ities were de facto upset by the victory of the counter-revolution at Vienna; they would have been equally upset had the revolution there found the support necessary to defeat its enemies. And lastly, the great argument that Hungary could not leave legal and constitutional ground, may do very well for British free traders, but it will never be deemed sufficient in the eyes of history. Suppose the people of Vienna had stuck to “legal and constitutional” means on the 13th of March and on the 6th of October, what then of the “legal and constitutional” movement, and of all the glorious battles which, for the first time, brought Hungary to the notice of the civilised world? The very legal and constitutional ground upon which it is asserted the Hungarians moved in 1848 and 1849 was conquered for them by the exceedingly illegal and unconstitutional rising of the people of Vienna on the 13th of March. It is not to our purpose here to discuss the revolutionary history of Hungary, but it may be deemed proper if we observe that it is utterly useless to professedly use merely legal means of resistance against an enemy who scorns such scruples; and if we add, that had it not been for this eternal pretence of legality which Görgey seized upon and turned against the government, the devotion of Görgey’s army to its general, and the disgraceful catastrophe of Villágos, would have been impossible. And when, at last, to save their honour, the Hungarians came across the Leitha, in the latter end of October 1848—was that not quite as illegal as any immediate and resolute attack would have been?

We are known to harbour no unfriendly feeling toward Hungary. We stood by her during the struggle; we may be allowed to say that our paper, the Neue Rheinische Zeitung, has done more than any other to render the Hungarian cause popular in Germany, by explaining the nature of the struggle between the Magyar and Slavonian races, and by following up the Hungarian war in a series of articles which have had paid them the com-

1 Kossuth’s agitation enjoyed the moral and material support of the British Liberal free traders headed by Cobden.—Ed.
2 In August 1849, Görgey unconditionally surrendered to Paskevich at Villágos and his army laid down its weapons.—Ed.

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pliment of being plagiarised in almost every subsequent book upon the subject, the works of native Hungarians and “eye-witnes-

ses” not excepted. We even now, in any future continental convulsion, consider Hungary as the necessary and natural ally of Germany. But we have been severe enough upon our own countrymen to have a right to speak out upon our neighbours; and then we have here to record facts with historical impartiality, and we must say that in this particular instance, the generous bravery of the people of Vienna was not only far more noble, but also more far-sighted than the cautious circumspection of the Hun-

The second ally of Vienna was the German people. But they were everywhere engaged in the same struggle as the Viennese. Frankfort, Baden, Cologne, had just been defeated and disarmed. In Berlin and Breslau the people were at daggers-drawn with the army, and daily expected to come to blows. Thus it was in every local centre of action. Everywhere questions were pending that could only be settled by the force of arms; and now it was, that for the first time, were severely felt the disastrous consequences of the continuation of the old dismemberment and decentralisation of Germany. The different questions in every state, every province, every town, were fundamentally the same; but they were brought forward everywhere under different shapes and pretexts, and had everywhere attained different degrees of maturity. Thus it happened that while in every locality the decisive gravity of the events at Vienna was felt, yet nowhere could an important blow be struck with any hope of bringing the Viennese succour or making a diversion in their favour; and there remained nothing to aid

1 In the spring of 1849, the Hungarian revolutionary army after a number of victories cleared the whole territory of Hungary of Austrian forces and compelled the Austrian emperor to have recourse to the assistance which had long been offered him by the Russian tsar.—Ed.
them but the Parliament and Central Power of Frankfort; they were appealed to on all hands, but what did they do?

The Frankfort Parliament and the bastard child it had brought to light by incestuous intercourse with the old German Diet, the so-called Central Power, profited by the Viennese movement to show forth their utter nullity. This contemptible assembly, as we have seen, had long since sacrificed its virginity, and young as it was, it was already turning grey-headed and experienced in all the artifices of prating and pseudo-diplomatic prostitution. Of the dreams and illusions of power, of German regeneration and unity, that in the beginning had prevailed it, nothing remained but a set of Teutonic claptrap phraseology that was repeated on every occasion, and a firm belief of each individual member in his own importance, as well as in the credulity of the public. The original naïveté was discarded; the representatives of the German people had turned practical men, that is to say, they had made it out that the less they did, and the more they prated, the safer would be their position as the umpires of the fate of Germany. Not that they considered their proceedings superfluous; quite the contrary. But they had found out that all really great questions, being to them forbidden ground, had better be let alone, and here, like a set of Byzantine doctors of the Lower Empire, they discussed, with an importance and assiduity worthy of the fate that at last overtook them, theoretical dogmas long ago settled in every part of the civilised world, or microscopical practical questions which never led to any practical result. Thus, the Assembly being a sort of Lancastrian School 1 for the mutual instruction of members, and being, therefore, very important to themselves, they were persuaded it was doing even more than the German people had a right to expect, and looked upon everyone as a traitor to the country who had the impudence to ask them to come to any result.

When the Viennese insurrection broke out, there was a host of interpellations, debates, motions and amendments upon it, which, of course, led to nothing. The Central Power was to interfere.

1 A school in which mutual instruction played a great role, the better scholars helping the weaker ones.—Ed.
was he who retarded for a considerable time the taking of the town, and covered one of its sides from attack by burning the Tabor Bridge over the Danube. Everybody knows how after the storming he was arrested, tried by a court-martial, and shot. He died like a hero. And the Frankfort Assembly, horrorstruck as it was, yet took the bloody insult with a seeming good grace. A resolution was carried, which, by the softness and diplomatic decency of its language, was more an insult to the grave of the murdered martyr than a damning stain upon Austria. But it was not to be expected that this contemptible Assembly should resent the assassination of one of its members, particularly of the leader of the Left.

