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Nineteenth-Century Europe: Liberalism and Its Critics

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Hegel remarks somewhere that all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur, as it were, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce.1 Caussidière for Danton, Louis Blanc for Robespierre, the Montagne of 1848 to 18512 for the Montagne of 1793 to 1795, the Nephew for the Uncle. And the same caricature occurs in the circumstances attending the second edition of the Eighteenth Brumaire!

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionising themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battlecries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language. Thus Luther donned the mask of the Apostle Paul, the revolution of 1789 to 1814 draped itself alternately as the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire, and the revolution of 1848 knew nothing better to do than to parody, now 1789, now the revolutionary tradition of 1793 to 1795. In like manner a beginner who has learnt a new language always translates it back into his mother tongue, but he has assimilated the spirit of the new language and can freely express himself in it only when he finds his way in it without recalling the old and forgets his native tongue in the use of the new.

Consideration of this world-historical necromancy reveals at once a salient difference. Camille Desmoulins, Danton, Robespierre, Saint-Just, Napoleon, the heroes as well as the parties and the masses of the old

1. Hegel expressed this idea in his work Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte (its first edition came out in Berlin in 1837). In the third part of this work, at the end of Section 2, entitled "Rom vom zweiten punischen Krieg bis zum Kaiserthum," Hegel wrote in particular that "A coup d'état is sanctioned as it were in the opinion of people if it is repeated. Thus, Napoleon was defeated twice and twice the Bourbons were driven out. Through repetition, what at the beginning seemed to be merely accidental and possible becomes real and established." Hegel also repeatedly expressed the idea that in the process of dialectical development there is bound to be a transition from the stage of formation and efflorescence to that of disintegration and ruin (see, in particular, G. W. F. Hegel, Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts, Th. 3, Abt. 3, §347).

2. Montagne (the Mountain)—representatives in the Constituent and subsequently in the Legislative Assembly of a bloc of democrats and petty-bourgeois socialists grouped round the newspaper La Réforme. They called themselves Montagnards or the Mountain by analogy with the Montagnards in the Convention of 1792–94.
French Revolution, performed the task of their time in Roman costume and with Roman phrases, the task of unchaining and setting up modern bourgeois society. The first ones knocked the feudal basis to pieces and mowed off the feudal heads which had grown on it. The other created inside France the conditions under which free competition could first be developed, parcelled landed property exploited and the unchained industrial productive forces of the nation employed; and beyond the French borders he everywhere swept the feudal institutions away, so far as was necessary to furnish bourgeois society in France with a suitable up-to-date environment on the European Continent. The new social formation once established, the antediluvian Colossi disappeared and with them resurrected Romany—the Brutuses, Gracchi, Publicolas, the tribunes, the senators, and Caesar himself. Bourgeois society in its sober reality had begotten its true interpreters and mouthpieces in the Says, Cousins, Royer-Collards, Benjamin Constants and Guizots; its real commanders sat behind the counter, and the hogheaded Louis XVIII was its political chief. Wholly absorbed in the production of wealth and in peaceful competitive struggle, it no longer comprehended that ghosts from the days of Rome had watched over its cradle. But unheroic as bourgeois society is, it nevertheless took heroism, sacrifice, terror, civil war and battles of peoples to bring it into being. And in the classically austere traditions of the Roman Republic its gladiators found the ideals and the art forms, the self-deceptions that they needed in order to conceal from themselves the bourgeois limitations of the content of their struggles and to maintain their passion on the high plane of great historical tragedy. Similarly, at another stage of development, a century earlier, Cromwell and the English people had borrowed speech, passions and illusions from the Old Testament for their bourgeois revolution. When the real aim had been achieved, when the bourgeois transformation of English society had been accomplished, Locke supplanted Habakkuk.

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

From 1848 to 1851 only the ghost of the old revolution walked about, from Marrast, the républicain en gants jaunes, who disguised himself as the old Bailly, down to the adventurer who hides his commonplace repulsive features under the iron death mask of Napoleon. An entire people, which had imagined that by means of a revolution it had imparted to itself an accelerated power of motion, suddenly finds itself set back into a de-

4. On December 10, 1848 Louis Bonaparte was elected President of the French Republic by a majority vote.
1848 to 1851 French society made up, and that by an abbreviated because revolutionary method, for the studies and experiences which, in a regular, so to speak, textbook course of development, would have had to precede the February revolution, if it was to be more than a ruffling of the surface. Society now seems to have fallen back behind its point of departure; it has in truth first to create for itself the revolutionary point of departure, the situation, the relations, the conditions under which alone modern revolution becomes serious.

