times. By the end of the century, when artisans had all but disappeared as an important productive force in England and Germany, the words bourgeois and capitalist came to denote a broad but single social group—such as factory owners, bankers, and large commercial wholesalers and retailers—whose interests were not only basically shared but organically interlocked.

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION IN FRANCE

On the continent, the lag in industrialization, producing uneven levels of technology in the various stages of production, was even more marked than in England. Where, by 1810, England could boast of possessing some five thousand steam engines, for example, France had only two hundred. Comparable divergences in mechanization applied to nearly all branches of French industry. Generally, too, in the replacement of cottage and artisanal production by the factory system, France lagged far behind England. In the England of 1850, for example, nearly a quarter of a million power looms in operation, compared with about 40,000 handlooms; in 1848 in France, by contrast, despite its substantially larger population, there were only 31,000 power looms. (Nonetheless, France had a large textile output, which suggests that French handlooms—whose scale we can only guess at because of the decentralized nature of cottage production—were enormously productive.)

To be sure, France, like England, had a number of large industrial installations. The multistoried British factories like the Boulton and Watt engine works were matched by the Le Creusot foundries as early as the 1790s. But if small firms and cottage production lingered precariously in Britain even until the middle of the nineteenth century, they remained dominant in France, and for a much longer period of time. The hand production of garments and luxury items that gave French goods their worldwide reputation for artistry and quality played a major economic role even into the twentieth century.

The marked lag in the spread of factories in France by comparison with Britain is accountable partly, perhaps decisively, by what Tom Kemp has aptly called "the essential paradox of nineteenth-century France." As a result of the Great Revolution, France had one of the most individualistic political and juridical systems in Europe—which, other things being equal, should have supplied an enormous impetus to the rise of industrial capitalism there. Yet the same Revolution, by removing the feudal burdens on agriculture and contributing to a widespread redistribution of land, also furnished the material underpinnings for one of the most self-sufficient peasantry in Western Europe. By its very self-sufficiency, this peasantry closed off much of France's domestic market to factory-made goods, creating little incentive for the mass production of commodities such as textiles, leather products, and the like.

To exacerbate the situation, the very individual rights that the Revolution had expanded—"confirmed the peasant custom of [land] division on inheritance," Kemp notes, "and thus prevented the development of a really individualist agriculture over the country as a whole." The inheritance clauses of the revolutionary and Napoleonic civil codes contributed to _morcelement_ [parcelizing] of the peasants' lands where they did not encourage the limitation of family size. No doubt they helped to conserve the peasantry, albeit at a low standard of living, but at the price of impeding the expansion of the internal market and the creation of an urban, industrial proletariat.

Thus, despite the seemingly "bourgeois" revolution of 1789–94, French industrial capitalists actually found themselves at a considerable disadvantage with respect to their English competitors, whose government was engaged in a frenzy of land enclosures that virtually destroyed the British peasantry, leaving "deserted villages" in their wake. French industrial capitalism was significantly impeded by the very revolution that has been described as classically bourgeois.

Nor was the French bourgeoisie itself disposed to foster industrial development along British lines. In the early nineteenth century the big bourgeoisie, largely centered in Paris, continued to expend its funds on the purchase of land, on mortgages and state bonds, and on monetary speculation, to the general neglect of the industrial economy. Still predominantly agrarian, the French economy was hidebound by tradition—parochial, craft-oriented, and above all, fixed on the value of land—the very traits that had marked the economy of the ancien régime. As for the expansion of the internal market and the overcoming of regional isolation, few statistics highlight the differences between England and France in these years better than the numbers for railway mileage laid down. In 1843 British rails extended for 2,036 miles, compared with only 268 miles in France—a nearly tenfold difference that remained significantly undiminished for decades. The extent to which regional distinctions, so pronounced in the preindustrial era of both countries, were diminished by industrialization and by railroads strongly affected the kinds of socialist ideas and practices that would develop on each side of the Channel.
BRITAIN’S SOCIALIST TRAJECTORY

Economic factors alone, to be sure, cannot account for the differences in the socialist movements that emerged in Britain and France: political traditions, the flexibility of existing institutions, and the cultural clan of the laboring classes had significant effects as well. But the role of economic factors should not be underrated.

Reaching unprecedented peaks early in the century, British land enclosures produced a labor force that was inchoate and demoralized, one that eventually fell prey to ruthless exploitation on the part of fiercely competitive factory owners. In England itself, between 1800 and 1820, about 300,000 acres of open land, on which many villagers depended for wood and pasturage, were enclosed, leaving incalculable numbers of rural folk at the mercy of industrial capitalists. The labor force that entered the new English factories was thus made up of broken people, disheartened by the loss not only of their homes but of the traditional protections that had once been supplied by the landed nobility and by guilds. Like the independent artisanal handworkers who were faced with extinction by power-driven machinery, the new industrial proletariat was caught in the harsh tension between a rationalized factory system and the more organic lifeways, however miserable they had been materially, of preindustrial village society.

Cannily, British industrial capitalists exploited the weaknesses of this proletariat by playing its religious and gender differences against each other. About twenty percent of the new English proletariat was composed of Irish peasants who had fled devastating economic conditions in their own country. Acrimony flared up easily between Irish Catholics and English Protestants, despite the misery that both groups shared in factories and slums. Such differences kept proletarians sufficiently divided among themselves that their potential to unite in opposition to their employers was, for a time, diverted into mutual hatred—until class consciousness began to dilute the malice English workers harbored toward “foreigners” and “papists.”

Moreover, an estimated three-quarters of the factory labor force was made up of women and children. Socially vulnerable and relatively docile, these groups could be reduced to submission to factory owners with relative ease. No section of the working population, during the entire Industrial Revolution, was more ruthlessly exploited and more effectively controlled by the industrial bourgeoisie. Female workers, generally intimidated by their employers, could be hired instead of militant males inclined to trade union organizing. Children, for similar reasons, were worked to exhaustion, growing up into an adult generation physically weak and deformed by rickets. So warped were their bodies that they unnerved even the ruling classes, who required a supply of physically able recruits, not only for England’s factories but for its military forces as well.

The more independent artisans, still rooted in the cultural lifeways of the preindustrial past, were far less accepting of their deteriorating social condition than these industrial workers. Riots and near-insurrections over food shortages and social abuses were their typical forms of protest. Even strikes began to occur, although they were to become more characteristic of industrial than artisanal workers. The skilled keelmen of Newcastle went on strike as early as 1750, as did London tailors a year later, both actions lasting several weeks. In 1753 in Manchester, carpenters, joiners, and bricklayers—that is to say, artisans—as well as construction laborers engaged in a work stoppage for higher wages, even raising money to defend their imprisoned leaders. Above all, great hunger riots swept over Britain in 1795–96, marked by virtual insurrections and attacks on the person of the king in London, led by craftsmen whose belligerency was redolent of the waning noncapitalistic world.

Other artisan revolts were more organized. The stormy Luddite movement, which tried to preserve old artisanal lifeways by damaging new labor-saving machines, was initiated mainly by cottage lace and hosiery workers in the Midlands, spreading to croppers and cotton weavers in 1811–12. These artisans and cottagers were hardly a riotous crowd but were made up of a number of well-organized groups who secretly directed their activities against carefully selected industrial targets. During the summer of 1812 the government had to station more than 12,000 troops in places where machine-breaking disturbances and riots had occurred. After a brief hiatus late in 1813, the movement resumed, panicking industrial capitalists into fears of a well-organized insurrection. Not until a major trial in York Castle was their movement effectively put down, resulting in the hanging of twenty of their leaders and the penal transportation of seven to Australia.

Such behavior and values, as Gwyn A. Williams so perceptively concludes, were essentially pre-industrial in a deeper sense than the merely technical.

“Long have we been endeavoring to find ourselves men,” said the sailors of the British fleet in 1797. “We now find ourselves so. We will be treated as such.” They learned this tone from others. The first political statement of this instinct was made by men who, however poor, could not conceive of themselves as “factory hands” or a “labour force,” men with the dignity of a skill and the mystery of a craft, men who polished tools and knew the “fine points,” men whose wage was a “selling price” and whose property was labour, men whose values, even in adversity, were fixed by an earned independence. The statement, once made, was universal—since, to quote another of them—“a man’s a man for a’ that”—but its origin should not be overlooked. This is the central truth. . . . The ideology of democracy was pre-industrial and its first serious practitioners were artisans.
Which is not to say that the new industrial proletariat was completely passive in the face of the terrible abuses inflicted upon it. The first "modern" industrial strike seems to have occurred in 1810, when Manchester cotton spinners left their factories by the thousands—disbursing among themselves, for their subsistence, £1,500 a week in strike funds that they had accumulated. It was a harbinger of later strikes that were to sweep up industrial proletarians in great movements for higher wages, shorter hours, and improved working conditions. Yet at the beginning of the century the English industrial proletariat was already making itself felt, opening expectations that would make it the focus of socialist ideology for several generations.

Nevertheless, neither the industrial proletariat nor the artisan craftworkers in England challenged the existing structure of society as such, despite the attempts of many radical theorists to impute such aims to them. In the wake of Cromwell's rule, the ruling classes in Britain had developed a sufficient degree of institutional flexibility to keep mass movements under control, their willingness to use force against rebels notwithstanding. The great movements of the English working classes, including Luddism, were effectively contained within the parliamentary system—to an extent that comparable movements in France were not. Unlike monarchical government in France, parliamentary government in England always held out the prospect that it could be reformed to benefit the poor and disenfranchised, with the result that any social or political upheaval, far from intensifying into a revolutionary situation, could ultimately be settled by compromise. In the 1790s the landed classes, in an attempt to keep the rural poor from migrating to the cities, agreed at Speenhamland to provide a basic, albeit meager income to the most underprivileged residents of the countryside. This measure, which remained in effect for decades, did not prevent all hungry and dispossessed villagers from migrating to the new industrial towns. But by providing a semblance of paternal concern and by giving traditional rural society an extended lease on life, it helped keep revolt in abeyance.

The Chartist movement and its outcome exemplify this containment of popular opposition. Adopted in 1838 by the London Workingmen's Association, the People's Charter raised basic demands for reforms like universal manhood suffrage, payment for members of Parliament, a secret ballot, fairly divided electoral districts, the abolition of property qualifications for membership in the House, and annual parliaments—demands that more or less had already been granted in the United States.

Support for the Chartist movement came from almost every sector of the English working class—factory workers as well as artisans, laborers as well as intellectuals, clerks as well as alehouse proprietors. The movement had a certain volatility, and some of its actions took threatening forms: in July 1839, after the House of Commons rejected the Charter despite the million and a quarter signatures attached to it, the ensuing popular anger generated riots, strikes, and even local uprisings. Talk of outright civil war was rife but not frightening enough to prevent the House from rejecting a second Chartist petition in 1842. In April 1848—itself a year of armed insurrection on the continent—a plan to present Chartist demands to Parliament in yet another great petition, accompanied by a mass demonstration, generated a veritable panic among the ruling classes. Expecting hundreds of thousands of Chartists to all but invade London, they proceeded to turn the capital into an armed camp. A large civilian constabulary was recruited from the middle classes; the aged Duke of Wellington was entrusted with the command of an army to defend the city; and even the queen was spirited off to the Isle of Wight for protection against the anticipated insurrection.

But the panic, as it turned out, was unfounded. Since its high point in the early 1840s, the Chartist movement had actually been waning. In advance of the 1848 effort, its leaders were sharply divided over strategy, and the relatively small crowd that massed to present the petition was patently intimidated by the government's enormous show of force. The middle-class elements who had formerly supported the Chartists had by now turned their attention to other pressing issues, especially an effort to abolish the Corn Laws, which had been enacted in 1815 to restrict the importation of corn in the interests of the landed classes, but which were keeping domestic food prices and wages inordinately high. Industrial workers, for their part, had shifted from Charter agitation to the formation of trade unions (which the repeal of the Combination Acts had permitted) as the most promising means for achieving their material goals. Finally, the artisans, newly harnessed by the industrial system, were turning to peaceful forms of action to preserve their waning status and lifeways.

In fact, a strong prima facie case can be made for correlating the rise of Chartism with worsening economic conditions, and its ebb with material improvements. It was when the price of corn increased enormously in 1838 and when a severe depression developed in 1842 that Chartism became a major force, as working-class fury reached near-insurrectionary proportions—only to wane during the intervening years and virtually fade away after 1846, when bread-and-butter trade unionism began to supplant Chartist influence among the proletariat.

Moreover, even as Parliament was using a firm stick to intimidate the Chartist movement, it was also offering the working classes a carrot in the form of ameliorative labor legislation. In 1844 a Tory parliament passed a law reducing the working time of children between the ages of eight and thirteen to six and a half hours daily. Young people between thirteen and eighteen could not work more than eleven hours, and child and female labor was prohibited completely in mines. Three years later a ten-hour working day for everyone was enacted, making English labor legislation among the most advanced in the
world. Factory inspectors were appointed to oversee working conditions, issuing reports that would gain a reputation for an unprecedented critical frankness. In the years that followed, the middle classes and ever larger sectors of the working class gained the franchise. Apart from a few flare-ups—which themselves never seriously threatened the social order—the English proletariat was ultimately domesticated.

The trajectory of English socialist movements was no more revolutionary than Chartism. Socialist proletarians and artisans put their efforts into the formation of cooperatives, benefit and educational societies, and conventional trade unions rather than the fomenting of insurrections. Later generations of socialists pinned their hopes on the formation of the Labour Party, which professed to seek a socialist society by electoral means. Nonetheless, before English socialism was entirely tamed, many early English socialists and their anarchist affines were committed to less parliamentary approaches. In October 1833 delegates to a Cooperative Congress in London, called by Robert Owen to unite the cooperative and trade union movements, flirted with the formation of a "Grand National Moral Union of the Productive Classes" (the presence of the word "Moral" is worth noting) and with waging a general strike as a means to achieve a cooperative society. In the same month a meeting of Glasgow workers endorsed a resolution for a general strike in terms that Harry W. Laidler calls "like a modern syndicalist manifesto."