London, March 1852.

XIII. THE PRUSSIAN ASSEMBLY—THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(New York Daily Tribune, April 17, 1852)

On the 1st of November Vienna fell, and on the 9th of the same month the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly in Berlin showed how much this event had at once raised the spirit and the strength of the counter-revolutionary party all over Germany.

The events of the summer of 1848 in Prussia are soon told. The Constituent Assembly, or rather “the Assembly elected for the purpose of agreeing upon a constitution with the crown,” and its majority of representatives of the middle-class interest, had long since forfeited all public esteem by lending itself to all the intrigues of the court, from fear of the more energetic elements of the population. They had confirmed, or rather restored, the obnoxious privilege of feudalism, and thus betrayed the liberty and the interest of the peasantry. They had neither been able to draw up a constitution, nor to amend in any way the general legislation. They had occupied themselves almost exclusively with nice theoretical distinctions, mere formalities, and questions of constitutional etiquette. The Assembly, in fact, was more a school of parliamentary savoir vivre for its members,

1 The Assembly began its activities on May 22, 1848.—Ed.

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than a body in which the people could take any interest. The majorities were, besides, very nicely balanced, and almost always decided by the waving “centres” whose oscillations from Right to Left, and vice versa, upset first the ministry of Camphausen, then that of Auerswald and Hansemann.1 But while thus the liberals, here as everywhere else, let the occasion slip out of their hands, the court reorganised its elements of strength among the nobility, and the most uncultivated portion of the rural population, as well as in the army and bureaucracy. After Hansemann’s downfall, a ministry of bureaucrats and military officers, all staunch reactionists, was formed,2 which, however, seemingly gave way to the demands of the parliament; and the Assembly, acting upon the commodious principle of “measures, not men,” were actually duped into applauding this ministry, while they, of course, had no eyes for the concentration and organisation of counter-revolutionary forces, which that same ministry carried on pretty openly. At last, the signal being given by the fall of Vienna, the king dismissed his ministers, and replaced them by “men of action,” under the leadership of the present premier, M. Manteuffel. Then the dreaming Assembly at once awoke to the danger; it passed a vote of no confidence in the Cabinet, which was at once replied to by a decree removing the Assembly from Berlin, where it might, in case of a conflict, count upon the support of the masses, to Brandenburg, a petty provincial town dependent entirely upon the government. The Assembly, however, declared that it could not be adjourned, removed, or dissolved, except with its own consent. In the meantime, General Wrangel entered Berlin at the head of some forty thousand troops. In a meeting of the municipal magistrates and the officers of the National Guard, it was resolved not to offer any resistance. And now, after the Assembly and its constituents, the liberal bourgeoisie, had allowed the combined reactionary party to occupy every important position, and to

2 The Camphausen Ministry was overthrown on June 20. The Auerswald Ministry, in which the finance minister, Hansemann, had in fact the leading role, was dismissed in the middle of September 1848.—Ed.

2 The head of the new ministry installed on September 21 was General Pfuel.—Ed.
wrest from their hands almost every means of defence, began that grand comedy of "passive and legal resistance" which they intended to be a glorious imitation of the example of Hampden and of the first efforts of the Americans in the War of Independence. Berlin was declared in a state of siege, and Berlin remained tranquil; the National Guard was dissolved by the government, and its arms were delivered up with the greatest punctuality. The Assembly was hunted down during a fortnight, from one place of meeting to another, and everywhere dispersed by the military, and the members of the Assembly begged of the citizens to remain tranquil. At last the government having declared the Assembly dissolved, it passed a resolution to declare the levying of taxes illegal, and then its members dispersed themselves over the country to organise the refusal of taxes. But they found that they had been woefully mistaken in the choice of their means. After a few agitated weeks followed by severe measures of the government against the opposition, everyone gave up the idea of refusing the taxes in order to please a defunct Assembly that had not even had the courage to defend itself.

Whether it was, in the beginning of November 1848, already too late to try armed resistance, or whether a part of the army, on finding serious opposition, would have turned over to the side of the Assembly, and thus decided the matter in its favour, is a question which may never be solved. But in revolution as in war, it is always necessary to show a strong front, and he who attacks is in the advantage; and in revolution as in war, it is of the highest necessity to stake everything on the decisive moment, whatever the odds may be. There is not a single successful revolution in history that does not prove the truth of these axioms. Now, for the Prussian Revolution, the decisive moment had come in

Hampden was one of the leaders of the opposition in the English parliament in the thirties and forties of the seventeenth century. He came out against payments of taxes that had not been voted by parliament. Charles I, who appeared in the House of Commons with some hundreds of soldiers in order to arrest the leaders of the opposition, including Hampden, encountered strong resistance. This breach of the rights of parliament aroused a storm of indignation in the country. The rupture between the House of Commons and the king led to open war which ended with the establishment of the republic headed by Cromwell.—*Ed.*

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November 1848: the Assembly, at the head, officially, of the whole revolutionary interest, did neither show a strong front, nor it receded at every advance of the enemy; much less did it attack—for it chose even not to defend itself; and when the decisive moment came, when Wrangel, at the head of forty thousand men, knocked at the gates of Berlin, instead of finding, as he and all his officers fully expected, every street studded with barricades, every window turned into a loop-hole, he found the gates open, and the streets obstructed only by peaceful Berliner burghers, enjoying the joke they had played upon him, by delivering themselves up, hands and feet tied, unto the astonished soldiers. It is true, the Assembly and the people, if they had resisted, might have been beaten; Berlin might have been bombardèd, and many hundreds might have been killed, without preventing the ultimate victory of the royalist party. But that was no reason why they should surrender their arms at once. A well-contested defeat is a fact of as much revolutionary importance as an easily-won victory. The defeats of Paris in June 1848, and of Vienna in October, certainly did far more in revolutionising the minds of the people of these two cities than the victories of February and March. The Assembly and the people of Berlin would, probably, have shared the fate of the two towns above named; but they would have fallen gloriously, and would have left behind themselves, in the minds of the survivors, a wish of revenge, which in revolutionary times is one of the highest incentives to energetic and passionate action. It is a matter of course that, in every struggle, he who takes up the gauntlet risks being beaten; but is that a reason why he should confess himself beaten, and submit to the yoke without drawing the sword?