Bourgeois revolutions, like those of the eighteenth century, storm swiftly from success to success, their dramatic effects outdo each other, men and things seem set in sparkling brilliants, ecstasy is the everyday spirit, but they are short-lived, soon they have attained their zenith, and a long crassulent depression seizes society before it learns soberly to assimilate the results of its storm-and-stress period. On the other hand, proletarian revolutions, like those of the nineteenth century, criticise themselves constantly, interrupt themselves continually in their own course, come back to the apparently accomplished in order to begin it afresh, deride with unmerciful thoroughness the inadequacies, weaknesses and paltriness of their first attempts, seem to throw down their adversary only in order that he may draw new strength from the earth and rise again, more gigantic, before them, and recoil again and again from the indefinite prodigiosity of their own aims, until a situation has been created which makes all turning back impossible, and the conditions themselves cry out:

Hic Rhodus, hic salta!
Here is the rose, here dance!

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

Three main periods are unmistakable: the February period, May 4, 1848 to May 28, 1849; the period of the constitution of the republic or of the Constituent National Assembly; May 28, 1849 to December 2, 1851: the period of the constitutional republic or of the Legislative National Assembly.

The first period, from February 24, or the overthrow of Louis Philippe, to May 4, 1848, the meeting of the Constituent Assembly, the February period proper, may be described as the prologue to the revolution. Its character was officially expressed in the fact that the government improvised by it declared itself that it was provisional and, like the government, everything that was mooted, attempted or enunciated during this period proclaimed itself to be only provisional. Nothing and nobody ventured to lay claim to the right of existence and of real action. All the elements that had prepared or determined the revolution, the dynastic opposition, the republican bourgeoisie, the democratic-republican petty bourgeoisie and the Social-Democratic workers, provisionally found their place in the February government.

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

The second period, from May 4, 1848 to the end of May 1849, is the period of the constitution, the foundation, of the bourgeois republic. Di-

5. Hic Rhodus, hic salta! ("Here is Rhodes, leap here!")—meaning: here is the main point, now show us what you can do!—words addressed to a swaguerer (in a fable by Aesop, "The Boasting Traveller") who claimed that he had made tremendous leaps in Rhodes.

Here is the rose, here dance!—a paraphrase of the preceding quotation (in Greek Rhodes, the name of an island, also means "rose") used by Hegel in the preface to his work Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts.

6. The dynastic opposition—an opposition group in the French Chamber of Deputies during the July monarchy (1830-48). The group, headed by Odilon Barrot, expressed the views of the liberal industrial and commercial bourgeoisie and favoured a moderate electoral reform, which they regarded as a means of preventing a revolution and preserving the Orleans dynasty.
rectly after the February days not only had the dynastic opposition been surprised by the republicans and the republicans by the Socialists, but all France by Paris. The National Assembly, which met on May 4, 1848, had emerged from the national elections and represented the nation. It was a living protest against the aspirations of the February days and was to reduce the results of the revolution to the bourgeois scale. In vain the Paris proletariat, which immediately grasped the character of this National Assembly, attempted on May 15, a few days after it met, forcibly to negate its existence, to dissolve it, to disintegrate again into its constituent parts the organic form in which the proletariat was threatened by the reacting spirit of the nation. As is known, May 15 had no other result save that of removing Blanqui and his comrades, that is, the real leaders of the proletarian party, from the public stage for the entire duration of the cycle we are considering.

The bourgeois monarchy of Louis Philippe can be followed only by a bourgeois republic, that is to say, whereas a limited section of the bourgeoisie ruled in the name of the king, the whole of the bourgeoisie will now rule on behalf of the people. The demands of the Paris proletariat are utopian nonsense, to which an end must be put. To this declaration of the Constituent National Assembly the Paris proletariat replied with the June insurrection, the most colossal event in the history of European civil wars. The bourgeois republic triumphed. On its side stood the finance aristocracy, the industrial bourgeoisie, the middle class, the petty bourgeois, the army, the lumpenproletariat organised as the Mobile Guard, the intellectual tuals, the clergy and the rural population. On the side of the Paris proletariat stood none but itself. More than 3,000 insurgents were butchered after the victory, and 15,000 were deported without trial. With this defeat the proletariat recedes into the background of the revolutionary stage. It attempts to press forward again on every occasion, as soon as the movement appears to make a fresh start, but with ever decreased expenditure of strength and always slighter results. As soon as one of the social strata situated above it gets into revolutionary ferment, the proletariat enters into an alliance with it and so shares all the defeats that the different parties suffer, one after another. But these subsequent blows become the weaker, the greater the surface of society over which they are distributed. The more important leaders of the proletariat in the Assembly and in the press successfully fall victim to the courts, and every more equivocal figures come to head it. In part it throws itself into doctrinaire experiments, exchange banks and workers' associations, hence into a movement in which it renounces the revolutionising of the old world by means of the latter's own great, combined resources, and seeks, rather, to achieve its salvation behind society's back, in private fashion, within its limited conditions of existence, and hence necessarily suffers shipwreck. It seems to be unable either to rediscover revolutionary greatness in itself or to win new energy from the communications newly entered into, until all classes with which it contended in June themselves lie prostrate beside it. But at least it succumbs with the honours of the great, world-historic struggle; not only France, but all Europe trembles at the June earthquake, while the ensuing defeats of the upper classes are so cheaply bought that they require barefaced exag- geration by the victorious party to be able to pass for events at all, and become the more ignominious the further the defeated party is from the proletarian party.