But the strike plan they discussed was not general in any syndicalist sense; on the contrary, it was intermittent and fragmentary. Workers would set aside some of their income, and when they had accumulated sufficient funds to cover their living expenses for an extra week or month, they would remain at home for that period of time. Afterward they would return to work, repeating the same alternating sequence of work and idleness. This "direct action" was intended to eventually reduce capitalism to a shambles. Laidler's opinion of its militancy notwithstanding, the notion was naive and never carried out. Later, a more resolute notion of a "Grand National Holiday" of one month's duration would capture the imagination of many Chartists, who actually managed to unite the cooperative and trade union movements, flirted with the formation of a "Grand National Moral Union of the Productive Classes" (the presence of the word "Moral" is worth noting) and with waging a general strike as a means to achieve a cooperative society. In the same month a meeting of Glasgow workers endorsed a resolution for a general strike in terms that Harry W. Laidler calls "like a modern syndicalist manifesto."

For all his single-mindedness and idealism, the great "utopian socialist" Robert Owen was by no means a firebrand. He resolutely opposed the notions of class conflict that were percolating through the English working class. Initially a textile manufacturer, he had introduced sweeping reforms in his factory at New Lanark to show that capitalism could be managed beneficently and humanely, while still making a profit—and New Lanark quickly became a showplace for visiting statesmen and industrialists. In his later endeavors he hoped to create a new society structured around "villages of cooperation." As Owen envisioned it, these self-sufficient "villages," initially peopled by the unemployed, would combine agriculture with industry to produce for members' needs and then exchange their surpluses with one another in a spirit of cooperation rather than competition. In time, he hoped, the "villages" would peacefully replace capitalism and its industrial installations, opening an era of harmony and brotherly love. Owen even tried to gain governmental assistance to realize his plan, which, needless to say, was not forthcoming.

Although he devoted the rest of his life to realizing this essentially preindustrial vision of a new society, none of his practical schemes succeeded—least of all his attempt to finance, establish, and maintain a utopian community in the United States. Yet his tireless efforts to improve the condition of the working class made him, for a time, the indubitable leader of early English trade unionism, while his propaganda on behalf of cooperatives helped inspire various communitarian movements that flourished well into the next century, both at home and abroad. (In the late twentieth century Owen's cooperative vision continues to be recycled by communitarians who appear to know nothing of the "villages of cooperation" or the lessons to be drawn from their failure.)

For the rest of the nineteenth century, British socialism proliferated into a variety of tendencies: guild socialism, with its emphasis on localism; Fabian socialism, with its emphasis on gradualism and education; and even a small Marxian socialist tendency and a fairly respectable anarchist scene. But all of them culminated in the creation of a parliamentarian labor movement of sizable proportions. As for the laborist ideas of David Ricardo and the socialists who had drawn out their radical implications, they were absorbed into the synthesis produced by Marx, whose economics were far more Ricardian than many of his supporters acknowledged.

Ironically, the greatest single achievement of English socialism—or at least the English radical milieu—was the work of an exiled German who, ensconced in the British Museum, produced a masterpiece, Capital, that profoundly shaped socialism in most of the world—except, perhaps, in Britain. The passing of the artisans—and with them their strong sense of independence, their sometimes benign traditional lifeways, and their commitment to a moral economy—had done much to devitalize the British working classes and steer them toward parliamentary solutions for social problems. Idealistic social goals were consistently replaced with pragmatic reforms to limit working hours in factories, expand the franchise, and allow for trade unions and a social democratic labor party. In England it was ultimately in parliamentary legislation that social changes were registered.
THE FRENCH SOCIALIST TRAJECTORY

In France, by contrast, social changes were ultimately registered in armed insurrections that, even as failures, left a legacy of radical idealism with enormous international influence.

From an ideological and emotional standpoint, the foremost fact about French socialism was the drama of the Great Revolution itself. Haunting every aspect of Gallic political life—reactionary as well as revolutionary—it was fought and refought in the very writing of history. Historians of various revolutionary sympathies wrote accounts of the Revolution as Dantonists, Robespierristes, Hébertists, and even (albeit rarely) as enragés. On the other side of the debate were historians who admired the Bourbons, the Girondins, and even the contemptible Directory, not to speak of Bonapartists who claimed the revolutionary mantle for their Emperor, and moderate republicans who were ecumenically inspired by the monumental events of 1789 and afterward.

Indeed, until the 1860s, when Baron Haussmann began to destroy the city's revolutionary character and its many landmarks by building broad avenues—so useful for providing a clear line of fire for artillery to rout demonstrators—the Revolution was inscribed on the city of Paris itself. The Tuileries, in whose magnificent gardens fighting had broken out in July 1789 and whose palace Louis XVI and his family had occupied after the women's march on Versailles in 1789, was still the official center of the national government. The Hôtel de Ville still stood as a testament to the revolutionary Commune, where Hébertists, enragés, and sectionnaires had debated furiously and where Robespierre had briefly taken refuge after his fall. Inasmuch as the Parisian city hall became the traditional site for the sanctification of revolutionary governments, radical insurrectionaries would repeatedly try to occupy it in the name of popular sovereignty, recapitulating its importance in the Great Revolution.

The quartiers, houses, and streets that would form settings for nineteenth-century barricades—and the paving stones that would be their building material—bore testimony to Paris as the world center of revolution, but especially for the people of France. To live in Paris in the early nineteenth century was to drink at the very fountain of revolution, to feel its presence in every street, alley, cul-de-sac, and avenue. There one could encounter the sons and daughters of the sans-culottes who had driven forward the Great Revolution—and even elderly men and women who themselves had played a role in its events. Physically, despite Napoleon's self-celebratory monuments, Paris remained an oversize medieval city with narrow alleys, cul-de-sacs, and twisting streets, shaded by overhanging tenements as many as seven stories high—the ideal urban landscape for barricade fighters as well as for snipers. However poorly armed, civilians could defend themselves in this city with telling effect even against trained professional troops.
but according to the financial investment they had made in the community. In

with an almost hourly rotation of tasks in horticultural as well as artisanal work. Boring toil, work, in Fourier's utopia, would be an enjoyable and varied activity, women in society, drew up serious plans for self-sufficient cooperative phalansteries were to be rewarded, not on the basis of their labor or their needs, but according to the financial investment they had made in the community. In this respect it is difficult to call Fourier a socialist. Yet he was vigorously opposed to capitalism, whose abuses he never ceased to chronicle and attack. Moreover, his phalansteries very closely resembled Owen's "villages of cooperation" (so much so that copious ink was spilled, among Owenites and Fourierists, over the tiresome issue of who had "plagiarized" from whom). Significantly, and in stark contrast to Saint-Simon, Fourier eschewed all notions of a centralized, state-managed economy, a feature of his work that endeared him to anarchists later in the century.

Although only a small number of Fourierists clustered around the lonely man in the 1820s, during the years following the Revolution of 1830 Fourier's ideas gained a respectable following among craftspersons as well as intellectuals. Like the Saint-Simonians, the Fourierists after the master's death propagated his ideas in a socialist form. Nor did Fourierism lack for distinguished admirers in the English-speaking world. In varying degrees American journalists and authors such as Albert Brisbane, Horace Greeley, Margaret Fuller, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Ralph Waldo Emerson disseminated his ideas among their readers as well as their peers in the progressive New England elite. Some of his followers created phalansteries in the United States, of which Brook Farm, outside Boston, is the most famous.

Prior to the 1830 Revolution in France, the leading utopian socialists, including Saint-Simon and Fourier, vigorously opposed insurrections and eschewed a class analysis that focused on conflict between the working class and the bourgeoisie. To be sure, they despised the exploiters of their day. Saint-Simon, for example, detested the idle and reactionary landed aristocracy that, during the Restoration, was the preeminent social class (which may account for the support he earned from financiers and manufacturers). Fourier, for his part, feared the impact of competition upon preindustrial society, and the very nature of his phalansteries reflected his disposition to favor rural life organized along communal lines. That later socialists turned their attention away from these ideas and toward the working class is due less to their utopian nature than to the great upheavals, early in the century, that occurred in France—notably the insurrections of the early 1830s and the Revolution of 1848. These events and the stirring demands of the working classes for more freedom could not be ignored, least of all because they were backed up with barricades and muskets.

To French artisans, most of whom worked in small shops and who often aspired to independent enterprises, the institutionalized trade unionism that would soon gain a stronghold among English factory workers was irrelevant. Nor did the French parliamentary tradition, in contrast to the British, open avenues for the expression of working-class discontent. As a result, French workers, like radical intellectuals, tended to view direct, even armed confrontation with an oppressive regime as the principal means for resolving
social injustices. French socialist movements, in effect, differed profoundly from their British counterparts, not only because they appeared later but because, the pacifism of early socialist theorists notwithstanding, they were much more insurrectionary.

The counterrevolutionary backlash against the French Revolution, especially under the Bourbon monarchs Louis XVIII and Charles X, also brought the repression of republican and socialist movements. Young radicals were obliged to form secret conspiratorial groups, many of which favored as their ideal a “democratic and social republic.” This slogan, which was to resound through much of French revolutionary history during the century, fused radical political Jacobinism with clearly socialist ends, pointing to a change not only in the governing regime but in the social order itself. A “democratic and social republic” would be one that provided for the poor, the underprivileged, and the helpless, and one that protected craft workers from the deprivations of the privileged and powerful, and from the inroads of industrial capitalism. For many ordinary Parisians, prior to the 1830s, it was thus essentially a defensive concept, in which government would rectify gross economic inequities and protect artisans in their traditional vocations. Nonetheless, so intense was the reactionary backlash during the Restoration that even this moderate idea could be advanced only in secret conspiratorial societies.

How widespread republican conspiratorial groups were in this period, and how many were socialist, is hard to judge, given the demimonde they inhabited. But the underground world clearly became a training ground for the many ordinary Parisians, prior to the 1830s, it was thus essentially a defensive concept, in which government would rectify gross economic inequities and protect artisans in their traditional vocations. Nonetheless, so intense was the reactionary backlash during the Restoration that even this moderate idea could be advanced only in secret conspiratorial societies.

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The affinity between their names notwithstanding, the two movements were of a considerably different nature in the two countries. Where the Italian carbonari were primarily nationalists, the French charbonnerie brought together red republicans, embittered Bonapartists, and socialists like Buonarroti (who actually played a major role in both the Italian and French groups). “At its height [the charbonnerie] had about 60,000 members in sixty departments [of France], the majority in the east,” observes Pamela Pilbeam. “Its aims were vaguely subversive, stressing the brotherhood and equality of man, and it attracted young idealists as well as republicans and Bonapartists unreconciled to the new regime.”

To circumvent the Restoration penal code that required any organization of more than twenty people to be officially approved, the charbonnerie limited each component group, or vente, to twenty or fewer members. Again like the Masons, their network was structured hierarchically, culminating in a commanding vente suprême in Paris.

Although the charbonnerie had been formed by Jura workmen, the movement in Restoration France became essentially an elite phenomenon. Its red republican and other members tended to be not artisans but students, former Napoleonic officers, romantic writers and poets, and even liberals who preferred an Orléanist throne to a Bourbon one. Artisans, who constituted the great majority of French workers at the time, created their own societies based on fellowship and mutual aid, quite apart from intellectuals and professionals. Despite legislation that had been passed during the Revolution banning the traditional guild system and all kinds of trade unions, master craftsmen and journeymen established benefit and mutual aid groups to advance their own interests. Here concepts of mutualism were nourished into a specifically artisanal socialism well in advance of Proudhon’s writings on mutualism in the 1840s.

The most conspicuous and rambunctious mutual benefit societies at this time were the compagnonnages, which were formed by journeymen artisans. Compagnons, or bachelor journeymen, wandered around France seeking work and gaining skills, finding temporary housing in hostels. Although their societies were formed for their mutual benefit, compagnons, organized according to their trades and housed together in close quarters, were imbued with a strong sense of craft exclusivity and arrogance. Compagnons from different trades frequently clashed with one another, often violently and riotously expressing their trade parochialism as well as their social discontent. In the cafés and streets of small towns and cities they were a perennial source of working-class divisiveness—although in times of social crisis, they might unite to fight the authorities as well. Nonetheless, as their infighting illustrates, craft distinctions still divided French workers. Indeed, it should be noted that the slogan on which the Communist Manifesto ended—“Workingmen of all countries, unite!”—was a plea not only for international class solidarity but also for internal class unity.

By the 1830s, however, a new mood was in the air. There was a growing feeling among workers that the term citizen, so commonly used as a mode of address during the Great Revolution, had a dual meaning; it meant one thing for those who worked and another for those who idly enjoyed the fruits of the workers’ labor. If economists and utopian socialists still puzzled over the sources of profits and preached class conciliation, ordinary workers instinctively knew that they were being exploited, in effect robbed of their labor time. A realization was growing, ever more clearly, that Jacobinism, with its message of political freedom, was inadequate to address the needs of workers, skilled and unskilled alike. Workers in England and France were
coming to understand that freedom was incomplete if they were insecure, ill-fed, ill-housed, short-lived, and denied the simplest amenities of life. This understanding did not, in itself, render workers, least of all master artisans, receptive to sophisticated ideas of socialism, but it did open their minds to ideas of cooperative production, spelling an end to Jacobinism as the dominant ideology of social rebellion.

As the nineteenth century approached its midpoint, it was evident to the clearest minds of the time, be they communists such as Marx or astute conservatives such as Alexis de Tocqueville, that the future would be shaped by class conflicts, in which the propertyless masses would be aligned against their propertied opponents. In France, the transition from Jacobinism to socialism, while painfully slow, was to be completed in the fourth decade of the century, when the red flag was pitted in open insurrection against the tricolor of 1789.