In revolution he who commands a decisive position and surrenders it, instead of forcing the enemy to try his hands at an assault, invariably deserves to be treated as a traitor.

The same decree of the king of Prussia which dissolved the Constituent Assembly also proclaimed a new constitution, founded upon the draft which had been made by a committee of that Assembly, but enlarging in some points the powers of the crown, and rendering doubtful in others those of the parliament. This
constitution established two chambers, which were to meet soon for the purpose of confirming and revising it.

We need hardly ask where the German National Assembly was during the "legal and peaceful" struggle of the Prussian constitutionalists. It was, as usual, at Frankfort, occupied with passing very tame resolutions against the proceedings of the Prussian government, and admiring the "imposing spectacle of the passive, legal, and unanimous resistance of a whole people against brutal force." The Central Government sent commissioners to Berlin to intercede between the Ministry and the Assembly; but they met the same fate as their predecessors at Olmütz, and were politely shown out. The Left of the National Assembly, i.e., the so-called Radical Party, sent also their commissioners; but after having duly convinced themselves of the utter helplessness of the Berlin Assembly, and confessed their own equal helplessness, they returned to Frankfort to report progress, and to testify to the admirably peaceful conduct of the population of Berlin. Nay, more: when M. Bassermann, one of the Central Government's commissioners, reported that the late stringent measures of the Prussian ministers were not without foundation, insomuch as there had of late been seen loitering about the streets of Berlin sundry savage-looking characters such as always appear previous to anarchical movements (and which ever since have been named "Bassermannic characters"), these worthy deputies of the Left and energetic representatives of the revolutionary interest actually arose to make oath and testify that such was not the case! Thus within two months the total impotency of the Frankfort Assembly was signally proved. There could be no more glaring proofs that this body was totally inadequate to its task; nay, that it had not even the remotest idea of what its task really was. The fact that both in Vienna and in Berlin the fate of the revolution was settled, that in both these capitals the most important and vital questions were disposed of, without the existence of the Frankfort Assembly ever being taken the slightest notice of—this fact alone is sufficient to establish that the body in question was a mere debating-club, composed of a set of dupes, who allowed the governments to use them as a parliamentary puppet, shown to amuse the shopkeepers and petty tradesmen of petty states and petty towns, as long as it was considered convenient to divert the attention of these parties. How long this was considered convenient we shall soon see. But it is a fact worthy of attention that among all the "eminent" men of this Assembly there was not one who had the slightest apprehension of the part they were made to perform, and that even up to the present day ex-members of the Frankfort club have invariably organs of historical perception quite peculiar to themselves.

London, March 1852.

XIV. The Restoration of Order—Diet and Chamber

[New York Daily Tribune, April 24, 1852]

The first months of the year 1849 were employed by the Austrian and Prussian governments in following up the advantages obtained in October and November last. The Austrian Diet, ever since the taking of Vienna, had carried on a merely nominal existence in a small Moravian country town named Kremisir. Here the Slavonian deputies, who, with their constituents, had been mainly instrumental in raising the Austrian government from its prostration, were singularly punished for their treachery against the European revolution; as soon as the government had recovered its strength, it treated the Diet and its Slavonian majority with the utmost contempt, and when the first successes of the imperial arms foreboded a speedy termination of the Hungarian War, the Diet, on the 4th of March, was dissolved and the deputies dispersed by military force. Then at last the Slavonians saw that they were duped, and then they shouted: Let us go to Frankfort and carry on there the opposition which we cannot pursue here! But it was then too late, and the very fact that they had no other alternative than either to remain quiet or to join the impotent Frankfort Assembly—this fact alone was sufficient to show their utter helplessness.