The defeat of the June insurgents, to be sure, had indeed prepared and levelled the ground on which the bourgeois republic could be founded and built up, but it had shown at the same time that in Europe the questions at issue are other than that of "republic or monarchy." It had revealed that here bourgeois republic signified the unlimited despotism of one class over other classes. It had proved that in countries with an old civilisation, with a developed formation of classes, with modern conditions of production and with an intellectual consciousness in which all traditional ideas have been dissolved by the work of centuries, the republic signifies in general only the political form of the revolutionising of bourgeois society and not its conservative form of life, as, for example, in the United States of North America, where, though classes already exist, they have not yet become fixed, but continually change and interchange their component elements in constant flux, where the modern means of production, instead of coinciding with a stagnant surplus population, rather compensate for the relative
pay, among the big bourgeoisie, who hailed Bonaparte as a bridge to the monarchy, and among the proletarians and petty bourgeoisie, who hailed him as a scourge for Cavaignac. I shall have an opportunity later of going more closely into the relationship of the peasants to the French Revolution.

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

II

. . . I have discussed elsewhere the significance of the election of December 10. I will not revert to it here. It is sufficient to remark here that it was a reaction of the peasants, who had to pay the cost of the February revolution, against the remaining classes of the nation, a reaction of the country against the town. It met with great approval in the army, for which the republicans of the National had provided neither glory nor additional

10. An allusion to a legend according to which the Roman Emperor Constantine (274-337) on the eve of a battle against his rival Maxentius in 312 saw in the sky the sign of the Cross and over it the words: "By this sign thou shalt conquer!" With this legend the Church links Constantine's "conversion" from the persecution of Christianity to its protection.

11. Kraplinski—one of the main characters in Heine's poem "Zwei Ritter" (Ranamerio). Here Marx alludes to Louis Bonaparte.
In the first French Revolution the rule of the Constitutionalists is followed by the rule of the Girondins and the rule of the Girondins by the rule of the Jacobins. Each of these parties relies on the more progressive party for support. As soon as it has brought the revolution far enough to be unable to follow it further, still less to go ahead of it, it is thrust aside by the bolder ally that stands behind it and sent to the guillotine. The revolution thus moves along an ascending line.

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

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

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

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

VII

... Why did the Paris proletariat not rise in revolt after December 2?" 13

The overthrow of the bourgeoisie had as yet been only decreed: the decree had not been carried out. Any serious insurrection of the proletariat would at once have put fresh life into the bourgeoisie, would have reconciled it with the army and ensured a second June defeat for the workers. On December 4 the proletariat was invited by bourgeois and épicer to fight. On the evening of that day several legions of the National Guard promised to appear, armed and uniforms, on the scene of battle. For the bourgeoisie and the épicer had got wind of the fact that in one of his decrees of December 2 Bonaparte abolished the secret ballot and enjoined them to record their "yes" or "no" in the official registers after their names. The resistance of December 4 intimidated Bonaparte. During the night he caused placards to be posted on all the street corners of Paris, announcing the restoration of the secret ballot. The bourgeoisie and the épicer believed that they had gained their end. Those who failed to appear next morning were the bourgeois and the épicer.

By a coup de main during the night of December 1 to 2, Bonaparte had robed the Paris proletariat of its leaders, the barricade commanders. An army without officers, averse to fighting under the banner of the Montagnards because of the memories of June 1848 and 1849 and May 1850, it left to its vanguard, the secret societies, the task of saving the insurrectionary honour of Paris, which the bourgeoisie had so unresistingly surrendered to the soldiery that, later on, Bonaparte could sneeringly give as his motive for disarming the National Guard—his fear that its arms would be turned against itself by the anarchists!

"C'est le triomphe complet et définitif du socialisme!" Thus Guizot characterised December 2. But if the overthrow of the parliamentary republic contains within itself the germ of the triumph of the proletarian revolution, its immediate and palpable result was the victory of Bonaparte over parliament, of the executive power over the legislative power, of force without words over the force of words. In parliament the nation made its

13. In the 1852 edition this paragraph reads as follows: "Why did the proletariat not rescue the bourgeoisie? Implied in this is the question: Why did the Paris proletariat not rise in revolt after December 2?"
general will the law, that is, it made the law of the ruling class its general will. Before the executive power it renounces all will of its own and sub-
mits to the superior command of an alien will, to authority. The executive
power, in contrast to the legislative power, expresses the heteronomy of a
nation, in contrast to its autonomy. France, therefore, seems to have es-
caped the despotism of a class only to fall back beneath the despotism of
an individual, and, what is more, beneath the authority of an individual
without authority. The struggle seems to be settled in such a way that all
classes, equally impotent and equally mute, fall on their knees before the
rifle butt.