NOTES

2. "Babeuf’s Defense" (Vendôme, February-May 1797), in Socialist Thought, ed. Fried and Sanders, pp. 67-8; emphases in the original.
6. Ibid., pp. 103-4.
Of enormous importance were the city's eastern districts on the right bank of the Seine, which were crowded with ateliers, a word that refers both to the workshops of craftspeople and to the studios of artists. Moreover, planted in these same districts, roughly between the Place Vendôme and the Place de la Bastille, lay the principal administrative and financial buildings of the French national government, immense royal palaces and grim bureaucratic edifices, the national bank and the bourse. In times of crisis, the very proximity of this state and capitalistic apparatus to the ateliers invited the discontented to seize the buildings, indeed to do nothing less than seize control of the government.

The city's romantic aura, however, was engendered by very real social tensions that prevailed within its gates. The capital was a magnet not only for revolutionaries of all nationalities but also for impoverished individuals from other parts of France—for artisans who were being displaced by new technologies, and for peasants displaced by the continual parceling of family-owned land into ever smaller plots that were ever less economically sustainable. Immigrants speaking French in foreign accents increasingly intermingled with uprooted craftspeople and peasants who spoke in the heavy accents of distant provinces.

In the two generations following the Great Revolution, the population of Paris soared from about 600,000 to well over a million; many of the newcomers planted no firm roots in the city's economy and lived in destitution. Wandering nomads, as they were called, from the Auvergne, in south-central France, and other provinces performed the most menial jobs, mainly as construction laborers, usually arriving in the city for work in spring and summer and returning to their villages in winter. Those who remained behind during the colder months tended to drift into the disease-ridden and criminalized slums around the Rue Saint-Denis and other eastern quarters.

The social volatility brought on by these numerous semi- and unemployed people was heightened by the archaic structure of the French economy itself. However cosmopolitan Paris seemed to foreigners, even to visitors from slum-ridden London, its working classes were highly differentiated. By far the largest number of producers, as we have seen, were artisans, such as printers, tailors, furniture makers, masons, jewelers, and carpenters. The majority were employed by masters, who worked alongside their employees in the ateliers. Accustomed to relatively relaxed work rhythms, they should be clearly distinguished from the proletarians who toiled in the new factories that were emerging on the outskirts of the capital.

On the next lower rung of the working class were those who worked in what we would now call sweatshops: dressmakers, lace workers, spinners, and dyers. Mainly women and children, their status was similar to that of factory workers, and like women and children in English factories, they were difficult to organize in opposition to their ruthless exploiters. At the bottom of the economic ladder were the laborers (redolent of the bras nus of the Great Revolution), a multitude of transient nomads and more permanently settled workers who filled odd jobs on a daily or weekly basis. Finally, residing in their midst was a large lumpenproletariat whose lives were desperate, often criminal, as they preyed on each other and on more fortunate members of the working class. Congested in slums, they were illiterate, short-lived, overworked when not underworked, and half-starved—the victims of epidemics and food shortages. As Louis Chevalier laconically notes in his study of the Parisian lower classes, "No one [in authority] cared what the working class was doing and what was to become of it."

Despite these strong social differentiations, the various classes of the capital were not strongly demarcated by residence or by a lack of contact with each other. To be sure, the worst slums of Paris were filled with the "dangerous classes," which might include poor and respectable workers and students, as well as nomads, thieves, and prostitutes, often packed together in extremely unhealthy rooms and apartments. But in the "better" neighborhoods individuals of markedly different social positions intermingled with one another physically, even residing in the same buildings. The first floor (or in American parlance, the second) of such a building might be rented by an affluent bourgeois family, its spacious living room adorned with chandeliers and costly furniture. The next floor up would house a more modest but still well-to-do family, while on successively higher floors lived craftspeople of limited means. Finally the small, grim, and virtually unfurnished rooms on the top floor would be occupied by the impoverished, who lived in virtual destitution. During the early years of the Restoration, the intermingling of the well-to-do with the poor seems to have been the rule rather than the exception.

Despite this physical proximity, however, social intercourse was becoming ever rarer in the 1820s and 1830s. Increasingly, the middle classes and the better-off workers were migrating to newly constructed open areas, especially in the western sectors, where dwellings were more suitable to their needs and tastes, thereby physically segregating the affluent from the poor. It was a differentiation that would culminate in later uprisings, when the western half of the city would be considered bourgeois and the eastern half working class.

CABET, BLANQUI, BUCHEZ, BLANC, AND PROUDHON

To the radical members of this differentiated population, socialism, as we have seen, was coming to mean a "democratic and social republic," one in which the state would be responsible for the public welfare. But in the Napoleonic and Restoration eras, few if any of the utopian socialists, like Saint-Simon and Fourier, had a lasting influence on the artisanal workers and the industrial
proletariat, with their imaginary utopias and phalansteries. It was the concretely political ideas of socialism that gained far more influence among the working classes, addressing as they did the workers’ lived concerns. Along with the writings and activities of transitional socialists like Cabet, those of Blanqui, Buzea, Blanc, and the individualistic Proudhon played varying roles in the revolutionary upheaval of 1848 and in some cases the Paris Commune of 1871, after which their influence dwindled in favor of anarchistic and Marxist ideologies.

Étienne Cabet, a transitional utopian thinker, still had one foot in Owenite and Fourierist schemes and another in down-to-earth radicalism. His utopian novel Voyage en Icarie (Voyage to Icaria), published in 1840, was based very much on Thomas More’s classic Utopia: it advanced a state-communist vision of production and distribution, guided by the maxim that adorned the novel’s opening page: “From each according to his strength; to each according to his needs.” The book, which popularized the word communiste nearly a decade before Marx and Engels’s Communist Manifesto, enjoyed an immense readership when it appeared.

But the book’s generous social ideas were marred by the author’s preferences for uniformity in clothing, shelter, and almost every detail of daily life—a degree of standardization that anticipates dystopias rather than their opposite. The lives of Cabet’s Icarians are shaped by an elite of technicians, who rule the utopia firmly. Indeed, Cabet’s version of communism was so authoritarian that it gave the word a dictatorial and statist connotation that it never fully shed. Cabet himself firmly opposed insurrections, nor did his sincerity in trying to advance the interests of the working class outweigh his failings in its behalf. Yet despite the comparative harmlessness of his views, he was to be hounded out of France as a rabid communiste.

Among the other radicals who surfaced in France during the first half of the nineteenth century, three figures should be singled out because of their direct influence on Parisian workers and radical intellectuals: Louis-Auguste Blanqui, Louis Blanc, and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. Blanqui, although he had a mesmerizing effect on young romantic revolutionaries as a mysterious fomenter and dark genius of insurrectionary purposes, was less popular among workers themselves in the early years of his revolutionary activities. By contrast, Louis Blanc, the sober statesman of the Parisian working class, exercised a brief but considerable influence on the workers of 1848, in spite of his distaste for insurrection. Finally, Proudhon, a latecomer to French revolutionary politics, known to his admirers as the father of anarchism and syndicalism, exercised a considerable international influence well beyond his lifetime. Despite Proudhon’s imprisonment and his flights into exile to escape persecution, he was more of a writer than an activist like Blanqui; nor was he by any means as consistent a thinker as Blanc.

Blanqui’s life is so enmeshed with the history of nineteenth-century French revolutionary and working-class insurgencies that an account of one is integrally an account of both. He deservedly personifies the era of French revolutionary politics in which conspiracies persistently attempted—and failed—to violently replace capitalism with what would have been a fairly authoritarian socialist order. Born in 1805, he was a fiery product of the Great Revolution: his father, a Bonapartist official, had been a Girondin member of the Convention. A stunningly brilliant student, the young Blanqui received a classical education at the lycée, from which he graduated with honors, and went on to study law and medicine in Paris. Like his father, he had a passion for revolutionary politics and early in his youth joined the charbonnerie.

The young Blanqui was the very incarnation of the committed and unrelenting revolutionary activist. In 1827, while reporting for the liberal periodical Le Globe, he was wounded in popular riots. After the publication of Buonarotti’s history of the Conspiracy of Equals in 1828, he gave up on a conventional journalistic career, adopting essentially Babouvist political views. After the revolution of 1830 he helped organize several of the conspiracies that jolted the reign of Louis-Philippe, and by 1848 he had gained a widespread reputation for his intractable revolutionary activities, which sent him in and out of prison for most of his adult life. Only imprisonment prevented him from participating in the Paris Commune of 1871. Altogether Blanqui spent some thirty-one of his seventy-six years behind the bars of one jail or another.

The French bourgeoisie reacted to this dedicated man as if he were a nineteenth-century Marat. Writing of an event during the 1848 Revolution in which the National Assembly was invaded by a “mob,” the aristocratic Alexis de Tocqueville gave a patently hateful description of him:

It was then that I saw appear, in his turn, in the tribune a man [Blanqui] whom I have never seen since, but the recollection of whom has always filled me with horror and disgust. He had wan, emaciated cheeks, white lips, a sickly, wicked and repulsive expression, a dirty pallor, the appearance of a mouldy frock corpse; he wore no visible linen; an old black frock coat tightly covered his lean, withered limbs; he seemed to have passed his life in a sewer, and to have just left it. I was told it was Blanqui.3

The words of the fastidious comte reek with class hatred and social arrogance toward a man whose health had been all but destroyed by the maltreatment of his jailers. Yet as a complete product of the French Enlightenment, Blanqui was a committed materialist, a strong believer in the power of education to change human behavior, and a bitter opponent of all forms of oppression. He regarded belief in a supernatural being as the greatest ideological impediment to the development of a revolutionary mentality and spirit. Contrary to the conventional
notion that Blanqui expected to achieve a socialist or communist society by sudden putsches, he actually thought that, while putsches and conspiracies played an important role, a long period of moral education would be necessary to abolish cupidity and material greed in favor of a communistic economy.

Like Marx, Blanqui abjured giving a detailed description of the kind of communist society he hoped would succeed the present one. "One of our most grotesque presumptions is that we barbarians, we ignoramuses, pose as legislators for future generations," he wrote in response to utopian socialists who tried to chart out the contours of a future society. Cabet's communism and Proudhonianism "argue vigorously on the bank of a stream over whether there is a field of corn or wheat on the other side. Let us cross first, we will see when we get there." 4

Yet Blanqui's proclivity for agitation of a practical nature often concealed a relatively insightful theory of class conflict and its role in history, including a recognition that "toilers" were a class distinct from the old Third Estate. In this respect, he was unique among the French socialists of his day. He unequivocally opposed the ownership of private property, particularly in its capitalist forms, and he vigorously despised reforms as soporifics that narcotized the desire for revolutionary change. But like many Parisian socialist writers before Marx, his economic theories were fixated not so much on industrial capital as on finance capital, which he believed drained the poor and exploited of society. For him, the source of capitalist profit lay not with the exploitation of the working class but with the ability of capitalists to overcharge buyers—a view that dovetailed closely with the prevailing socialist tendency to make moral condemnations of the profit system.

Contrary to many histories that attribute it to him, Blanqui decidedly did not invent the phrase "dictatorship of the proletariat." The notion that the industrial proletariat (as yet a very small minority in France) was a hegemonic class that would lead all other "toiling" strata in transforming society was alien to his thinking. But he emphatically did believe that a temporary dictatorship by an elite of single-minded republicans—more precisely, a dictatorship of socially progressive Paris over the peasantry, which seemed to impede any social advances in France—would be needed to abolish the existing society. His Marxist and anarchist critics were not wrong when they described Blanqui as a man who envisioned the seizure of political power as the work of a small, well-educated, and highly committed conspiratorial group. The secret societies he formed in the 1830s were impressive military organizations, with command systems based on complete obedience to a secret central committee. However indirectly, they were to inspire, if not prefigure, the underground organizations established or envisioned years later by Russian populists, even anarchists such as Mikhail Bakunin, and the Bolshevik leader Lenin, despite his firm opposition to Blanqui's putschist tactics.

In fairness to Blanqui, this dedicated revolutionary did not regard putsches as substitutes for popular uprisings. Nor did he seek to replace mass action with the actions of a small elite. Quite the contrary: the essential function of a Blanquist putsch was to ignite the masses into a widespread uprising against the social order. In this respect, Blanqui was actually following an image of revolution that was widely shared in France, namely, that revolutions were essentially spontaneous popular actions in which a mere spark, like the seizure of the Hôtel de Ville or the rearing of barricades in workers' districts, was all that was needed to set the oppressed in motion. Had not the Great Revolution begun as an irrepressible mass uprising initiated by Desmoulins's cry to insurrection at the Palais Bourbon in July 1789? Had not the spontaneous barricades of 1830 toppled a king? A Blanquist putsch was intended essentially as a gesture of the same kind as Desmoulins's cry, both depending for their success on the enthusiastic response of the masses. This vision of revolution as basically spontaneous was cherished by thousands of ordinary French workers and middle-class republicans up to the Paris Commune of 1871, after which it faded away in favor of organized socialist parties.

Finally, what is less known is that later in life, Blanqui wavered in his emphasis on putsches and secret conspiracies as the means for social change. In the 1870s he began to stress the importance of popular education and popular social movements based in large part on the industrial working class. But he always retained a consistent commitment to revolutionary action, and it was this commitment rather than his social theories—which he left unclear or continually modified—that finally endeared him to the masses, especially the young, who revered le Vieux (the "Old Man") for his unwavering dedication, honesty, and decisiveness. It is not surprising that this extraordinary and selfless man suddenly died of a stroke shortly after addressing a mass meeting on behalf of imprisoned Communards of 1871. Although he was most beloved by radical intellectuals and publicists, a vast crowd of workers accompanied his remains to their resting place in January 1881. French workers cherished him not only as a legendary symbol of the struggle for socialism but as a committed revolutionary who made no compromises with the oppression and exploitation of the masses.

Even before Blanqui's red republican views yielded to a clearly socialist outlook, Philippe-Joseph-Benjamin Buchez, a physician and former charbonnier, was propagandizing socialist ideas of association among French workers, based on Christian principles of charity, fraternity, and equality. A populist, Buchez responded with considerable sensitivity to the plight of the workers and gave them practical help in forming associations. Known as the founder of the French cooperative movement, what made him distinctive among the theorists of the 1830s was his emphasis on working-class independence and cooperation in resistance to the encroachments of finance and industrial capitalism.
Buchez was sufficiently tame politically to write for the moderate republican periodical, *Le National*, and to be elected briefly to the presidency of the Constituent Assembly that emerged out of the 1848 Revolution. But in contrast to top-down Saint-Simonian ideas that favored economic associations controlled by entrepreneurs, he was convinced that the workers must form and control their own associations. And in contrast to his collectivist contemporaries Constantin Pecqueur and François Vidal, who envisioned the rise of large-scale industry, called for the nationalization of the economy, and relied on the state for the establishment of an associationist economy, Buchez relied on the workers themselves, to whom he turned for the financial contributions necessary to create productive associations.