Thus ended for the present, and most likely for ever, the attempts of the Slavonians of Germany to recover an independent national existence. Scattered remnants of numerous nations, whose nationality and political vitality had long been extinguished, and
who in consequence had been obliged, for almost a thousand years, to follow in the wake of a mightier nation, their conqueror, the same as the Welsh in England, the Basques in Spain, the Bas-Bretons in France, and at a more recent period the Spanish and French Creoles in those portions of North America occupied of late by the Anglo-American race—these dying nationalities, the Bohemians, Carinthians, Dalmatians, etc., had tried to profit by the universal confusion of 1848, in order to restore their political status quo of A.D. 800. The history of a thousand years ought to have shown them that such a retrogression was impossible; that if all the territory east of the Elbe and Saale had at one time been occupied by kindred Slavonians, this fact merely proved the historical tendency, and at the same time the physical and intellectual power of the German nation to subdue, absorb, and assimilate its ancient eastern neighbours; that this tendency of absorption on the part of the Germans had always been, and still was, one of the mightiest means by which the civilisation of Western Europe had been spread in the east of that continent; that it could only cease whenever the process of Germanisation had reached the frontier of large, compact, unbroken nations, capable of an independent national life, such as the Hungarians and in some degree the Poles; and that, therefore, the natural and inevitable fate of these dying nations was to allow this progress of dissolution and absorption by their stronger neighbours to complete itself. Certainly this is no very flattering prospect for the national ambition of the Pan-Slavistic dreamers who succeeded in agitating a portion of the Bohemian and South Slavonian people; but can they expect that history would retrograde a thousand years in order to please a few phthisical bodies of men, who in every part of the territory they occupy are interspersed and surrounded by Germans, who from times almost immemorial have had for all purposes of civilisation no other language but the German, and who lack the very first conditions of national existence, numbers and compactness of territory? Thus, the Pan-Slavistic rising, which everywhere in the German and Hungarian Slavonic territories was the cloak for the restoration to independence of all these numberless petty nations, everywhere clashed with the European revolutionary movements, and the Slavonians, although pretending to fight for liberty, were invariably (the democratic portion of the Poles excepted) found on the side of despotism and reaction. Thus it was in Germany, thus in Hungary, thus even here and there in Turkey. Traitors to the popular cause, supporters and chief props to the Austrian government’s cabal, they placed themselves in the position of outlaws in the eyes of all revolutionary nations. And although nowhere the mass of the people had a part in the petty squabbles about nationality raised by the Pan-Slavistic leaders, for the very reason that they were too ignorant, yet it will never be forgotten that in Prague, in a half-German town, crowds of Slavonian fanatics cheered and repeated the cry: “Rather the Russian knout than German liberty!” After their first evaporated effort in 1848, and after the lesson the Austrian government gave them, it is not likely that another attempt at a later opportunity will be made. But if they should try again under similar pretexts to ally themselves to the counter-revolutionary force, the duty of Germany is clear. No country in a state of revolution and involved in external war can tolerate a Vendée 1 in its very heart.

As to the constitution proclaimed by the emperor at the same time with the dissolution of the Diet, there is no need to revert to it, as it never had a practical existence and is now done away with altogether. Absolutism has been restored in Austria to all intents and purposes ever since the 4th of March, 1849.

In Prussia, the Chambers met in February for the ratification and revision of the new charter proclaimed by the king. They sat for about six weeks, humble and meek enough in their behaviour toward the government, yet not quite prepared to go the lengths the king and his ministers wished them to do. Therefore, as soon as a suitable occasion presented itself, they were dissolved.

1 A Department of Western France, the seat of counter-revolution at the time of the first bourgeois revolution in France. The adherents of the king relied for support on the backward strata of the peasantry and repeatedly organised revolts in the Vendée against the revolutionary government.—Ed.
Thus both Austria and Prussia had for the moment got rid of the shackles of parliamentary control. The governments now concentrated all power in themselves, and could bring that power to bear wherever it was wanted: Austria upon Hungary and Italy, Prussia upon Germany. For Prussia, too, was preparing for a campaign by which "order" was to be restored in the smaller states.

Counter-revolution being now paramount in the two great centres of action of Germany, in Vienna and Berlin, there remained only the lesser states in which the struggle was still undecided, although the balance there, too, was leaning more and more against the revolutionary interest. These smaller states, we have said, found a common centre in the National Assembly at Frankfort. Now, this so-called National Assembly, although its reactionist spirit had long been evident, so much so that the very people of Frankfort had risen in arms against it, yet its origin was of a more or less revolutionary nature; it occupied an abnormal, revolutionary position in January; its competence had never been defined, and it had at last come to the decision—which, however, was never recognised by the larger states—that its resolutions had the force of law. Under these circumstances, and when the constitutionalist-monarchical party saw their positions turned by the recovering absolutists, it is not to be wondered that the liberal, monarchical bourgeoisie of almost the whole of Germany should place their last hopes upon the majority of this Assembly, just as the petty shopkeeping interest, the nucleus of the Democratic Party, gathered in their growing distress around the minority of that same body, which indeed formed the last compact parliamentary phalanx of democracy. On the other hand, the larger governments, and particularly the Prussian Ministry, saw more and more the incompatibility of such an irregular elective body with the restored monarchical system of Germany, and if they did not at once force its dissolution, it was only because the time had not yet come, and because Prussia hoped first to use it for the furthering of its own ambitious purposes.

In the meantime, that poor Assembly itself fell into a greater and greater confusion. Its deputations and commissaries had been treated with the utmost contempt, both in Vienna and Berlin; one of its members, in spite of his parliamentary inviolability, had been executed in Vienna as a common rebel. Its decrees were nowhere heeded; if they were noticed at all by the larger powers, it was merely by protesting notes which disputed the authority of the Assembly to pass laws and resolutions binding upon their governments. The representative of the Assembly, the central executive power, was involved in diplomatic squabbles with almost all the cabinets of Germany, and, in spite of all their efforts, neither Assembly nor Central Government could bring Austria or Prussia to state their ultimate views, plans and demands. The Assembly, at last, commenced to see clear, at least so far, that it had allowed all power to slip out of its hands, that it was at the mercy of Austria and Prussia, and that if it intended making a federal constitution for Germany at all, it must set about the thing at once and in good earnest. And many of the vacillating members also saw clearly that they had been egregiously duped by the governments. But what were they, in their impotent position, able to do now? The only thing that could have saved them would have been promptly and decidedly to pass over into the popular camp; but the success, even of that step, was more than doubtful; and then, where in this helpless crowd of undecided, short-sighted, self-conceited beings who, when the eternal noise of contradictory rumours and diplomatic notes completely stunned them, sought their only consolation and support in the ever-lastingly repeated assurance that they were the best, the greatest, the wisest men of the country, and that they alone could save Germany—where, we say, among these poor creatures, whom a single year of parliamentary life had turned into complete idiots, where were the men for a prompt and decisive resolution, much less for energetic and consistent action?