But the revolution is thorough. It is still journeying through purgatory.
It does its work methodically. By December 2, 1851 it had completed one
half of its preparatory work; it is now completing the other half. First it
perfected the parliamentary power, in order to be able to overthrow it. Now
that it has attained this, it perfects the executive power, reduces it to its
purest expression, isolates it, sets it up against itself as the sole target, in
order to concentrate all its forces of destruction against it. And when it has
done this second half of its preliminary work, Europe will leap from its
seat and exultantly exclaim: Well buried, old mole!

This executive power with its enormous bureaucratic and military
organisation, with its extensive and artificial state machinery, with a host
of officials numbering half a million, besides an army of another half mil-
lion, this appalling parasitic body, which enmeshes the body of French soci-
ety like a net and chokes all its pores, sprang up in the days of the abso-
lute monarchy, with the decay of the feudal system, which it helped to
hasten. The seignorial privileges of the landowners and towns became
transformed into so many attributes of the state power, the feudal digni-
taries into paid officials and the motley pattern of conflicting medieval
plenary powers into the regulated plan of a state authority whose work is
divided and centralised as in a factory. The first French Revolution, with its
task of breaking all separate local, territorial, urban and provincial powers
in order to create the civil unity of the nation, was bound to develop what
the absolute monarchy had begun: the centralisation, but at the same time
the extent, the attributes and the agents of governmental power. Napoleon
perfected this state machinery. The Legitimist monarchy and the July mon-
archy added nothing but a greater division of labour, growing in the same
measure as the division of labour within bourgeois society created new
groups of interests, and, therefore, new material for state administration.
Every common interest was straightway severed from society, counter-
posed to it as a higher, general interest, snatched from the activity of so-
ciety's members themselves and made an object of government activity,
whether it was a bridge, a schoolhouse and the communal property of a
village community, or the railways, the national wealth and the national
university of France. Finally, in its struggle against the revolution, the par-
liamentary republic found itself compelled to strengthen, along with the
repressive measures, the resources and centralisation of governmental
power. All revolutions perfect this machine instead of breaking it. The
parties that contended in turn for domination regarded the possession of
this huge state edifice as the principal spoils of the victor.

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

Only under the second Bonaparte does the state seem to have made it-
self completely independent. As against civil society, the state machine has
consolidated its position so thoroughly that the chief of the Society of
December 10 suffices for its head, a casual adventurer from abroad, raised
up as leader by a drunken soldiery, which he has bought with liquor and
sausage, and which he must continually ply with more sausage. Hence the
downcast despair, the feeling of most dreadful humiliation and degradation
that oppresses the breast of France and makes her catch her breath. She
feels dishonoured.

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

Just as the Bourbons were the dynasty of big landed property and just as
the Orleans were the dynasty of money, so the Bonapartes are the dynasty
of the peasants, that is, the mass of the French people. Not the Bonaparte
who submitted to the bourgeois parliament, but the Bonaparte who dis-
persed the bourgeois parliament is the chosen man of the peasantry. For
three years the towns had succeeded in falsifying the meaning of the elec-
tion of December 10 and in cheating the peasants out of the restoration of
the empire. The election of December 10, 1848 has been consummated
only by the coup d'état of December 2, 1851.

The small-holding peasants form a vast mass, the members of which live
in similar conditions but without entering into manifold relations with
one another. Their mode of production isolates them from one another in-
stead of bringing them into mutual intercourse. The isolation is increased
by France's bad means of communication and by the poverty of the peas-
nants. Their field of production, the smallholding, admits of no division of

14. In the 1852 edition this sentence reads thus: "Only under the second Bonaparte does
the state seem to have made itself independent of society and subjected it." The text went on
just follows: "The independence of the executive power emerges into the open when its chief no
longer requires genius, its army no longer requires glory, and its bureaucracy no longer re-
labour in its cultivation, no application of science and, therefore, no diversity of development, no variety of talent, no wealth of social relationships. Each individual peasant family is almost self-sufficient; it itself directly produces the major part of its consumption and thus acquires its means of life more through exchange with nature than in intercourse with society. A smallholding, a peasant and his family; alongside them another smallholding, another peasant and another family. A few score of these make up a village, and a few score of villages make up a department. In this way, the great mass of the French nation is formed by simple addition of homologous magnitudes, much as potatoes in a sack form a sack of potatoes. Insofar as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class. Insofar as there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond and no political organisation among them, they do not form a class. They are consequently incapable of enforcing their class interests in their own name, whether through a parliament or through a convention. They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented. Their representative must at the same time appear as their master, as an authority over them, as an unlimited governmental power that protects them against the other classes and sends them rain and sunshine from above. The political influence of the small-holding peasants, therefore, finds its final expression in the executive power subordinating society to itself.