Buchez's notion of association was, in many respects, radically collectivist. An association, in his view, should be established by collecting dues from workers, which would then constitute its common capital, free of any individualistic encumbrances or claims. Means of production would belong to no individual but exclusively to the association as a whole. Nor could they be restored, even in part, to an individual worker who decided to withdraw from the association. The proceeds derived from this inalienable capital would be used to purchase raw materials and machines, with which the members, working cooperatively, would produce goods for the market. The earnings would then be shared among all the association's members in an equitable and democratic manner.

Buchez's scheme was wholly oriented toward artisans and small-scale forms of production, not toward industrial proletarians and factories. His system of artisanal socialism was anachronistically counterposed to the industrial system and the advanced technology that were percolating into France. But perhaps Buchez's most important heir was Louis Blanc, whose place in the history of socialism greatly eclipsed his and who figured very significantly in the 1848 Revolution. Characteristics in his own day as a utopian socialist, Blanc's political behavior was that of a prudent parliamentarian with generous but moderate social ideals. Like Blanqui, Blanc was the son of a French Bonapartist official; he was born in Madrid in 1811 and educated in Corsica. In 1837, having made his way to Paris, he founded a radical democratic periodical, *La Revue du progrès*, and during the 1830s and early 1840s he acquired a measure of scholarly distinction for his historical works, particularly his account of the French Revolution, in which he was partial to the Jacobin republic. But Blanc was no insurrectionary. He opposed the uprising of the Parisian workers in June 1848 and the Commune of 1871, and in 1872 he even supported legislation against the International Workingmen's Association, or First International. By the time of his death in 1882, he had become so domesticated politically that the Chamber of Deputies, of which he was a member, voted to give him a state funeral.

What initially won Blanc wide acclaim among the working class was his book *Organisation du travail* (The Organization of Work), initially published as a series in his *Revue* in 1840, in which he elaborated his scheme of ateliers sociaux, or social workshops as a cooperative alternative to a capitalist economy. In the final form in which Blanc envisioned them, these workshops would be governed by the workers themselves and would be federated into large worker-controlled productive associations.

But initially, Blanc's social workshops were to be aided by benevolent banks and a sympathetic state, which would provide the credit needed to subsidize them. Insofar as this scheme depended at first upon state subsidies, it has been regarded as an early form of state socialism. By cooperating with each other and fostering a high level of morale, the ateliers would ultimately be able to gain a stronger competitive edge over capitalist enterprises. Gradually, Blanc hoped, capitalist firms would find it more profitable to merge with the more efficient social workshops, for which they would receive a suitable profit and the assurance of a more stable society. Class conflict, in effect, would be abolished by the sheer play of market forces.

The competitive success Blanc envisioned for his ateliers should not be taken as an indication that he thought highly of either competition or the market. Quite to the contrary, his horror at the effects of the laissez-faire economy's impact on the English proletariat made him into a communist, although he carefully eschewed this word in favor of socialist. Nevertheless, he was clearly guided by communist principles of production and distribution. Natural inequalities, he believed, existed among individuals, but these inequalities must be compensated for in a free and humane society.

All men are not equal in physical force, in intelligence; all have not the same tastes, the same inclinations, the same aptitudes, any more than they have the same visage or the same figure; ... but each one should be placed in a condition to derive the greatest possible advantage from his faculties, in so far as this can be done with due regard to others, and to satisfy as completely as possible, without injuring others, the needs which nature has given him.  

The moral improvement of humanity, Blanc believed, would spawn an entirely new set of values that would recognize the need to compensate individuals for these inequalities. He was voicing, in effect, a communistic critique of the liberal assumption (previously held by Jacobins) that freedom exists when everyone, irrespective of capacity, is equal before the law and is compensated by society according to the work they have performed. Blanc, on the contrary, argued that under this system, some would suffer privation regardless of their performance, because they would be beset by greater material requirements. Instead, he
maintained, an individual's remuneration should depend upon his or her needs and those of their families, irrespective of their labor and skills.

Like Cabet before him and like Marx after him, Blanc rejected the contractarian notion of compensation according to the amount of work people performed—or what Marx would later call "bourgeois right"—and replaced it with the notion of compensation according to the needs that they had to satisfy. Or as Blanc was among the first to put it: "From every man according to his faculties" (which Blanc designated as "duty") and "To every man—within the limits of the resources of the community—according to his wants" (which he called "right").* This principle by far outweighs in importance Blanc's naive prescriptions for class collaboration and renders his name highly significant in the history of socialist ideas. For Blanc had stated more clearly than any theorist of his day the basic maxim of a communist society: "From each according to ability, to each according to need."

But given his reliance on the state for initial financing and for technical and managerial expertise for his ateliers, was Blanc committed to permanent state control over society? Surprisingly, he was not: he never intended that his social ideas be approximated the most socialistic goals that could have been achieved by the artisanal society of his day, and in later decades, in continental Europe as a whole, they indirectly influenced many confederal and decentralistic notions of a socialist economy.

* Louis Blanc, 1848. Historical Relations: Inscribed to Lord Normanby (London: Chapman and Hall, 1858), p. 109. This virtually forgotten account of the 1848 Revolution contains one of the ablest expositions of "wants" written by any communist and warrants careful rereading. The rather sophomoric criticism of communism is sometimes made that individuals who are free to take as much as they want might very well exhaust the common pool and render a communist society impossible; a coercive authority, such as a state bureaucracy, would therefore be necessary to allocate available goods. Blanc's qualification that "wants" or "needs" would be circumscribed by the "resources of the community" answers this claim. It would obviously be the responsibility of the community to decide, in a rational and democratic manner, what was available.

By contrast, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, who himself has been credited with fostering syndicalist ideas under the name of "mutualism," seems to have taken a remarkably jaundiced view of the "principle of association." Like Fourier nearly forty years earlier, Proudhon was born in Besançon, in his case to parents of a working-class and peasant background. Unlike Fourier, however, he seems to have been incapable of transcending the provincialism and parochialism of small-town France. A firm paterfamilias (indeed, a misogynist), Proudhon mystified the peasant family as the basic unit of social life, and like many French peasants, whose notion of exploitation seldom extended beyond the necessity of paying interest to moneylenders, he thought of economic ills as caused primarily by finance capital—particularly by Jewish lenders. In fact, long after his death, his bitter anti-Semitism, combined with his patriarchal outlook, were to make many of his views congenial to European reactionaries, including outright fascists.

These limitations did not prevent Proudhon from acquiring the lofty title of the "father of anarchism." His avowed hostility toward government and politics, however, was by no means unique; it was very much in harmony with a rural mentality that resented tax collectors and notaries as oppressors. Nor was his attitude toward the state consistently negative. Despite his frequent denunciations of state power and authority in general, he often softened his attitude with changing circumstances and even whims. Nevertheless, his defiant rejection of many economic and political shibboleths of the day gave him notoriety as a provocative contrarian, an image that he carefully cultivated, despite his numerous ideological self-contradictions and pedantic views.

Proudhon, in fact, was not quite the enfant terrible he made himself out to be. It is true that he holds a place in the trajectory of French socialism—if socialist he was—by virtue of his commitment to a labor theory of value. By calling for exchange based on the amount of labor that was required to manufacture the products involved, his ideas potentially gave an important centrality to the proletariat, although he was strongly focused on artisans and their concerns. Despite his famous cry, "Property is theft!" however, Proudhon was no socialist: he definitely favored private property, advancing an economy structured around small privately owned enterprises that would be linked together by contracts untainted either by profit considerations or by exploitation.

By making a distinction between "property" acquired by exploitation and "possession" acquired by labor, Proudhon essentially smuggled into his vision a belief in private property, albeit with a moral aura. His statement "property is theft!" did not refer strictly to tangible economic property; nor was it intended to lead to the abolition of private property. Rather, in Proudhon's thinking, property was a vague moral category—and had it been generally understood for what it was by his capitalist critics in 1840, when What Is Property? was
published, Proudhon would not have been considered “the terror of the French bourgeoisie,” as George Lichtheim sardonically observes.7

In fact, Proudhon was a committed individualist and proprietor, who expressly denounced “the principle of association” because it “necessarily implies obligation, common responsibility, fusion of rights and duties in relation to outsiders.” As such, he argued, it inhibits the allegedly “stimulating” effects of competition in advancing technological development. In fact, in order to denounce association, Proudhon invoked nearly every philistine argument that could be drawn from the bourgeois repertory, including the canard that association rewards “the weak and lazy associate.” Association requires, much to his outrage, that “all are responsible for all: the smallest is as great as the greatest: the last comer has the same rights as the oldest member.”8 As for communism, he considered it authoritarian in all its forms, presumably because of Cabet’s statism and Blanc’s associationism.

Proudhon consistently condemned the communist principle of distribution according to needs rather than ability “as unproductive and harassing, applicable to quite special conditions, its inconveniences growing much more rapidly than its benefits, ... equally opposed to the advantageous use of labor and to the liberty of the workman.” The worker’s salvation, he argued, lies in “competition which gives [skill and talent] life.” One may reasonably wonder why Proudhon felt it necessary to promote this viewpoint among French workers when bourgeois economists everywhere were also hailing competition as humanity’s salvation. Nor is it quite clear that workers, rather than the Parisian bourgeoisie, made Proudhon’s General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century (from which the foregoing passages are taken) a publishing success upon its appearance in July 1851.

The “reciprocity” that Proudhon favored seems to have been nothing more than the solid bourgeois principle of equivalence: each person should receive exactly what is his or her due, exclusively on the basis of an “equal” exchange of commodities. His anarchism, if such it can be called, rewarded hard, virtuous toil but made no social allowance for the care of the weak, infirm, aged, or even physically impaired who were unable to perform such toil. These unequal individuals would be left to the ministrations of charity or, more likely, to care by the family, the basic unit of Proudhonist social life. There is nothing in Proudhon’s image of the good society that obliges a collective concern for their fate. The systemic “equalization” of inequalities in ability among real people under a communist system seems, if anything, to have affronted Proudhon, since it violated his sacred precept of the exchange of equivalences.

The sinew of Proudhon’s social vision was his commitment to contract: not, let it be emphasized, a Rousseauean “social contract” but the mundane everyday contracts that uphold the capitalist economy. Only one moral provision distinguished the Proudhonist contract from the capitalist contract: it abjured profit and exploitation. In Proudhon’s anarchist society, free and completely autonomous individuals, indeed property owners, would contract to exchange of goods and services with one another, taking exactly their due—no more and no less—in terms of the value of labor involved in producing the goods exchanged. Nor was contract, for Proudhon, merely an economic instrument for assuring fair trade—rather, it was the mainstay of industrial labor as well. Workers within factories would contract with one another to exchange their labor, and factories would contract with one another to form federations, as would communities, all on the basis of the equal exchange of goods and services. The notion of associating on an ethical basis seems to have eluded Proudhon’s social vision. At the core of his “mutualism” lay not a moral concept but a plan to finance these enterprises by means of a People’s Bank, or Bank of Exchange, which would afford small proprietors low-interest loans drawn from the savings and investments of ordinary workers.

Obviously, Proudhon’s proprietor views, based above all on the patriarchal family and individual possession, brought him into opposition to communism in all its forms. What made him seem socialistic was his hectoring rhetoric, his slogans formulated more for their shock value than for their substance, and his moral injunctions against the exploitation of labor and the pursuit of profit. But his strong emphasis on individual ownership, self-interest, contractual market relationships, and distribution based on ability rather than need—and his implacable hostility to associationism and communism—all were surprisingly indistinguishable from the conventional bourgeois wisdom of his day.

Nor were his acolytes by any means the most radical in France, rarely designating themselves as anarchists but preferring the milder and more socially acceptable term mutualists. Where Proudhon opposed strikes and insurrections as too coercive, his closest adherents were only too eager to follow in their maître’s path. Bakunin, who regarded Proudhon as a pioneering theorist of anarchism, was nonetheless sharply critical of “Proudhonist individualists.” Some Proudhonists, like his own heir apparent, Henri Tolain, were actually very conservative in their social views. Tolain, a true contractor, not only opposed civil rights for women but sat in the very Chamber of Deputies that presided over the suppression of the Paris Commune of 1871, for which he was understandably reviled by French workers, many of them his former admirers.

Given Proudhon’s gradualist approach to social change and his opposition to militant actions of almost any sort, his ideas required major surgery before they could be accepted by neo-Proudhonist supporters of the Paris Commune of 1871. What Proudhonist Communards absorbed from his work was his emphasis on federalism as the basic structure of social life, rather than his strident individualism. Indeed, the dwindling number of Proudhonists who helped establish the syndicalist movement in France during the closing decades
of the nineteenth century, based on the general or mass strike, would have shocked their maître, had he not died six years before the Commune. The fact is that Proudhon’s connection with syndicalism rests on an artificially generated myth. As Bernard H. Moss notes,

During the height of revolutionary syndicalism, a circle of French intellectuals, in opposition to Germanic Marxism, sought to define the French socialist tradition as Proudhonian. While they found no historical filiation between Proudhonism and syndicalism, they established the myth of a Proudhonian labor movement, shared by liberal and Marxist historians alike, which has never been confirmed by historical investigation. In only one period, the early 1860s, did Proudhonism have a definite impact upon labor militants, but this was in the early stages of a movement that soon violated its precepts in theory and practice. The goal of trade socialism, the collective ownership of industry by trade federations, was incompatible with Proudhon’s anarchism of small independent producers. If one is to attach trade socialism to the anarchist tradition, then it is surely closer to the “collectivist” anarchism of Bakunin than to the individualistic anarchism of Proudhon.11

Although syndicalists were to borrow certain key ideas from Proudhon, as we shall see, libertarian working-class movements, especially in Spain, were obliged to shed Proudhon’s essential gradualism and proprietarianism. His notion of a low-interest People’s Bank, which he aided in vain to establish, was all but dropped from the theoretical armamentarium of anarchism and syndicalism (see Chapter 32). Later anarchists were obliged to turn to figures like Bakunin and Kropotkin for inspiration, both of whose outlooks were not only collectivistic and communistic but decidedly revolutionary.