At last the Austrian government threw off the mask. In its Constitution of the 4th of March, it proclaimed Austria an indivisible monarchy, with common finances, system of customs duties, of military establishments, thereby effacing every barrier and dis-

Marx Selected Works
tinction between the German and non-German provinces. This declaration was made in the face of resolutions and articles of
the intended federal constitution which had been already passed
by the Frankfort Assembly. It was the gauntlet of war thrown
down to it by Austria; and the poor Assembly had no other
choice but to take it up. This it did with a deal of bluster-
ing, but which Austria, in the consciousness of her power, and of
the utter nothingness of the Assembly, could well afford to allow
to pass. And this precious representation, as it styled itself, of the
German people, in order to revenge itself for this insult on the
part of Austria, saw nothing better before it than to throw itself,
hands and feet tied, at the feet of the Prussian government.
Incredible as it would seem, it bent its knees before the very
ministers whom it had condemned as unconstitutional and anti-
popular, and whose dismissal it had in vain insisted upon. The
details of this disgraceful transaction, and the tragi-comical events
that followed, will form the subject of our next.

London, April 1852.

XV. THE TRIUMPH OF PRUSSIA

[New York Daily Tribune, July 27, 1852]

We now come to the last chapter in the history of the German
Revolution: the conflict of the National Assembly with the govern-
ments of the different states, especially of Prussia; the insurrec-
tion of Southern and Western Germany, and its final overthrow by
Prussia.

We have already seen the Frankfort National Assembly at
work. We have seen it kicked at by Austria, insulted by Prussia,
disobeyed by the lesser states, duped by its own impotent Central
"Government," which again was the dupe of all and every prince
in the country. But at last things began to look threatening for
this weak, vacillating, insipid legislative body. It was forced to
come to the conclusion that "the sublime idea of German unity
was threatened in its realisation," which meant neither more nor
less than that the Frankfort Assembly and all it had done, and

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was about to do, were very likely to end in smoke. Thus it
set to work in good earnest in order to bring forth as soon as
possible its grand production, the "Imperial Constitution." There
was, however, one difficulty. What executive government was there
to be? An executive council? No; that would have been, they
thought in their wisdom, making Germany a republic. A "presi-
dent"? That would come to the same. Thus they must revive
the old imperial dignity. But—as of course a prince was to be
emperor—who should it be? Certainly none of the diti minorum
gentium, from Reuss-Schleiz-Greiz-Lobenstein-Ebersdorf up to
Bavaria; neither Austria nor Prussia would have borne that. It
could only be Austria or Prussia. But which of the two? There
is no doubt that, under otherwise favourable circumstances, this
august Assembly would be sitting up to the present day, discuss-
ing this important dilemma without being able to come to a
conclusion, if the Austrian government had not cut the Gordian
knot, and saved them the trouble.

Austria knew very well that from the moment in which she
could again appear before Europe with all her provinces subdued,
as a strong and great European power, the very law of political
gravitation would draw the remainder of Germany into her orbit,
without the help of any authority which an imperial crown, con-
ferred by the Frankfort Assembly, could give her. Austria had been
far stronger, far freer in her movements, since she shook off the
powerless crown of the German empire—a crown which clogged
her own independent policy, while it added not one iota to her
strength, either within or without of Germany. And supposing
the case that Austria could not maintain her footing in Italy
and Hungary—why then she was dissolved, annihilated in Germany
too, and could never pretend to re-seize a crown which had slipped
her hands while she was in the full possession of her strength.
Thus Austria at once declared against all imperialist resurrections,
and plainly demanded the restoration of the German Diet, the
only Central Government of Germany known and recognised by
the treaties of 1815; and on the 4th of May, 1849, issued that
constitution which had no other meaning than to declare Austria
an indivisible, centralised and independent monarchy, distinct even from that Germany which the Frankfort Assembly was to reorganise.

This open declaration of war left, indeed, the Frankfort wise- acres no other choice but to exclude Austria from Germany, and to create out of the remainder of that country a sort of Lower Empire,¹ a “Little Germany,” the rather shabby imperial mantle of which was to fall on the shoulders of His Majesty of Prussia. This, it will be recollected, was the renewal of an old project fostered already some six or eight years ago by a party of South and Middle German liberal doctrinaires, who considered as a godsend the degrading circumstances by which their old crotchets was now again brought forward as the latest “new move” for the salvation of the country.

They accordingly finished, in February and March 1849, the debate on the Imperial Constitution, together with the Declaration of Rights and the Imperial Electoral Law; not, however, without being obliged to make, in a great many points, the most contradictory concessions—now to the conservative or rather reactionary party—now to the more advanced factions of the Assembly. In fact, it was evident that the leadership of the Assembly, which had formerly belonged to the Right and Right Centre (the conservatives and reactionists), was gradually, although slowly, passing toward the Left or democratic side of that body. The rather dubious position of the Austrian deputies in an Assembly which had excluded their country from Germany, and in which yet they were called upon to sit and vote, favoured the derangement of its equipoise; and thus, as early as the end of February, the Left Centre and the Left found themselves, by the help of the Austrian votes, very generally in a majority, while on other days the conservative fraction of the Austrians, all of a sudden, and for the fun of the thing, voting with the Right, threw the balance again on the other side. They intended, by these sudden souffreants, to bring the Assembly into contempt; which,

¹ The name given to the East Roman (Byzantine) empire in the period of its decline.—Ed.

however, was quite unnecessary, the mass of the people being long since convinced of the utter hollowness and futility of anything coming from Frankfort. What a specimen of a Constitution, in the meantime, was framed under such jumping and counter-jumping, may easily be imagined.