Historical tradition gave rise to the belief of the French peasants in the miracle that a man named Napoleon would bring all the glory back to them. And an individual turned up who gives himself out as the man because he bears the name of Napoleon, as a result of the Code Napoléon, which lays down that la recherche de la paternité est interdite. After a vaga-bondage of twenty years and after a series of grotesque adventures, the legend finds fulfilment and the man becomes Emperor of the French. The fixed idea of the Nephew was realised, because it coincided with the fixed idea of the most numerous class of the French people.

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

15. This refers to the participation of peasants in the republican uprisings in France in late 1851 in protest against the Bonapartist coup d'état. These uprisings, involving mainly artisans and workers of small towns and settlements, local peasants, tradesmen and intellectuals, embraced nearly twenty departments in south-east, south-west and central France. Lacking unity and centralisation they were fairly quickly suppressed by police and troops.

Since Louis XIV, France has experienced no similar persecution of the peasants "for demagogic practices." 16

But let there be no misunderstanding. The Bonaparte dynasty represents not the revolutionary, but the conservative peasant; not the peasant that strikes out beyond the condition of his social existence, the smallholding, but rather the peasant who wants to consolidate this holding; not the country folk who, linked up with the towns, want to overthrow the old order through their own energies, but on the contrary those who, in stupefied seclusion within this old order, want to see themselves and their smallholdings saved and favoured by the ghost of the empire. It represents not the enlightenment, but the superstition of the peasant; not his judgment, but his prejudice; not his future, but his past; not his modern Cévennes, but his modern Vendée. 17

The three years' rigorous rule of the parliamentary republic had freed a part of the French peasants from the Napoleonic illusion and had revolutionised them, even if only superficially; but the bourgeoisie violently repressed them whenever they set themselves in motion. Under the parliamentary republic the modern and the traditional consciousness of the French peasant contended for mastery. This progress took the form of an incessant struggle between the schoolmasters and the priests. The bourgeoisie struck down the schoolmasters. For the first time the peasants made efforts to behave independently in the face of the activity of the government. This was shown in the continual conflict between the maires and the prefects. The bourgeoisie deposed the maires. Finally, during the period of the parliamentary republic, the peasants of different localities rose against their own offspring, the army. The bourgeoisie punished them with states of siege and punitive expeditions. And this same bourgeoisie now cries out about the stupidity of the masses, the vile multitude, that has betrayed it to Bonaparte. It has itself forcibly strengthened the imperial sentiments of the peasant class, it conserved the conditions that form the birthplace of this

16. Here Marx compares the Bonapartist authorities' reprisals against the participants in the republican movement, including peasants, with the persecution of the so-called demagogues in Germany in the 1820s and 1830s.

Demagogues in Germany were participants in the opposition movement of intellectuals. The name became current after the Karlshafen Conference of Ministers of the German States in August 1819, which adopted a special decision against the intrigues of "demagogues."

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

Vendée—a department in Western France; during the French Revolution of 1789–94 a centre of a royalist revolt in which the mass of the local peasantry took part. The name "Vendée" came to denote counter-revolutionary activity.
peasant religion. The bourgeoisie, to be sure, is bound to fear the stupidity of the masses as long as they remain conservative, and the insight of the masses as soon as they become revolutionary.

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

After the first revolution had transformed the peasants from semi-villains into freeholders, Napoleon confirmed and regulated the conditions on which they could exploit undisturbed the soil of France which had only just fallen to their lot and skive their youthful passion for property. But what is now causing the ruin of the French peasant is his smallholding itself, the division of the land, the form of property in which Napoleon consolidated in France. It is precisely the material conditions which made the French feudal peasant a small-holding peasant and Napoleon an emperor. Two generations have sufficed to produce the inevitable result: progressive deterioration of agriculture, progressive indebtedness of the agriculturist. The “Napoleonic” form of property, which is the beginning of the nineteenth century was the condition for the liberation and enrichment of the French country folk, has developed in the course of this century into the law of their enslavement and pauperisation. And precisely this law is the first of the “idées napoléoniennes” which the second Bonaparte has to uphold. If he still shares with the peasants the illusion that the cause of their ruin is to be sought, not in this small-holding property itself, but outside it, in the influence of secondary circumstances, his experiments will burst like soap bubbles when they come in contact with the relations of production.