By the 1850s, Proudhon’s influence on French workers had declined to a near vanishing point; his opposition to strikes, his on-off support of Louis Bonaparte, and other such retreats from his seemingly militant stance left him, after his death in 1865, with a dwindling following. Only because anarchists, by sorting out ideas that he had left vague or contradictory, turned him into one of their saints did his work manage to gain posthumous fame. A number of his ideas affected the thinking of Tolstoy, Martin Buber, and Gandhi—as well as corporatist tendencies on the right that were to feed into the fascism of Mussolini and of Vichy France. In more recent times he has been revived by anarchists drifting toward “market socialism,” a phrase that may reasonably be considered a contradiction in terms.

It was not until well after the Revolution of 1830, when a self-conscious workers’ movement appeared, that Blanqui, Cabet, Buchez, Blanc, and Proudhon were to become voices, to one degree or another, of a class-oriented social movement. Although both Cabet and Blanqui were participants in local upheavals during the Restoration, Blanc and Proudhon were much too young to have become involved in the early revolutionary movements of the period. Nor did any of them exercise influence among actual French working people, be they artisans or industrial proletarians, in the 1820s. In fact, what mainly concerned French workers at the end of the decade was economic difficulties and the increasingly repressive behavior of Charles X.

THE ROAD TO REVOLUTION

The fragility of the Bourbon Restoration is perhaps most dramatically revealed by the ease with which Napoleon Bonaparte, on his sudden return from exile in Elba, temporarily deposed Louis XVIII in the famous one hundred days of the emperor’s rule in 1815. Only the exhaustion of France after Waterloo—the last battle in the seemingly interminable wars associated with Bonaparte’s name—gave the Bourbon monarchy any staying power in the country.

France wanted peace—peace from imperial conflicts, as well as peace from revolution. The Congress of Vienna that followed Napoleon’s defeat—a concert of Europe’s principal powers—left no doubt that any renewal of revolution or warfare on the part of the French would meet with swift repression and a stern occupation. A Holy Alliance among Prussia, Russia, and Austria, fashioned by Alexander I of Russia and Metternich of Austria, was established to forestall any Bonapartist ambitions and, more significantly, to prevent France from once again initiating a revolutionary wave across the European continent.

Yet nothing was farther from the minds of the French people than revolution. Neither the peasantry, who were major recipients of the Revolution’s and Bonaparte’s agrarian policies, nor the bourgeoisie—and least of all the great financiers, its most powerful stratum—wanted a continuation of war and social instability. The rest of French society, in turn, had been drained by taxes and demands for military service. Despite certain technological advances, industry had gained very little from the Napoleonic wars. On the contrary, the British blockade had appreciably reduced France’s international markets and domestic standard of living, setting back the country’s economic development for all strata of the population.

Thush Louis XVIII’s nine-year reign, from 1815 to 1824, was one of economic retrenchment and peace at any cost. Fat and clumsy, the brother of Louis XVI must have known he was not loved, not even by the contemptuous and arrogant émigrés whom he eventually remunerated for the loss of their estates during the Great Revolution and who, together with an accommodating nobility that had arisen under Napoleon, formed the predominant land-owning
ruling class during the Restoration. The country, in short, needed to catch its breath and recover a measure of normality, which a stable monarchy seemed able to provide. The king, in turn, was shrewd enough to realize that, while his status was shaky, the monarchy was desirable, and the better part of wisdom was to govern his country with fairly loose reins.

The economic changes produced by the Revolution, he realized, could not be undone. Although he remunerated the émigrés, the peasants and land speculators would never give up the holdings they had gained. Nor would the bourgeoisie allow the juridical rights it had acquired since 1789 to be completely effaced. Yet the very republic that had initiated the new agrarian dispensation and the new individual rights was hardly spoken of in polite company. Clerics and secular educators saw to it that republicanism was identified with terror, civil war, social instability, material deprivation, and foreign conflict. Even in the 1820s there were young men who knew nothing whatever about the Girondins and Jacobins, including many whose fathers had been among their strongest adherents.

But the old nobility was not to be stilled. The first year of Louis's reign saw the emergence of bitter fury on the part of the aristocracy, which sought redress for its smoldering grievances and reprisals against the revolutionaries who had driven them from France a generation earlier. In July 1815 the ostensibly free elections to the Chamber of Deputies, based on a scandalously restricted electorate, brought a vindictive royalist majority (or "ultras," as they were called) of 350 legislators out of 420 to power. A "white terror" ensued that placed stringent restrictions on the press and removed innumerable Bonapartists from the bureaucracy and other public offices. Thousands of highly qualified officials—from the municipal level, through the departmental, to the highest national offices—were sent into a counterrevolutionary limbo, where they were left to seethe in fury against their old opponents. Special military tribunals were established throughout the country that delivered not only prison but death sentences. Even Marshall Ney, Napoleon's most popular commander, who had received a peerage from Louis XVIII but defected to the emperor during the "hundred days," was executed after a trial in the Chamber of Peers.

Louis XVIII, however, was still committed to making compromises with social changes that he knew could not be undone without plunging the country into civil war. Even before Napoleon's "hundred days," Louis had adopted the Charter of 1814, or Chartre, which allowed for a carefully selected hereditary Chamber of Peers, an elected Chamber of Deputies, and guarantees of equality before the law and freedoms of expression, conscience, and worship, as well as the inviolability of citizens from arbitrary arrest and seizure of property. The Napoleonic Code, which had rationalized the country's legal system, was kept intact, and gifted men like Talleyrand, who had served not only the early revolutionary government but the Directory and Bonaparte, retained important offices. Louis, in fact, took umbrage at his Chamber of Deputies, whose ultraroyalist convictions were so extreme that, in pursuing monarchical absolutism, it gathered parliamentary power for itself at the expense of the throne's authority, not unlike the notables who tried to weaken Louis XVI's power in 1789.

Finally, little more than a year after the Chamber of Deputies of 1815 was installed, Louis had had enough of its proscriptive legislation, and he dissolved the Chambre introuvable ("Incomparable Chamber," as it was maliciously called). The elections that followed returned a majority of moderate royalists who, under various ministries, remained in power until 1821, providing France with a period of relative prosperity and stability.

This quiet period also allowed for a political regroupment in the Chamber of Deputies, yielding a "Left" composed of reconstructed republicans such as the aging Marquis de Lafayette, as well as moderate constitutional monarchists such as Benjamin Constant, Hippolyte Carnot (whose father had been an outstanding general during the Revolution and a member of the Directory), and other men who were loathed by the ultraroyalist minority in the Chamber. This quasi-factional "Left" worked in conjunction with the larger group of moderate parliamentarians, or "Independents," in the Chamber, including wealthy bourgeois elements such as the banker Jacques Laffitte, the cotton and sugar baron Benjamin Delessert, the merchant Ternaux, and the entrepreneur Casimir Périer.

The moderate or liberal governments of these years provided the country with sufficient economic prosperity to keep the bourgeoisie and the working class fairly quiescent. Although the wrangling between the liberal coalition and the ultraroyalists in the Chamber of Deputies continued, it was not serious enough to be of major concern to the lower classes. France was still ruled by landowners. The nobility and its minions exercised their most effective power through the prefects and subprefects who administered the departments, the provincial judges, and the municipal hirelings who genuflected before their agrarian masters. Craftsmen and peasants, living in their own self-enclosed world, were indifferent to a national regime over which they had no influence whatever. The electoral base for the Chamber of Deputies was brazenly limited to well-to-do individuals who paid a minimum of 300 francs in taxes—which meant that only 110,000 out of a population of about nine million adults had the right to vote.

But this basically stable situation came to an end in 1820, when the Duke of Berri, the king's nephew, was assassinated, unleashing a furious royalist backlash. Louis, who was also outraged, restricted the franchise even further by establishing the so-called "double vote," according to which the wealthiest quarter of the electorate—about 25,000 men—were given the
exclusive right to select 165 deputies out of the 265 chosen by the "general" electorate for the Chamber. (In the elections of 1823 the ultras were to gain a huge legislative majority—not only by means of the new franchise restrictions, but because local notables, state-appointed prefects of the departments, and local ultra thugs engaged in crass manipulation and fraud to assure their victory. They did not hesitate to use the names of dead royalists to pack the electoral lists in support of their candidates. That the elections were blatantly rigged was a widely known fact to which the government turned a blind eye.)

In 1821 Louis XVIII replaced the moderate ministry of Elie Decazes with one presided over by the extremely reactionary Count of Villèle, the leader of the ultraroyalists in the Chamber of Deputies. As president of the king's council, Villèle floated a state loan to further recompense émigrés and others who had lost their lands during the Republic—a gesture that many peasant and bourgeois who had purchased biens nationaux in the 1790s feared might lead to the wholesale restoration of the old noble estates. His ministry stroked the Catholic Church by making obeisances to its authority, giving it emoluments and an enhanced status as "the religion of Frenchmen." Above all, it increased clerical control over education, which created widespread uneasiness among many secular citizens, especially those who had benefited from the sale of Church lands during the Revolution. Restrictions, including unbridled acts of censorship, were placed on the liberal press; the term of service for members of the Chamber of Deputies was extended from four to seven years; and to the fury of liberals who still claimed some filiations with the cause of freedom, French troops were used in support of the Spanish monarchy against Spanish revolutionaries during the peninsular uprising of 1823. His ministry spanning Louis's and Charles X's reigns, Villèle personified the new Chambre retrouvée, much to the approval of the reactionary ultras.

Under Villèle, the Right could also settle its scores with its liberal opponents by making use of loopholes in the Charte of 1814 that favored the king. Although nearly all deputies avowed their allegiance to the document, its preamble averred that the monarch had granted it "voluntarily" to France, "by the free exercise of our royal authority." This phrase coupled the Charte to the will of the monarch, who theoretically could rescind it just as freely as he had granted it. Additionally, the Charte averred that the government ministers were "responsible," but to whom—the king or the Chamber of Deputies?—it did not specify. Thus ministerial responsibility seemed to float freely in the air, at the discretion of the king, as the ultras claimed, or the Chamber of Deputies, as the opposition claimed. Finally, the Charte contained a stipulation, Article 14, that gave the king the authority to dispatch the entire constitutional system at will, should he choose:

Under Louis, all of these royalist formulations had been regarded as mere rhetoric that asserted France's monopolistic status. But Article 14 was waiting in the wings, at the disposal of any authoritarian monarch who might choose to exercise it. And it was precisely such a monarch, Charles X, aided by an entourage of unforgiving ultras, who took control of the French throne upon the death of Louis in 1824.

If Louis likely knew he was not beloved, Charles at least should have suspected that most of the French people thoroughly detested him. Only the most fanatical ultras of the émigré population and their offspring—those who abominated the Revolution and republicanism in any form—rallied around the new king, feeding his worst fears of revolutionary conspiracies. Ascending the throne at the age of sixty-seven, Charles had been an émigré for twenty-five years as the Count of Artois. Having left France as early as 1789, he subsequently plotted with Bourbon loyalists abroad against the Republic, the Directory, and the Empire. In 1824, once Charles became king, he and Villèle matched each other like a royal hand and a perfectly fitting ministerial glove.

But even within the limited and wealthy electorate on which Villelè based his authority, a major split soon appeared. Many voters felt that the president of the king's council was spinning too far to the right, while the zealous ultras in the legislature felt that he was not going far enough. By 1827 Villèle had alienated his ultra supporters as much as his liberal opponents in the Chamber, making it difficult, if not impossible, for his ministry to govern the country effectively. Although it is difficult to see how he could have hoped to realign French political life in his favor, he was obliged to urge Charles to call new elections.

The liberals, in turn, had learned only too well that they had to organize at a grassroots level to prevent more outrageous electoral malfeasances from the right. In 1827 lawyers, journalists, and the editors of the liberal periodical Le Globe created a public supervisory and educational group with the name Aide-toi, le ciel t'aidera ("God helps those who help themselves," or more loosely, "self-help"), to disencumber the forthcoming elections of manipulation by notables and royal prefects. A large network of Aide-toi committees was established all over France to oversee the electoral lists, obstruct ultra interference in voting assemblies, and propagandize voters in support of liberal candidates. Their highly effective activities successfully augmented the number of liberal voters who participated in the elections of November 1827, reducing the ultras in the Chamber to a small bloc of 60 to 80, as against 180 liberals. Villelè resigned and was replaced by the liberal Viscount of Martignac.
Adolphe Thiers, a gifted journalist for the liberal press, published his *Histoire de vote*, their actions unnered all the middle and upper classes of the country, were obliged to return to the villages from which they had drifted in harvests, particularly of grain and of potatoes, deprived industrial workers and been sinking into a deep-seated economic crisis. Especially in the north, bad harvests, particularly of grain and of potatoes, deprived industrial workers and the poor of staple foods. These shortages, combined with a major financial crisis and unemployment (partly due to imports of cheap British iron), deepened the popular hatred of Villèle and Martignac and stoked widespread riots and denunciations of the regime—in some cases of the king. Textile workers in Normandy and Alsace were either thrown out of work owing to foreign imports or suffered cuts in their already low wages. These economic afflictions induced further rioting, and many city workers, having lost their jobs, were obliged to return to the villages from which they had drifted in economically more halcyon days. Although the workers most deeply affected by the economic crisis had no stake in the political world that denied them the vote, their actions unnerved all the middle and upper classes of the country, inspiring fears of a new social uprising by the lower classes.