The Left of the Assembly—this élite and pride of revolutionary Germany, as it believed itself to be—was entirely intoxicated with the few paltry successes it obtained by the good will, or rather the ill will, of a set of Austrian politicians, acting under the instigation and for the interest of Austrian despotism. Whenever the slightest approximation to their own not very well-defined principles had, in a homeopathically diluted shape, obtained a sort of sanction by the Frankfort Assembly, these Democrats proclaimed that they had saved the country and the people. These poor, weak-minded men, during the course of their generally very obscure lives, had been so little accustomed to anything like success, that they actually believed their paltry amendments, passed with two or three votes’ majority, would change the face of Europe. They had, from the beginning of their legislative career, been more imbued than any other fraction of the Assembly with that incurable malady parliamentary cretinism, a disorder which penetrates its unfortunate victims with the solemn conviction that the whole world, its history and future, are governed and determined by a majority of votes in that particular representative body which has the honour to count them among its members, and that all and everything going on outside the walls of their house—wars, revolutions, railway-constructing, colonising of whole new continents, California gold discoveries, Central American canals, Russian armies, and whatever else may have some little claim to influence upon the destinies of mankind—is nothing compared to the incommensurable events hanging upon the important question, whatever it may be, just at that moment occupying the attention of their honourable House. Thus it was the Democratic Party of the Assembly, by effectually smuggling a few of their nostrums into the “Imperial Constitution,” first became bound to support it, although in every essential point it flatly contradicted their own oft-proclaimed principles; and at last, when this mongrel work
was abandoned and bequeathed to them by its main authors, accepted the inheritance, and held out for this *monarchical* constitution, even in opposition to everybody who then proclaimed their own *republican* principles.

But it must be confessed that in this the contradiction was merely apparent. The indeterminate, self-contradictory, immature character of the Imperial Constitution was the very image of the immature, confused, conflicting political ideas of these democratic gentlemen. And if their own sayings and writings—as far as they could write—were not sufficient proof of this, their actions would furnish such proof; for among sensible people it is a matter of course to judge of a man, not by his professions, but by his actions; not by what he pretends to be, but by what he does and what he really is; and the deeds of these heroes of Germany democracy speak loud enough for themselves, as we shall learn by and by. However, the Imperial Constitution, with all its appendages and paraphernalia, was definitely passed, and on the 26th of March, the king of Prussia was, by 290 votes, against 248 who abstained and some 200 who were absent, elected emperor of Germany minus Austria. The historical irony was complete; the imperial farce executed in the streets of astonished Berlin, three days after the Revolution of March 13, 1848, 1 by Frederick William IV, while in a state which elsewhere would come under the Maine Liquor Law—this disgusting farce, just one year afterward, had been sanctioned by the pretended Representative Assembly of all Germany. That, then, was the result of the German Revolution!

London, July 1852.

**XVI. THE ASSEMBLY AND THE GOVERNMENTS**

*New York Daily Tribune, August 19, 1852*

The National Assembly of Frankfort, after having elected the King of Prussia Emperor of Germany (*minus* Austria), sent a deputation to Berlin to offer him the crown, and then adjourned. On the 2nd of April, Frederick William received the deputies. He told them that, although he accepted the right of precedence over all the other princes of Germany, which this vote of the people's representatives had given him, he could not accept the imperial crown as long as he was not sure that the remaining princes acknowledged his supremacy, and the Imperial Constitution conferring those rights upon him. It would be, he added, for the governments of Germany to see whether this constitution was such as could be ratified by them. At all events, emperor or not, he always would be found ready, he concluded, to draw the sword against either the external or the internal foe. We shall soon see how he kept his promise in a manner rather startling for the National Assembly.

The Frankfort wiseacres, after profound diplomatic inquiry, at last came to the conclusion that this answer amounted to a refusal of the crown. They then (April 12) resolved: That the Imperial Constitution was the law of the land, and must be maintained; and not seeing their way at all before themselves, elected a Committee of Thirty to make proposals as to the means how this constitution could be carried out.

This resolution was the signal for the conflict between the Frankfort Assembly and the German governments which now broke out. The middle classes, and especially the smaller trading class, had all at once declared for the new Frankfort Constitution. They could not await any longer the moment which was "to close the revolution." In Austria and Prussia the revolution had, for the moment, been closed by the interference of the armed power; the classes in question would have preferred a less forcible mode of performing that operation but they had not had a chance; the thing was done and they had to make the best of it, a resolution which they at once took and carried out most heroically. In the smaller states, where things had been going on comparatively smoothly, the middle classes had long since been thrown back into that showy, but resultless, because powerless, parliamentary agitation, which was most congenial to themselves. The different states of Germany, as regarded each of them separately, appeared thus
to have attained that new and definitive form which was supposed to enable them to enter henceforth the path of peaceful constitutional development. There only remained one open question, that of the new political organisation of the German Confederacy. And this question, the only one which still appeared fraught with danger, it was considered a necessity to resolve at once. Hence the pressure exerted upon the Frankfort Assembly by the middle classes, in order to induce it to get the constitution ready as soon as possible; hence the resolution among the higher and lower bourgeoisie to accept and to support this constitution, whatever it might be, in order to create a settled state of things without delay. Thus from the very beginning the agitation for the Imperial Constitution arose out of a reactionary feeling, and sprung up among those classes which were long since tired of the revolution.

But there was another feature in it. The first and fundamental principles of the future German constitution had been voted during the first months of spring and summer, 1848—a time when popular agitation was still rife. The resolutions then passed—though completely reactionary then—now, after the arbitrary acts of the Austrian and Prussian governments, appeared exceedingly liberal, and even democratic. The standard of comparison had changed. The Frankfort Assembly could not, without moral suicide, strike out these once-voted provisions, and model the Imperial Constitution upon those which the Austrian and Prussian governments had dictated, sword in hand. Besides, as we have seen, the majority in that Assembly had changed sides, and the Liberal and Democratic Party were rising in influence. Thus the Imperial Constitution not only was distinguished by its apparently exclusive popular origin, but at the same time, full of contradiction as it was, it yet was the most liberal constitution of all Germany. Its greatest fault was, that it was a mere sheet of paper, with no power to back its provisions.