The economic development of small-holding property has radically changed the relation of the peasants to the other classes of society. Under Napoleon, the fragmentation of the land in the countryside supplemented free competition and the beginning of big industry in the towns. The peasant class was the ubiquitous protest against the landed aristocracy which had just been overthrown. The roots that small-holding property struck in French soil deprived feudalism of all nutriment. Its landmarks formed the natural fortifications of the bourgeoisie against any coup de main on the part of its old overlords. But in the course of the nineteenth century the feudal lords were replaced by urban usurers; the feudal obligation that went with the land was replaced by the mortgage; aristocratic landed property was replaced by bourgeois capital. The smallholding of the peasant is now only the pretext that allows the capitalist to draw profits, interest and rent from the soil, while leaving it to the tiller of the soil himself to see how he can extract his wages. The mortgage debt burdening the soil of France imposes on the French peasantry payment of an amount of interest equal to the annual interest on the entire British national debt. Small-holding property, in this enslavement by capital to which its development inevitably pushes forward, has transformed the mass of the French nation into troglodytes. Sixteen million peasants (including women and children) dwell in hovels, a large number of which have but one opening, others only two and the most favoured only three. And windows are to a house what the five senses are to the head. The bourgeois order, which at the beginning of the century set the state to stand guard over the newly arisen smallholding and manured it with laurels, has become a vampire that sucks out its blood and brains and throws them into the alchemist's cauldron of capital. The Code Napoléon is now nothing but a code of distress, forced sales and compulsory auctions. To the four million (including children, etc.) officially recognised paupers, vagabonds, criminals and prostitutes in France must be added five million who hover on the margin of existence and either have their haunts in the countryside itself or, with their rags and their children, continually desert the countryside for the towns and the towns for the countryside. The interests of the peasants, therefore, are no longer, as under Napoleon, in accord with, but in opposition to the interests of the bourgeoisie, to capital. Hence the peasants find their natural ally and leader in the urban proletariat, whose task is the overthrow of the bourgeois order. But strong and unlimited government—and this is the second “idée napoléonienne,” which the second Napoleon has to carry out— is called upon to defend this “material” order by force. This “ordre matériel” also serves as the catchword in all of Bonaparte’s proclamations against the rebellious peasants.

Besides the mortgage which capital imposes on it, the smallholding is burdened by taxes. Taxes are the source of life for the bureaucracy, the army, the priests and the court, in short, for the whole apparatus of the

18. The 1852 edition further has: “Even the advantages given to the peasant class were in the interest of the new bourgeois order. This newly created class was the all-round extension of the bourgeois regime beyond the gates of the towns, its realisation on a national scale.”

19. The 1852 edition further has: “If it was favoured most of all, it was also suited most of all as a point of attack for the restoration of feudalism.”
against Rome will take place in France itself, but in a sense opposite to that of M. de Montalembert. 22

Lastly, the culminating point of the "idées napoléoniennes" is the preponderance of the army. The army was the point d'honneur of the small-holding peasants, it was they themselves transformed into heroes, defending their new possessions against the outer world, glorifying their recently won nationhood, plundering and revolutionising the world. The uniform was their own state dress; war was their poetry; the smallholding, extended and rounded off in imagination, was their fatherland, and patriotism the ideal form of their sense of property. But the enemies against whom the French peasant has now to defend his property are not the Cossacks; they are the hussiers 23 and the tax collectors. The smallholding lies no longer in the so-called fatherland, but in the register of mortgages. The army itself is no longer the flower of the peasant youth; it is the swamp-flower of the peasant lumpenproletariat. It consists in large measure of remplaçants, of substitutes, just as the second Bonaparte is himself only a remplaçant, the substitute for Napoleon. It now performs its deeds of valour by hunting down the peasants like chamois, and in organised drives, by doing gendarmerie duty, and if the internal contradictions of his system chase the chief of the Society of December 10 over the French border, his army, after some acts of brigandage, will reap, not laurels, but thrashings.

One sees: all "idées napoléoniennes" are ideas of the undeveloped smallholding in the freshness of its youth; for the smallholding that has outlived its day they are an absurdity. They are only the hallucinations of its death struggle, words that are transformed into phrases, spirits transformed into ghosts. But the parody of the empire was necessary to free the mass of the French nation from the weight of tradition and to work out in pure form the opposition between the state power and society. With the progressive undermining of small-holding property, the state structure erected upon it collapses. The centralisation of the state that modern society requires arises only on the ruins of the military-bureaucratic government machinery which was forged in opposition to feudalism. 24

The condition of the French peasants provides us with the answer to the

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20. The 1852 edition has: "Under Napoleon this numerous government personnel was not only directly productive in that it provided for the new peasantry, by state coercion, in the form of public works, etc., what the bourgeoisie was still unable to provide with the resources of private industry. The state taxes were an essential means of coercion for maintaining exchange between town and country. Otherwise the smallholder would, in peasant self-complacency, have broken off the connection with the towns as was the case of Norway and in part of Switzerland."

21. In the 1852 edition this sentence reads as follows: "The priest then appears as only the anointed bloodhound of the earthly police—another 'idée napoléoniennes'—whose duty under the second Bonaparte is not, as under Napoleon, to watch the enemies of the peasant regime in the towns, but Bonaparte's enemies in the country."

22. This refers to a speech by Montalembert, leader of the Legitimists, in the Legislative Assembly on May 22, 1850, in which he urged them to "wage a serious war against socialism."