And for good reason: the 1820s had seen a revival of strong public interest in the Great Revolution. Memoirs by participants had begun to appear, and even Adolphe Thiers, a gifted journalist for the liberal press, published his *Histoire de la révolution française* between 1823 and 1827, which dealt sympathetically with the Convention, even trying to account for the Terror objectively, despite the author's predilection for constitutional monarchy. Literate young people for whom the Revolution had been shrouded in mystery could now become acquainted with the events of 1789 to 1794, and they did so with genuine zest.

The death of Napoleon in his St. Helena exile in 1821, moreover, rendered the emperor a safe subject for public adulation as well, adding to the fascination with France's revolutionary past. A flood of memoirs by Bonapartists were published, and memorabilia from the era before Waterloo, generally in the form of insignias, songs, and busts of the emperor, became popular consumer items. Napoleon, reviled by the Bourbon monarchy as a "monster," now became a popular hero, initiating the Napoleonic legend that was to haunt France for generations. The government was continually on the watch for republican and Bonapartist conspiracies, whose importance Villèle cynically exaggerated to retain his hold on his royalist constituency. In reality, the danger from republicans and Bonapartists was negligible during the Villèle and Martignac ministries, but as the 1820s drew to their end, exaggerations of their danger added to a growing public sense of social crisis.

In fact, it was Charles himself who was the immediate source of the crisis. The king, ever mindful of 1789, viewed the growing militancy of the liberal press and liberal organizations as evidence of a looming revolution. Despite his avowal of adherence to the *Charte*, the king at heart was a devout supporter of the traditional institutions and values of the ancien régime: the quasi-feudal nobility, the moral authority of the Catholic Church, and the absolute supremacy of the monarch over all other institutions of the realm. Almost blind to the social changes in France since the Great Revolution, he retained an unswerving commitment to the very views that had sent his brother Louis XVI to the scaffold several decades earlier.

Perhaps no king was less suited to occupy the French throne than Charles, whose social vision extended no further than that of his guillotined brother. His unreconstructed worldview stood in flat opposition to the discontent of the liberals, who felt in varying degrees that France had yet to catch up with Britain as a constitutional monarchy. If the French king regarded liberal views as political heresy, indeed outright treason, the liberals and their various supporters, even moderate royalists, regarded the king as a political retrograde, with a chilling incapacity to stabilize the country, still less to rule it.

In 1829, when the minister, Martignac, attempted to allay liberal hostility to the crown by abolishing press censorship and curbing Jesuit control of education, the king replaced him with Jules Armand, the prince of Polignac—a reactionary so extreme and a Catholic so devout that he flatly refused to take the constitutional oath to obey the *Charte*. The Polignac ministry and the Chamber of Deputies were now on a direct collision course. Even a bloc of royalists led by François-René de Chateaubriand, a prominent romantic writer of the day, angrily defected from the ultras camp, leaving the king with a hostile majority against the ministry. The liberal press, in turn, particularly *Le National*, raised a howl against the new regime, comparing Charles with James II of England, the monarch whose harsh reactionism had induced the English ruling classes to unseat him in the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688.

Nor was the comparison between the late Stuarts and the late Bourbons unwarranted. In England, after Cromwell's Protectorate, the compliant Charles II had been succeeded by his brother James II, whose absolutism led to the definitive end of the Stuart kings. In France Louis XVIII, who had seemed willing to compromise, was succeeded by the unbending reactionary Charles X. A replay of 1789 now appeared to be in the offing. When a shuffling of cabinet positions and some feeble attempts by Charles to limit the Chamber of Deputies' legislative agenda to safe budgetary issues failed to quell the discontent, it became clear that the king would have to resort to his Article 14 powers and take dictatorial control of the state to annul the legislative powers of the Chamber.

In a threatening address on March 2 to a packed meeting of the legislature in the Louvre, the king significantly denounced "criminal maneuvers" against the government and issued warnings that he would "maintain public order." To this announcement the Chamber defiantly drafted a sharp reply. "The
permanent accord" between the wishes of the people and the government, the liberal deputies decided to say to the king, "does not now exist," and the people viewed his regime as "a threat to their liberties." After two days of secret discussion by the Chamber over the reply, 221 deputies voted to support the reply, and 181 voted against.

The die was now cast between the king and the Chamber. Further negotiations, in which the king averred that his "resolves are unalterable," ended in predictable collapse, after which, on March 19, Charles dissolved the legislature, amid furious liberal cries of "Vive la Charte!" and exultant royalist cries of "Vive le roi!" The constitution was now unmistakably pitted against the arbitrary authority of an absolutist monarch.

Although the king had dismissed the Chamber of Deputies, the July 1830 election returned a new Chamber with a greatly increased liberal opposition, from 221 to 274—reflecting 201 of the 221 defiant deputies from the previous legislature—as against a mere 145 for the king's ministry. To deepen the crisis, on July 25 the monarch and his supporting council issued five ordinances, four of which amounted to a de facto cancellation of the Charte's provisions for limited constitutional government. One ordinance annulled the new election by dissolving the new Chamber even before it had an opportunity to convene, while another reduced the electorate for deputies to include only the wealthiest, generally landed men of the realm, disenfranchising most businessmen, lawyers, and professionals. Still another ordinance required editors and printers to acquire preliminary authorization before publishing any periodical, subject to review every three months, essentially suspending freedom of the press.

To the liberals and many moderate royalists, as well as the politically aware public, the ordinances—essentially monarchical decrees—amounted to nothing less than a reactionary coup d'état that effectively nullified the Charte of 1814. By turning back the clock to the days of Louis XVI, the five ordinances, so peremptorily issued by Charles, opened the door to revolution.

NOTES

None of the leading liberals, still less the ultras, had any suspicion that Charles's coup d'état would induce Paris to explode in revolution. Nor did the opposition factions in the Chamber of Deputies have any desire to see the return of armed masses—so redolent of the journées of the Great Revolution—with their capacity for violence against the well-to-do and against property. In 1830, bourgeois and nobles were still alive who could vividly recall the great masses of sans-culottes who had stormed the Bastille, battled the king's troops in the Luxembourg Garden, and roared approvingly at the drop of the guillotine's blade. Yet despite rumors that the king might use his future powers to act sternly against the new, more liberal Chamber of Deputies, the full scope of his repressive plans was virtually unknown to anyone outside the circle of his closest ministers. The new ordinances had been composed in such complete secrecy that Polignac kept the sole copy of them on his own person, even refusing to place them in a locked drawer in his desk.

Nor did Charles need to be convinced by any of his ministers that he had to act forcefully against the opposition in the Chamber. According to one recollection, the king, who soon left for his summer residence at Saint-Cloud, firmly declared on signing the ordinances: "The more I think about it the more I am convinced that it is impossible to do otherwise." 1

"THREE GLORIOUS DAYS"

But if the king was resolute, his liberal opponents were not. For them, the official publication of the ordinances—in the Moniteur on July 26—arrived like a thunderclap, sending them scurrying around, disoriented, to the homes and editorial offices of their allies. Even the commander of the Parisian Gendarmerie was taken completely by surprise; no one in the ministry had seen fit to inform him that his police forces might soon be needed to curb public violence. Many liberals and royalists in their country homes learned about the king's coup d'état from visitors streaming in panic from the capital. The public that did not subscribe to the Moniteur heard the news in reading rooms and cafés. The leading and lesser lights of the Parisian business, journalistic, and political communities nervously gathered—in small numbers or large—to discuss the implications of the king's action, fearful of acting in a manner that would destabilize the monarchy.

Reports that were later published stated that owners of printing establishments had closed their shops to protest the restrictive press ordinance, but these accounts have no basis in reality. The establishments that did close down seem to have done so more because they feared prosecution by the authorities than as a "strike" against the king's directives. In short, the middle classes behaved with the characteristic cowardice that marked their behavior in the face of any assault on their freedoms.

Initially, in fact, the Parisian public seemed to be quite indifferent to the coup. Monday, July 26, was a very hot day and, for workers in certain trades, a holiday. Large crowds flocked out of doors, seeking relief from the sweltering weather. They were not protestors, let alone insurgents, and seemed completely indifferent to the king's ordinances, which, after all, affected only a small well-to-do minority of the population. Journalists and editors from a variety of periodicals, to be sure, did flock to the offices of the moderate National, which published a protest calling upon the people of France to refuse to pay taxes (a futile gesture that was not obeyed). Once the excited gathering at the National's offices managed to sort itself out, it established a committee to draw up a protest against the ordinances. Written by the young Adolphe Thiers, a constitutional monarchist, it vaguely called for disobedience in response to the king's action. After a great deal of bickering, the document was signed by journalists and editors of eleven leading periodicals in the capital, but beyond this gesture, none of the meetings that ensued in the late afternoon and evening, or even the following day, could produce agreement on a concrete form of action.

In the meantime, the king, his ministers, and officials in various governmental departments rested in the serene belief that the ordinances would evoke very little public response. None of the commanding generals in the country's military districts were ordered to mobilize any troops, nor were any special measures taken to prepare the police for public disorders. On Monday the king, confident that the country was indifferent to his coup, followed his normal daily routine: he attended morning mass and then went hunting with the dauphin. In the evening the royal party returned to the palace, where they dined and spent the evening playing cards.

As for the holiday crowds in the streets, they too were quiescent for most of
that Monday, July 26. Not even printers, faced with the loss of work, who took to the streets in angry protest, could persuade passersby to join them. But whatever catalyst it is that turns mildly curious crowds into protestors and protestors into insurrectionaries was very much at work on Monday evening. In the garden of the Palais Royal, a small crowd gathered before a print shop to read some verses posted in the window, when police officers arrived to close down the establishment, presumably because of an offense it had committed against the new press restrictions. As the curious crowd multiplied in number, it became unruly, booing the officers and shouting, "Long live the Chartet!" and, reading some verses posted in the window, when police officers arrived to close protestors into insurrectionaries was very much at work on Monday evening. In the streets in angry protest, could persuade passersby to join them. But the crowd behaved with remarkable judiciousness and discrimination toward the various armed forces deployed against them, probably because many of the older insurrectionaries were veterans of the Napoleonic Wars and were possessed of a degree of political consciousness. They realized that in this situation the loyalties of the troops of the line—ordinary soldiers—were uncertain, as those of the hated gendarmes and royal guards were not. If the crowd behaved well toward the soldiers, they might cross over to the side of the people. Shrewdly they raised the cry, "Long live the line! Down with the gendarmes and the guards!" Demonstrators stayed at their barricades until around ten o'clock, when they began to return home for the night. By midnight, the crowds had all but disappeared. The authorities, thinking the full meant the end of resistance, reduced their troop levels to mere street patrols near the Tuileries and the Place de la Bastille, while Marmont assured the imperturbable king that the uprising had been snuffed out.

But a major insurrection was in the offing. On the morning of Tuesday, June 27, crowds more menacing than those of the day before began to collect in the streets and squares of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, the crucible of Parisian journées during the Great Revolution, while bands of printers roamed the streets of the capital, calling on workers to support their protest. As the Palais Royal filled once again with angry crowds, the police tried to close the gates, scattering protestors into the surrounding squares and streets. The mounted gendarmes, whom the authorities had sent to the square to prevent further trouble, themselves provoked unrest: irritated by the heat and losing patience with the taunting crowds, they began to fire on the people. Fatally, the government had spilled blood, and the bodies of the revolution's first martyrs were paraded through the streets with cries of "Death to the ministers!" and "Death to Polignac!"

What had begun as protests and scattered riots soon turned into an armed confrontation between the government and especially the workers of Paris. The king reacted to the gendarmerie's shootings by appointing Auguste de Marmont, Duke of Raguse, to command the security forces. Among most Parisians, Marmont was particularly detested for abandoning Napoleon in April 1814 and defecting to the Allies. In fact, his very name had become a synonym (a "Ragusard") for "opportunist" and "traitor." The duke reacted forcefully to the shootings by sending out the entire Parisian garrison—royal guards, gendarmes, and troops of the line—to occupy the capital's major squares and avenues—a provocative action that only stoked the crowd's fury.

Finally, on Tuesday, July 27, the sporadic demonstrations ignited into a widespread insurrection. To slow down the movement of Marmont's columns toward their prescribed destinations, barricades were reared all over the working-class districts in the central part of the right bank, where most of the government buildings were located. By seven o'clock in the evening, the troops were indiscriminately using their firearms against crowds that pelted them with stones, adding to the toll of the revolution's martyrs. At twilight, far from diminishing, the crowds swelled, using the cover of night to ransack gun shops. Systematically blotting out the streetlamps, they plunged the insurrectionary parts of the capital into total darkness, enabling them to build their defenses and find weapons with impunity.

The crowd behaved with remarkable judiciousness and discrimination toward the various armed forces deployed against them, probably because many of the older insurrectionaries were veterans of the Napoleonic Wars and were possessed of a degree of political consciousness. They realized that in this situation the loyalties of the troops of the line—ordinary soldiers—were uncertain, as those of the hated gendarmes and royal guards were not. If the crowd behaved well toward the soldiers, they might cross over to the side of the people. Shrewdly they raised the cry, "Long live the line! Down with the gendarmes and the guards!" Demonstrators stayed at their barricades until around ten o'clock, when they began to return home for the night. By midnight, the crowds had all but disappeared. The authorities, thinking the full meant the end of resistance, reduced their troop levels to mere street patrols near the Tuileries and the Place de la Bastille, while Marmont assured the imperturbable king that the uprising had been snuffed out.

But on Wednesday morning, July 28, the crowds reappeared in full force in the central districts. Indeed, they were even more numerous and threatening, as Marmont nervously reported, than they had been before. They were building ever more elaborate barricades in ever greater earnest—felling trees, pulling up paving stones, and overturning wagons and market stalls to construct them. Troops that tried to pass through the insurrectionary arrondissements met with furious resistance. In the narrow streets adjoining the squares and boulevards, the columns were blocked by one barricade after another along their lines of advance. Each time they were halted, they were exposed to fire from insurgent muskets in adjacent houses and to barrages of paving stones, furniture, and tiles from the rooftops. Even when the troops succeeded in demolishing a
barricade, a new one would quickly spring up in their rear, trapping them, so that they were sandwiched within the narrow streets and caught in murderous crossfire.