Under these circumstances it was natural that the so-called Democratic Party, that is, the mass of the petty trading class, should cling to the Imperial Constitution. This class had always been more forward in its demands than the liberal, monarchical-constitutional bourgeoisie; it had shown a bolder front, it had very often threatened armed resistance, it was lavish in its promises to sacrifice its blood and its existence in the struggle for freedom; but it had already given plenty of proofs that on the day of danger it was nowhere, and that it never felt more comfortable than the day after a decisive defeat, when, everything being lost, it had at least the consolation to know that somehow or other the matter was settled. While, therefore, the adhesion of the large bankers, manufacturers and merchants was of a more reserved character, more like a simple demonstration in favour of the Frankfort Constitution, the class just beneath them, our valiant democratic shopkeepers, came forward in grand style, and, as usual, proclaimed they would rather spill their last drop of blood than let the Imperial Constitution fall to the ground.

Supported by these two parties, the bourgeois adherents of constitutional royalty, and the more or less democratic shopkeepers, the agitation for the immediate establishment of the Imperial Constitution gained ground rapidly, and found its most powerful expression in the parliaments of the several states. The Chambers of Prussia, of Hanover, of Saxony, of Baden, of Württemburg, declared in its favour. The struggle between the governments and the Frankfort Assembly assumed a threatening aspect.

The governments, however, acted rapidly. The Prussian Chambers were dissolved, anti-constitutionally, as they had to revise and confirm the constitution; riots broke out at Berlin, provoked intentionally by the government; and the next day, the 28th of April, the Prussian Ministry issued a circular note, in which the Imperial Constitution was held up as a most anarchical and revolutionary document, which it was for the governments of Germany to remodel and purify. Thus Prussia denied, pointblank, that sovereign constituent power which the wise men at Frankfort had always boasted of, but never established. Thus a Congress of Princes, a renewal of the old Federal Diet, was called upon to sit in judgment on that constitution which had already been promulgated as a law. And at the same time Prussia concentrated troops at Kreuznach, three days' march from Frankfort, and called upon the smaller states to follow its example by also dissolving their chambers as soon as they should give their adhesion to the
Frankfort Assembly. This example was speedily followed by Hanover and Saxony.

It was evident that a decision of the struggle by force of arms could not be avoided. The hostility of the governments, the agitation among the people, were daily showing themselves in stronger colours. The military were everywhere worked upon by the democratic citizens, and in the south of Germany with great success. Large mass meetings were everywhere held, passing resolutions to support the Imperial Constitution and the National Assembly, if need should be, with force of arms. At Cologne, a meeting of deputies of all the municipal councils of Rhenish Prussia took place for the same purpose. In the Palatinate, at Bergen, Fulda, Nuremberg, in the Odenwald, the peasantry met by myriads and worked themselves up into enthusiasm. At the same time the Constituent Assembly of France dissolved, and the new elections were prepared amid violent agitation, while on the eastern frontier of Germany, the Hungarians had within a month, by a succession of brilliant victories, rolled back the tide of Austrian invasion from the Theiss to the Leitha, and were every day expected to take Vienna by storm. Thus, popular imagination being on all hands worked up to the highest pitch, and the aggressive policy of the governments defining itself more clearly every day, a violent collision could not be avoided, and cowardly imbecility only could persuade itself that the struggle was to come off peaceably. But this cowardly imbecility was most extensively represented in the Frankfort Assembly.

London, July 1852.

XVII. INSURRECTION

[New York Daily Tribune, September 18, 1852]

The inevitable conflict between the National Assembly of Frankfort and the states' government of Germany at last broke out in open hostilities during the first days of May 1849. The Austrian
deputies, recalled by their government, had already left the Assembly and returned home, with the exception of a few members of the Left or Democratic Party. The great body of the conservative members, aware of the turn things were about to take, withdrew even before they were called upon to do so by their respective governments. Thus, even independently of the causes which in the foregoing papers have been shown to strengthen the influence of the Left, the mere desertion of their posts by the members of the Right, sufficed to turn the old minority into a majority of the Assembly. The new majority, which at no former time had dreamed of ever obtaining that good fortune, had profited by their places on the opposition benches to spout against the weakness, the indecision, the indolence of the old majority and of its imperial lieutenancy. Now all at once, they were called on to replace that old majority. They were now to show what they could perform. Of course, their career was to be one of energy, determination, activity. They, the élite of Germany, would soon be able to drive onwards the senile Lieutenant of the Empire and his vacillating ministers, and in case that was impossible they would—there could be no doubt about it—by force of the sovereign right of the people, depose that impotent government, and replace it by an energetic, indefatigable executive, who would assure the salvation of Germany. Poor fellows! Their rule—if rule it can be named where no one obeyed—was still more ridiculous than even the rule of their predecessors.