23. Bailiffs.

24. Instead of the last two sentences, the 1852 edition has: "The demolition of the state machine will not endanger centralisation. Bureaucracy is only the low and brutal form of a centralisation that is still afflicted with its opposite, with feudalism. When he is disappointed in the Napoleonic Restoration, the French peasant will part with his belief in his smallholding, the entire state edifice erected on this smallholding will fall to the ground and the proletarian revolution will obtain that chorus without which its solo becomes a swan song in all peasant countries."
riddle of the *general elections of December 20 and 21*, which bore the second Bonaparte up Mount Sinai, not to receive laws, but to give them. 25

Manifestly, the bourgeoisie had now no choice but to elect Bonaparte. When the puritans at the Council of Constance complained of the dissolute lives of the popes and wailed about the necessity of moral reform, Cardinal Pierre d'Ailly thundered at them: "Only the devil in person can still save the Catholic Church, and you ask for angels." In like manner, after the coup d'état, the French bourgeoisie cried: Only the chief of the Society of December 10 can still save bourgeois society! Only theft can still save property; only perjury, religion; bastardy, the family; disorder, order!

As the executive authority which has made itself an independent power, Bonaparte feels it to be his mission to safeguard "bourgeois order." But the strength of this bourgeois order lies in the middle class. He looks on himself, therefore, as the representative of the middle class and issues decrees in this sense. Nevertheless, he is somebody solely due to the fact that he has broken the political power of this middle class and daily breaks it anew. Consequently, he looks on himself as the adversary of the political and literary power of the middle class. But by protecting its material power, he generates its political power anew. The cause must accordingly be kept alive; but the effect, where it manifests itself, must be done away with. But this cannot pass off without slight confusions of cause and effect, since in their interaction both lose their distinguishing features. New decrees that obliterate the border line. As against the bourgeoisie, Bonaparte looks on himself, at the same time, as the representative of the peasants and of the people in general, who wants to make the lower classes of the people happy within the framework of bourgeois society. New decrees that cheat the "true Socialists" 26 of their statecraft in advance. But, above all, Bonaparte looks on himself as the chief of the Society of December 10, as the representative of the lumpenproletariat, to which he himself, his entourage, his government and his army belong, and whose prime consideration is to benefit itself and draw California lottery prizes from the state treasury. And he vindicates his position as chief of the Society of December 10 with decrees, without decrees and despite decrees.

This contradictory task of the man explains the contradictions of his government, the confused, blind to-ing and fro-ing which seeks now to win, now to humiliate first one class and then another and arrays all of them uniformly against him, whose practical uncertainty forms a highly comical contrast to the imperious, categorical style of the government decrees, a style which is faithfully copied from the uncle.

Industry and trade, hence the business affairs of the middle class, are to prosper in hothouse fashion under the strong government. The grant of innumerable railway concessions. But the Bonapartist lumpenproletariat is to enrich itself. The initiated play tripotage on the bourse with the railway concessions. But no capital is forthcoming for the railways. Obligation of the Bank to make advances on railway shares. But, at the same time, the Bank is to be exploited for personal ends and therefore must be cajoled. Release of the Bank from the obligation to publish its report weekly. Leonine agreement of the Bank with the government. The people are to be given employment. Initiation of public works. But the public works increase the obligations of the people in respect of taxes. Hence reduction of the taxes by an onslaught on the rentiers, by conversion of the five per cent bonds to four-and-a-half per cent. But, once more, the middle class must receive a douceur. Therefore doubling of the wine tax for the people, who buy it en détail, and halving of the wine tax for the middle class, who drink it en gros. Dissolution of the actual workers' associations, but promises of miracles of association in the future. The peasants are to be helped. Mortgage banks that expedite their getting into debt and accelerate the concentration of property. But these banks are to be used to make money out of the confiscated estates of the House of Orleans. No capitalist wants to agree to this condition, which is not in the decree, and the mortgage bank remains a mere decree, etc., etc.

Bonaparte would like to appear as the patriarchal benefactor of all classes. But he cannot give to one class without taking from another. Just as at the time of the Fronde it was said of the Duke of Guise that he was the most obligéant man in France because he had turned all his estates into his partisans' obligations to him, so Bonaparte would fain be the most obligéant man in France and turn all the property, all the labour of France into a personal obligation to himself. He would like to steal the whole of France in order to be able to make a present of her to France or, rather, in order to be able to buy France anew with French money, for as the chief of the So-

25. In the 1852 edition: "but to give and execute them." Then follows this passage: "Of course in those fateful days the French nation committed a mortal sin against democracy, which daily prays on its knees: Holy Universal Suffrage, plead for us! The believers in Universal Suffrage are naturally unwilling to dispense with the miraculous power which has worked such great things with them, which has transformed Bonaparte II into a Napoleon, a Saul into a Paul and a Simon into a Peter. The popular spirit speaks to them through the ballot box as the God of the Prophet Ezekiel spoke to the dry bones: 'Hoc dicit dominus deus assutibis suis: Ecce, ego intricabit in vos spiritum et vivietis.' 'Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live!'" [Ezekiel 37:5].