At around eleven a.m. a crowd in the Place de Grève overwhelmed the guard post before the Hôtel de Ville, forced open the gates, and invaded the aged labyrinthine building, causing the prefect to flee. The National Guard, which Charles had disbanded in 1827 as a politically unreliable force, reappeared and occupied the city hall. Atop the building, in the central cupola, they replaced the white Bourbon flag with the outlawed tricolor as a symbol of revolutionary victory. Indeed, in one of their most inspired actions, the insurgents raised the tricolor on a tower of Notre Dame as well, where it could be seen by most residents of the city. The soldiers of the line, surrounded by friendly crowds, began to fraternize with the workers. By noon Marmont, hearing reports of this dangerous development, sent out his troops in larger units, in order to prevent small groups of soldiers from defecting. Battalion- and regiment-sized columns supported by artillery thus sallied forth to reclaim the city's center, its strategic avenues, and the Hôtel de Ville. Despite some short-lived advances, the results were disastrous for the Bourbon monarchy.

The Napoleonic veterans seem to have provided the insurgents with a degree of tactical flexibility that was lacking among their opponents' officers. A direct confrontation on an open battlefield would have surely led to their defeat, but from the roofs and windows of their own apartment buildings, the insurgents could rain tiles and pāvés as well as bullets onto the hated guards and gendarmes. With their intimate knowledge of their maze-like neighborhoods, they could establish communication links between barricades and strong-points, transforming large parts of the city into one vast revolutionary fortress. Troops were felled into confusing blind alleys and intricate passages where, despite their superior arms and training, they were placed on the defensive against the knowledgeable and agile insurgents. By July 29, a traveler who walked from the northern part of Paris toward the center of the city would have encountered barricades on nearly every street, at intervals of thirty feet or so, some of formidable size. Rarities during the Great Revolution, more barricades were reared in July 1830 than in any Parisian insurrection before or since.

Everywhere insurgent sniper fire took its demoralizing toll. Some commanders, especially those of the Swiss mercenary units in the Royal Guard, were unfamiliar with the winding streets, alleys, and cul-de-sacs of Paris, so that their forces lost nearly all communication with nearby troops. Even protective structures proved to be traps. The Swiss Guards seeking to retake the Hôtel de Ville from the National Guards found themselves hopelessly surrounded by armed crowds in the Place de Grève and fired upon from the building. When the Swiss finally succeeded in taking the city hall, they soon found that they could get no reinforcements or supplies. Ordered to depart, most of the Swiss had to fight their way back to the outskirts of the city, once again barraged by fire from nearby buildings and narrow streets.

Finally, lacking food, drink, and even ammunition, Marmont's forces grew ever more demoralized. The widespread revolt of the populace now seemed beyond their power to vanquish. At length, before Wednesday was out, nearly all the key government areas had fallen into insurgent hands, leaving only a single route open to troop movements. The columns that Marmont had sent into strategic areas during the previous day were thinned out not only by casualties but—perhaps more importantly—by a steady flow of defections. The loyalty of entire regiments was now totally unreliable. Units that had managed to pass through the barricaded streets found that they were confined to mere plazas, a few broad avenues, and government buildings, while the maze of streets surrounding them were held fast by the insurgents. Attempts by Marmont's troops to subdue the densely populated areas that surrounded the seats of government were met with fierce but calculated resistance, and even the neighborhoods that Marmont's troops had apparently conquered were quickly reclaimed after the soldiers moved on.

By Thursday, July 29, the army had essentially been defeated. Even units of the normally reliable Royal Guards now refused to fight the populace. Moreover, any fears that loyal troops from the provinces would arrive to reinforce the Parisian garrison were dispelled as the provincials en route not only refused to supply the troops with food and drink but even attacked them along the roads. What remained of Marmont's forces on this last day of the insurrection were either withdrawn to the outskirts of the city or fled of their own accord.

Some 2,000 people had died during the "three glorious days," from Tuesday to Thursday. The overwhelming majority, some 1,800, were artisans, principally carpenters and joiners, cabinetmakers, stonemasons, shoemakers, locksmiths, jewelry makers, printers, and tailors. The middle classes do not seem to have played a consequential role in the fighting, judging from claims for compensation that wounded insurgents put in to the Commission des Récompenses Nationales after the uprising. During the street fighting class divisions had been marked, even in single buildings, let alone neighborhoods. Well-to-do royalists who rented apartments on the lower floors of the tenements, for example, provided food and drink for the troops trying to suppress the insurrection, while the workers who lived on the upper floors fought the same troops with weapons and stones from their windows and roofs. As David H. Pinkney sardonically observes:

In the so-called Bourgeois Revolution of 1830 the middle and upper bourgeoisie were either immune to bullets or absent from the firing line. Immunity is improbable, however, for some bourgeois met their ends as
THE UNRESOLVED REVOLUTION

In the week that followed the uprising, the defeated king and his entourage departed Paris, drifting slowly to the Channel ports and exile in England. To replace him, journalists, publishers, deputies, and, above all, dispossessed Bonapartist bureaucrats and officers were only too eager to use the popular uprising carried on and won by the workers of Paris to erect a regime that would be sympathetic to their own interests and prestige. As we have seen, the Parisian liberals were republicans of various hues, some of them ostensibly Jacobin in spirit. On July 29 they were still nervously debating the course of the revolution, rather than leading it on the barricades. But with the collapse of the royal defense of the city, they hastily draped themselves in the old tricolor and, joining with the constitutional monarchists, took the step of choosing a Municipal Commission, with members including Pérès, the banker. Charged by the subdued Chamber of Deputies to provision and defend the capital and maintain order, this Commission—and it noticeably did not call itself a Commune, as revolutionary tradition prescribed—installed itself in the Hôtel de Ville and began to sort out the extent of its authority.

The military power in Paris now consisted of two forces: the unorganized armed workers and the National Guard. As the only organized military force in Paris, the Guard was commanded by a constitutional monarchist, the Marquis de Lafayette, who, in his dubious transformation into a republican leader, had assiduously undertaken the job of holding at bay the more radical tendencies among the republican students, workers, National Guards, and Bonapartists. Among the disorganized forces of the worker-insurgents, there was no potential leader who could match Lafayette’s prestige and reputation. Thus when Lafayette ordered the muskets of the National Guard to back up the Municipal Commission, he ensured that the Commission was the sole administrative power in Paris. Like the Chamber of Deputies, the Commission favored the establishment of a liberal constitutional monarchy along the British parliamentary model. But who would fill the required role of monarch? The choice was made not by the insurrectionaries but by the banker Laffitte, his journalist colleague Thiers, and the historian François Guizot, who formed a cabal to promote the candidacy of Louis-Philippe, the Duke of Orleans. The duke was the son of Louis XVI’s rival, Philippe Égalité, who during the Great Revolution had abandoned his lofty title to support the First Republic.

Égalité’s renunciation, however, had not saved him from the guillotine, a fate that made his son, Louis-Philippe, all the more prudent. The Orleanists, as his supporters were called, and the republican “men of order” such as Lafayette, who upheld the leadership of the Municipal Commission, feared that any republic would necessarily become a terroristic Jacobin regime. Laffitte and Thiers thereupon entered into negotiations to bring Louis-Philippe to the throne under the title “citizen king” or, more absurdly, the “king of the barricades”—despite the fact that during the street fighting the Duke of Orleans had abandoned the embattled capital for his safe retreat at Neuilly. In the political labyrinth after the insurrection, posters all over Paris were hailing him as the most suitable successor to Charles—a propaganda enterprise guided by Thiers and apparently financed by Laffitte. Finally, with the guidance of his liberal advisers, none of whom had been active participants in the uprising, the duke began to sidle his way toward the throne.

What finally validated Louis-Philippe as a king “surrounded by republican institutions” (as his supporters were to put it) was Lafayette’s public embrace of him at the Hôtel de Ville on July 31. Lest the crowd that gathered outside—which seemed to prefer a republic—get out of control and act on its own, Lafayette, as Chateaubriand tells us in his memoirs, “gave the Duc d’Orleans a tricolor flag, went out on the balcony of the Hôtel de Ville, and embraced the Prince before the eyes of the astounded crowd, while the Duke waved the national flag.” One of the more principled royalists, Chateaubriand sardonically concludes: “The republican kiss of Lafayette created a king.”

Far from exhibiting any reluctance, Lafayette was only too willing to accept the duke as a monarch, a crass betrayal of the hopes of many of the workers who had made the 1830 Revolution. Indeed, Chateaubriand’s account takes note of the astonishment of the crowd at the action, not the “cheers” that some historians attribute to them. Thus, Lafayette once again showed himself to be a constitutional monarchist whose commitment to a republican government was largely rhetorical. Soon thereafter, nearly everyone in the new government apparently wanted to be rid of this relic of 1789. After being granted the vacuous title of “Honorary Commanding-General of the National Guard of the Kingdom,” which the seventy-three-year-old marquis considered
an insult, he resigned from his command and virtually disappeared from the political scene.

On August 9, scarcely a week after Lafayette's demonstrative blessing, Louis-Philippe, with the agreement of the Chambers of Deputies and Peers, was crowned sovereign. The coronation, which took place at the Palais Bourbon (the seat of the Chamber), was deliberately marked by an almost puritanical simplicity, in stark contrast to Charles's ornate ceremony at the Cathedral of Rheims. In a largely civil ceremony that referred to "the will of the people" rather than "divine right," the new monarch pledged to uphold the Charte, which itself was liberalized by the removal of the noxious preamble stating the document was a "voluntary" gift from the crown. The revisions also limited hereditary membership in the Chamber of Peers, lowered the voting age from 30 to 25, and reduced the tax qualifications for the franchise from 300 francs to 200. The Chamber of Deputies was instructed to pass laws to abolish press censorship and require jury trials instead of arbitrary judgments for journalistic malfeasance. Even education was made a state rather than a Church affair throughout the country, when the Chamber of Deputies appropriated funds to afford secular primary schools to communes instead of churches.

In deference to romantic nostalgia, the bicolor was made the official symbol of France. Louis-Philippe, in turn, pledged to "govern only by the laws and according to the laws." Amid cries of "Long live the king!" and "Long live Louis-Philippe I," the duke accepted the crown, the scepter, and the royal sword from the peers and deputies, dutifully signing in triplicate the declarations endowing him with his new status, much as though they were a commercial contract. In this prosaic businesslike fashion, which presumably represented the triumph of republican virtue over absolutism, the duke accepted the throne as "king of the French" rather than "king of France."

A calculating man, Louis-Philippe had traveled widely during his years of exile, even to the United States, and had spent his time patiently waiting for events to unfold on his behalf. When Ville lle's compensation law was passed in 1825, he had duly regained the considerable landed properties that had been expropriated from his family, recouping much of his family fortune, and he rose to high position in the Bourbon regime. Indeed, the king's behavior reflected a new kind of Frenchman that Honoré de Balzac was depicting in his novels. Despite his aristocratic pedigree, in his habits Louis-Philippe was a parsimonious and stolid bourgeois, cautious about advancing himself; indeed, even after he was established as king, he retained a cordial attitude toward ordinary people, who freely visited the royal palace as though it were a public institution. In his dress the "citizen king" was plain, and his reign—the July Monarchy, as it was called—was free of ostentation. Fortunately for the new monarch, moreover, France began to recover from the economic depression that had plagued her in the late 1820s and early 1830s and began to enjoy a period of relative prosperity.

But the new electoral law of April 1831, heralded as an Orleanist reform measure, still deprived the vast majority of adults of the franchise: only 166,000 out of 9 million adults were able to meet the 200-franc cens that made them eligible to vote. "The situation may have been even worse than the figures show," notes Priscilla Robertson, "but at any rate small and middling businessmen were excluded along with the learned and professional classes and, of course, the workers and peasants."

Disqualified Frenchmen could look with envy across the Channel, where the Reform Bill of 1832, for all its shortcomings, had expanded the English electorate by about 50 percent to some 750,000. Although 32 per thousand now had the franchise in Britain, a mere 5 per thousand could vote in France. To demands for a more representative suffrage, Guizot, the king's premier, arrogantly responded, "Enrich yourselves; then you can vote," with the result that as late as 1836, the Chamber of Deputies contained only 45 bankers, industrial capitalists, and merchants, as against 116 landed proprietors and parasitic rentiers.

Indeed, Marx's analysis of the 1830 Revolution as a shift in power from the landed nobility to the financial bourgeoisie is not supported by the reality that, apart from a few individuals, the financial and certainly the industrial bourgeois gained little power from the July Monarchy. The same landed nobility, especially local notables, who had formed the base of the Bourbon Restoration continued to constitute the base of the new monarchy, although their numbers were augmented by ex-Bonapartist officials and a few bourgeois. As William L. Langer remarks,

"It is true that the July Revolution of 1830, which was started by Paris printers and fought out by craftsmen and artisans, was taken over by a group of adroit bankers, of whom Laffitte, Casimir-Périer, and Delessert were the most prominent. But when the excitement was over, it turned out that for the next eighteen years France was to be ruled not by bankers and industrialists but by provincial notables, by lawyers and by bureaucrats, many of whom were officers or officials of the Napoleonic regime. In 1837 there were hardly more than forty deputies who could be fairly described as members of the new industrial class."8

And as Pinkney tersely observes,

"The new regime did differ from its predecessor in that there was a larger place in it for businessmen like Laffitte and Périer. ... Nonetheless, political power was still firmly in the hands of the landed proprietors, the officeholders, and the professional men."7
On the other hand, the workers who had done all the fighting gained nothing whatsoever, politically or materially, from the very uprising that made possible the Orleanist regime. Having shattered Marmont's army in an insurrection, the "heroes of July" (as the artisans were called) were saddled with an electoral law that, in 1831, slammed the political door in their faces. Indeed, from the July days onward, the Orleanist regime was wary of working people, not only in Paris but in the rest of France as well. Actually, in December 1830 the heated conflict over the fate of the former Bourbon ministers, who were treated fairly benignly by the new monarchy, nearly threw the capital into another insurrection. By putting up a strong show of force, mobilizing the National Guard, and placing ordinary troops on alert, the government showed that it was quite prepared to use all the military force at its disposal to control the "anarchistes" (a word that cropped up in ministerial deliberations) who threatened public order. Following the crisis of the ex-ministers' trial, a rash of strikes and economic dislocations obliged the Parisian Municipal Commission to provide public works for thousands of unemployed, in order to allay public unrest.

Indeed, as radical republican groups began to conspire against the Orleanist regime and as assassins stalked the king, the government became more and more conservative. In April 1831, in response to riots and demonstrations, the Chamber of Deputies enacted legislation against unlawful meetings or so-called assemblées and resumed the prosecution of oppositional leaders. That most sacred cow of the liberals, namely freedom of the press, which had been affirmed by Louis-Philippe on accepting the throne, was repeatedly abridged from the autumn of 1830 until September 1834, when press limitations forbade not only the use of the word republic but even political caricatures. A Law on Association passed in 1834 required most societies—even those that contained fewer than twenty members, which the Bourbons had tolerated—to be authorized by the state before they could function legally. This law effectively quashed not only republican societies but even early trade unions seeking higher wages and better working conditions, as well as mutual aid societies. As Pamela Pilbeam observes, the Orleanists pursued "a policy of surveillance, prosecution and ultimately changes in the law on associations which made the new liberal regime even less tolerant than the Restoration." Between ministries headed alternately by Guizot, the ever-adaptable Nicolas Soult (formerly a marshal of Napoleon), and the perennial enemy of rebellious workers Thiers, Orleanist commitments to freedom were steadily abridged.

Inasmuch as "political power was still firmly in the hands of the landed proprietors, the officeholders, and the professional men," Pinkney concludes, "...the July Days had effected no revolution in France." But the uprising had made "one revolutionary change, one that its principal beneficiaries had not intended and thoroughly deplored. It had brought the people, particularly the people of Paris, back into politics in a way they had not been involved since the 1790s."

THE SECRET SOCIETIES

The crowds who watched Lafayette embrace the Duke of Orleans at the Hôtel de Ville chafed at the incompleteness of the July events, whose victory they reasonably felt was being brazenly snatched from them. Having risen against the detested Bourbon monarchy and defeated it once, working people were now acutely aware of their power. It was almost certainly the Revolution of 1830 that created the sizable French public for Buonarotti's account of the Babouvist conspiracy, which was published only two years before the July days. Buonarotti's book now fed a growing desire to turn to conspiratorial methods to overthrow the July Monarchy—and among the French revolutionaries of the period, none embodied this tendency more consistently and militantly than Blanqui. When the July insurrection exploded, Blanqui may already have been a republican—in any case, he abandoned his moderate journalist colleagues at the Globe and threw himself into the street fighting, brandishing a musket in one hand and a tricolor in the other. He was wounded, for which the Orleans government awarded him a decoration, but he emerged from the fighting as a red republican and rapidly evolved into a socialist.

In January 1832, while defending himself at a highly publicized trial for his radical views, he delivered a passionate speech that J. Tchernoff describes as "the first socialist manifesto of this epoch." The July Monarchy, Blanqui said, was "the government of the bourgeois classes," and society was in "a state of war between rich and poor." Asked by the president of the court to name his own "estate," or class, Blanqui answered forthrightly, "Proletaire." When the president denied that the proletariat was an estate, Blanqui roared, "How is it not an estate? It is the estate of thirty million Frenchmen who live by their labor and are deprived of political rights!" The language of socialism was already very much in his mind as well as in the minds of a growing number of ordinary republicans in France.

An early arena for generating socialists was the secret republican society Société des Amis du Peuple (Society of the Friends of the People), inspired by the republican publicist Godefroy Cavaignac. The Amis, who were organized on July 30, immediately after the Paris street fighting, demanded that France be permitted to elect a new constituent assembly to decide the nature of the state, instead of restoring the old Chamber of Deputies. The many republican banquets and oratorical tournaments the society held challenged the legitimacy of the new monarchy, even attracting as many as a thousand people to their
meetings. In reality the Amis had only 150 committed members in Paris—Buonarotti was among them, as was Blanqui, although how intimate they were remains unclear. More radical and larger than the Amis was the Société des Droits de l'Homme (Society for the Rights of Man), a highly disciplined offshoot of the Amis that, after 1832, managed to collect a considerable working-class following and extend its reach throughout the arrondissements of Paris and into some of the provinces. Hierarchically structured, the top level of the Droits was an eleven-man central committee, below which came twelve commissioners, one for each arrondissement, and below them another forty-eight commissioners, one for each of the four quartiers into which each arrondissement was divided. The quartiers, in turn, were subdivided into sections, whose clubs claimed to be independent in order to evade government restrictions on membership in societies.

Clubs like the Amis and the Droits, which proliferated throughout France, were expressly republican and sometimes even socialistic in outlook. By 1833 the Droits claimed a total membership of 4000 in Paris, while its branch in Châlons, one of several outside the capital, had as many as 1500. Nor were these republican clubs mere debating societies. A number of them, including certain sections of the Droits, were armed, while others, particularly in the provinces, drilled and held target practice. The mushrooming of such revolutionary societies among artisans provided the upper classes with the excuse—and the need—to accept the repressive measures on association imposed by the Orleanist government.

On June 5, 1832, a funeral was held for Maximilien Lamarque, an immensely popular Bonapartist general on whom the exiled Napoleon had looked with such favor that he bequeathed upon him, on his deathbed at St Helena, the honorific title of marshal. Now a cortège of thousands, led by several distinguished military men, including Lafayette, followed Lamarque’s coffin as it wound its way to the Panthéon. Many who followed behind in the procession were members of revolutionary societies who expected, in the aftermath of the funeral, to stage an uprising, raising huge barricades with “sanguinary jacobinism.”

The flag so disconcerted Lafayette that, although he was a close associate of Lamarque’s, he abruptly left the funeral.

The indignation which this spectacle excited, was extreme, especially on the part of the republicans, whose principles this fearful apparition tended to misrepresent and throw a slur upon. One shout of reprobation burst from all present, with the exception of a few, who applauded, either with imbecile fanaticism, or with the treacherous purpose of throwing odium on the cause of the republic.

The man’s appearance, in Blanc’s view, succeeded in turning many members of the cortège against the prospective insurrection, by associating republicanism with “sanguinary jacobinism.”

The red flag had produced its effect: he who bore it immediately disappeared; and from that moment, the republicans had to renounce the hope of drawing after their steps the bulk of the bourgeoisie.

We will never know whether the horseman was a police provocateur or not, but his action did succeed in preventing a wide-scale insurrection that day.* The more militant republicans in Paris, however, were not to be deterred: they went on, in spite of the horseman, to stage an uprising, raising huge barricades at some of the capital’s key cross sections (vividly described by Victor Hugo in Les Misérables), exhibiting exceptional courage and panicking many members of the government. As it turned out, however, Louis-Philippe was well prepared to confront any insurrection: he had about 24,000 troops at his disposal, as well as most of the National Guard. On June 6, after two days of valiant but futile street fighting on the part of the rebels, the uprising was crushed.

Following the June 1832 uprising, societies that had enjoyed a semilegal status were driven completely underground, but the more stringently the societies were repressed, the more broadly socialistic ideas spread among the red republicans. Soon the newly formed socialist societies were collaborating with the older republican societies, interpenetrating one another with joint conspiracies and actions. By hounding these republican and socialist groups

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* Although the appearance of the horseman at Lamarque’s funeral cortège has been cited as the first time the red flag was raised in Paris, it had already been raised the year before, in 1831, in an insurrection at Lyon, and it was to reappear in French uprisings throughout the 1830s.
alike, the Orleanist regime forced them to take desperate and often adventurist actions. But perhaps the most memorable of the underground societies, serving partly as an inspiration and partly as a model, were those created by Blanqui and his supporters. In the summer of 1834 (or 1835, according to some sources), Blanqui founded the Société des Familles (Society of the Families), a secret conspiratorial organization that was avowedly committed to orchestrating a coup d'état against the Orleanist monarchy. By 1836, the membership of the society, it has been estimated, numbered about 1200.

The structure of the Familles, again, was hierarchical, patterning itself on the classical organizational forms of the charbonnerie. Its basic unit was a six-to-twelve-member “family”; five or six families constituted a “section” under a chief; three or four sections made up a “quarter,” led by a commandant de quartier; several quarters were led by an agent révolutionnaire. Finally, guiding this apparatus from above was a Comité secret, or central committee, whose membership was unknown to the rest of the organization. Actually, the central committee was more or less a fiction. The real command of the society consisted of three “revolutionary agents,” the most notable of whom were Blanqui and Armand Barbès. Barbès, whom Max Nomad describes as “young, rich, enthusiastic, good-natured, and heroic—the idol of the student youth and popular with all the republican opponents of the regime,” long remained, in his revolutionary career, a perpetual adolescent and reckless romantic. In fact, the Familles did not acquire much significance until Blanqui joined it around 1835.

Each member of a “family” was expected to join the National Guard, in order to gain military training, propagandize among the Guards, and if possible acquire a weapon and gunpowder. This typically Blanquist society had its own gunpowder laboratory (possibly two) in the very heart of Paris, as well as arms caches in different parts of the capital, and before the police learned of its existence, it had even begun to infiltrate two regiments of the Paris garrison. Upon its discovery Blanqui was arrested and jailed, but a year later he was released under a general amnesty and sent into a rather pleasant semibannishment near Paris, where he had a brief period of domestic happiness with his beloved wife, Amélie-Suzanne (whose early death only a few years later cast a pall over Blanqui’s many remaining years).

In exile Blanqui formed still another secret network, the Société des Saisons (Society of the Seasons), in collaboration with, once again, Barbès, and the printer Martin Bernard. More than the Familles, its membership grew to consist of a large percentage of workers. (Marx, in fact, regarded the society as exclusively proletarian, but this is probably a simplification.) Once again the Saisons, following the Charbonnerie, was organized into a hierarchy of levels of groups. This time individual conspirators were each named after a weekday, six of whom together constituted a “week,” led by “Sunday.” Four weeks formed a “month”—under the command of “July”—and three months formed a “season,” led by “spring.” All four seasons together constituted a “year,” which was directed by a “revolutionary agent.” Since the society had about a thousand members, it consisted of three “years,” each of which was led by a “revolutionary agent”—who happened, in fact, to be Blanqui, Barbès, and Bernard. This elaborate system of small units and centralized control was meant to neutralize any police infiltration and at the same time maximize the organization’s coordination during the coup that it intended to stage, the date of which was known to no one but the top leaders.

Members of the Saisons engaged in training exercises for the coup amid the unknowing Sunday-afternoon crowds of Parisians who were enjoying their day off out of doors. These insurrectionary exercises were conducted under the close supervision of Blanqui, who, in his black coat and black gloves, would calmly assess the strengths and weakness of his future insurgents, often from a café window as they passed by. The moment of truth for the Saisons finally came on the morning of May 12, 1839, when the conspirators raided gunsmith shops and seized the Palais de Justice and the Hôtel de Ville, proclaiming a republic and wildly singing the “Marseillaise.” The National and Municipal Guards were quickly mobilized, driving the insurgents behind barricades in the workers’ districts. Despite the Saisons’ largely working-class following, ordinary working people remained passive, abating from participation in the uprising. Two patently hopeless days later, the entire enterprise collapsed, with no impact upon the Parisian working class.

After five months of hiding in cellars and attics, Blanqui was caught and condemned to death, a sentence that was commuted to life imprisonment. The conspirator was confined to the island fortress of Mont Saint-Michel and later to a prison hospital at Tours, from which he was released in 1844 because of his fragile health. Although he had planned the May uprising in every detail, he seems to have developed doubts about its chances for success once it was under way. In any case, when it became clear to Blanqui that the uprising would be a failure, he prudently but reprehensibly withdrew himself from the action—an act that led to an irreconcilable break between himself and the more adventurous Barbès, who had been wounded in the fighting.

Despite its failure, the Saisons conspiracy was to seize the imagination of later revolutionaries, including anarchists, and it may have supplied the conspiratorial atmosphere for novels on anarchist terrorism written by distinguished authors from Dostoyevsky to Conrad. Blanqui, to be sure, was no anarchist; indeed, the leaders of the Saisons hoped ultimately to preside over a highly centralized revolutionary state. But the Narodnaya Volya (People’s Will or People’s Freedom—the Russian word volya has both meanings), the populist and terrorist organization that assassinated Tsar Alexander II in 1881, was
influenced by Peter Tkachev, one of Blanqui’s collaborators. The notion that small groups, if not individual conspirators, could initiate sweeping revolutionery events through heroic actions is a legacy of early Blanquism—however much Blanqui himself, over time, arrived at a more realistic appraisal of the limits of secret conspiratorial organizations.

In fact, by the 1840s, in the face of repeated defeats, arrests, and repression, popular belief in the effectiveness of Blanquist conspiratorialism was diminishing. The regime shrewdly exploited the conspiracies and various attempts to assassinate Louis-Philippe in order to arouse public opinion against republicanism and socialism. Whether because of this repression or for other reasons, the secret societies awakened no mass movement against the July Monarchy. For the most part, the workers of France had a traditional agenda of their own—to retain control over their working conditions, indeed to establish cooperative workshops that implicitly challenged the legitimacy of the property system itself, as well as to live decently and with self-respect. In time, once sweeping transformations had occurred in the economic and political landscape of Western Europe, they were to flock into socialistic organizations that sought to create a better society by other means.

NOTES


Even more than Danton a half-century earlier, Blanqui developed the technique of turning the tables on prosecutors and judges, transforming the accused into the accuser and his trials into forums for advancing his ideas. His stay in prison, too, became educational experiences for other political prisoners, many of whom he recruited to his ideas.

14. Ibid., pp. 31–2. Blanc’s apparently firsthand account seems more reliable than others that place the red flag, not in the hand of the anonymous “stranger,” but on Lamarque’s coffin. This would have been impossible, especially since Lafayette, one of the leading figures in the cortège, certainly would never have assented to such a gesture.