26. The reference is to German or "true socialism" which was widespread in Germany in the 1840s, mostly among petty-bourgeois intellectuals. The "true socialists"—Karl Grün, Moses Hess, Hermann Kriege—substituted the sentimental preaching of love and brotherhood for the ideas of socialism and denied the need for a bourgeois-democratic revolution in Germany. Marx and Engels critisised this trend in the following works: *The German Ideology, Circular Against Kriege, German Socialism in Verse and Prose and Manifesto of the Communist Party*. 
society of December 10 he must needs buy what ought to belong to him. And all the state institutions, the Senate, the Council of State, the legislative body, the Legion of Honour, the soldiers’ medals, the wash-houses, the public works, the railways, the état-major of the National Guard excluding privates, and the confiscated estates of the House of Orleans—all become parts of the institution of purchase. Every place in the army and in the government becomes a means of purchase. But the most important feature of this process, whereby France is taken in order to be given back, is the percentages that find their way into the pockets of the head and the members of the Society of December 10 during the transaction.

Driven by the contradictory demands of his situation and being at the same time, like a conjurer, under the necessity of keeping the public gaze fixed on himself, as Napoleon’s substitute, by springing constant surprises, that is to say, under the necessity of executing a coup d'état en miniature every day, Bonaparte throws the entire bourgeois economy into confusion, violates everything that seemed inviolable to the revolution of 1848, makes some tolerant of revolution, others desirous of revolution, and produces actual anarchy in the name of order, while at the same time stripping its halo from the entire state machine, profanes it and makes it at once loathsome and ridiculous. The cult of the Holy Coat of Trier\(^2\) he duplicates in Paris with the cult of the Napoleonic imperial mantle. But when the imperial mantle finally falls on the shoulders of Louis Bonaparte, the bronze statue of Napoleon will crash from the top of the Vendôme Column.\(^2\)

20. Louis Napoleon, Speech to the Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce (1852)

Louis Napoleon (1808–73) was the nephew of Napoleon I. Upon the death of the latter’s son in 1832, Louis Napoleon assumed the role of dynastic pretender, hoping to capitalize upon the cult of Napoleon that had been flourishing under the rather lackluster July Monarchy. In 1836, and again in 1840, he attempted to provoke insurrection among French troops with the intent of staging a coup d'état; both times he failed utterly and ended up in exile. The more sedentary life of exile bore fruit in his book *Napoléonie Ideas* (1839), which persuasively reformulated the Bonapartist legacy in terms more suitable to a new era, de-emphasizing its military ethos and stressing instead its social, industrial, and commercial aims. “One of the cleverest pieces of political sales talk produced in the nineteenth century,” the historian David Thomson has called it.

The Second Republic provided Louis Napoleon with his long-awaited opportunity, and Karl Marx’s *Eighteenth Brumaire* (document 19) offers a caustic analysis of the socioeconomic factors responsible for his victory in the presidential elections of 1849 and for the ease with which he was able to replace constitutionalism with dictatorship through his coup d'état of 2 December 1851.

The document reprinted here takes us from Marx’s portrait of Louis Napoleon in 1851 to the politician as presented in his own words less than a year later. The early part of 1852 had been spent consolidating the coup, in part by putting down insurrections by supporters of the republic. In the fall, the prince-president (as he was called) embarked upon a tour of south and central France, boldly visiting those departments that had been the scene of strong resistance to his takeover. Everywhere he was greeted with enthusiasm and with pomp and circumstance; no seditious murmurs were heard. The climax of the trip was his visit to the Atlantic port of Bordeaux. At a banquet in his honor given by the chamber of commerce—to mark the launching of a new ship called the *Louis-Napoleon* which featured an enormous bust of the prince on its prow—he made his momentous announcement: the restoration of the empire. The content of the speech, as well as Napoleon III’s subsequent policies, explains why the nineteenth-century critic Sainte-Beuve called this second modern emperor of the French “Saint-Simon on horseback.” (See introduction to document 14.)

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

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

From *Moniteur universel*, 12 October 1852. Translated for this volume by Paula Wissing.

Gentlemen:

The invitation extended to me by the chamber of commerce and commercial court of Bordeaux, which I eagerly accepted, allows me the opportunity to thank your great city for its warm welcome and magnificent hospitality, and it is with pleasure, now that I am near the end of my journey, that I share with you the impressions I gained from it.

As you know the goal of this trip for me was to acquaint myself with our beautiful southern provinces and to study their needs. It also produced a much more important result, however.

In fact, and I say this with a frankness that is as far removed from pride as it is from false modesty, never has a people expressed so directly, spon-