The new majority declared that, in spite of all obstacles, the Imperial Constitution must be carried out, and at once; that on the 15th of July ensuing the people were to elect the deputies for the new House of Representatives, and that this House was to meet at Frankfort on the 15th of August following. Now, this was an open declaration of war against those governments that had not recognised the Imperial Constitution, the foremost among which were Prussia, Austria, Bavaria, comprising more than three-fourths of the German population; a declaration of war which was speedily accepted by them. Prussia and Bavaria, too, recalled the deputies sent from their territories to Frankfort, and hastened their mili-
tary preparations against the National Assembly; while, on the other hand, the demonstrations of the Democratic Party (out of parliament) in favour of the Imperial Constitution and of the National Assembly acquired a more turbulent and violent character, and the mass of the working people, led by the men of the most extreme party, were ready to take up arms in a cause which, if it was not their own, at least gave them a chance of somewhat approaching their aims by clearing Germany of its old monarchical encumbrances. Thus everywhere the people and the governments were at daggers drawn upon this subject; the outbreak was inevitable; the mine was charged and it only wanted a spark to make it explode. The dissolution of the Chambers in Saxony, the calling in of the Landwehr (military reserve) in Prussia, the open resistance of the government to the Imperial Constitution, were such sparks; they fell, and all at once the country was in a blaze. In Dresden, on the 4th of May, the people victoriously took possession of the town and drove out the king, while all the surrounding districts sent reinforcements to the insurgents. In Rhenish Prussia and Westphalia the Landwehr refused to march, took possession of the arsenals and armed itself in defence of the Imperial Constitution. In the Palatinate the people seized the Bavarian government officials and the public moneys, and instituted a Committee of Defence, which placed the province under the protection of the National Assembly. In Württemberg the people forced the king to acknowledge the Imperial Constitution; and in Baden the army, united with the people, forced the Grand Duke to flight and erected a provincial government. In other parts of Germany the people only awaited a decisive signal from the National Assembly to rise in arms and place themselves at its disposal.

The position of the National Assembly was far more favourable than could have been expected after its ignoble career. The western half of Germany had taken up arms in its behalf; the military everywhere were vacillating; in the lesser states they were undoubtedly favourable to the movement. Austria was prostrated by the victorious advance of the Hungarians and Russia, that reserve force of the German governments, was straining all its powers in order to support Austria against the Magyar Revolution. There was only Prussia to subdue; and with the revolutionary sympathies existing in that country, a chance certainly existed of attaining that end. Everything then depended upon the conduct of the Assembly.

Now, insurrection is an art quite as much as war or any other, and subject to certain rules of proceeding, which, when neglected, will produce the ruin of the party neglecting them. Those rules, logical deductions from the nature of the parties and the circumstances one has to deal with in such a case, are so plain and simple that the short experience of 1848 had made the Germans pretty well acquainted with them. Firstly, never play with insurrection, unless you are fully prepared to face the consequences of your play. Insurrection is a calculus with very indefinite magnitudes, the value of which may change every day; the forces opposed to you have all the advantage of organisation, discipline and habitual authority; unless you bring strong odds against them you are defeated and ruined. Secondly, the insurrectionary career once entered upon, act with the greatest determination, and on the offensive. The defensive is the death of every armed rising; it is lost before it measures itself with its enemies. Surprise your antagonists while their forces are scattering, prepare new successes, however small, but daily; keep up the moral ascendant which the first successful rising has given to you; rally thus those vacillating elements to your side which always follow the strongest impulse and which always look out for the safer side; force your enemies to a retreat before they can collect their strength against you; in the words of Danton, the greatest master of revolutionary policy yet known: de l'audace, de l'audace, encore de l'audace!1

What, then, was the National Assembly of Frankfurt to do if it would escape the certain ruin which it was threatened with?

1 These statements of Marx and Engels, which have been confirmed by all the experience of the struggle of the working class, retain their validity to this day. Lenin and the Bolshevik Party in their leadership of the October struggle in 1917 realised in the most brilliant manner these rules, enriched by the experience of the later struggle of the proletariat and particularly by the experience of the December rising in Moscow in 1905. See Lenin, Marxism and Insurrection, Advice from an Onlooker, and other articles of the year 1917.—Ed.
First of all, to see clearly through the situation and to convince itself that there was now no other choice than either to submit to the governments unconditionally, or take up the cause of the armed insurrection without reserve or hesitation. Secondly, to publicly recognise all the insurrections that had already broken out, and to call the people to take up arms everywhere in defence of the national representation, outlawing all princes, ministers and others who should dare to oppose the sovereign people represented by its mandatories. Thirdly, to at once depose the German Imperial Lieutenant, to create a strong, active, unscrupulous Executive, to call insurgent troops to Frankfort for its immediate protection, thus offering at the same time a legal pretext for the spread of the insurrection, to organise into a compact body all the forces at its disposal, and, in short, to profit quickly and unhesitatingly by every available means for strengthening its position and impairing that of its opponents. 4

Of all this the virtuous Democrats in the Frankfort Assembly did just the contrary. Not content with letting things take the course they liked, these worthies went so far as to suppress by their opposition all insurrectionary movements which were preparing. Thus, for instance, did Mr. Karl Vogt at Nuremberg. They allowed the insurrections of Saxony, of Rhenish Prussia, of Westphalia to be suppressed without any other help than a posthumous, sentimental protest against the unfeeling violence of the Prussian government. They kept up an underhand diplomatic intercourse with the South German insurrection but never gave them the support of their open acknowledgment. They knew that the Lieutenant of the Empire sided with the governments and yet they called upon him, who never stirred, to oppose the intrigues of these governments. The ministers of the empire, old conservatives, ridiculed this impotent Assembly in every sitting, and they suffered it. And when William Wolff, a Silesian deputy, and one of the editors of the New Rhenish Gazette, called upon them to outlaw the Lieu-

3 All these tactical directives were communicated by Marx and Engels personally to the leaders of the Frankfort Left when they came to Frankfort after the suppression of the Neue Rheinische Zeitung. Engels even drew up a whole military strategical plan of insurrection.—Ed.

4 Germany: Revolution and Counter-revolution

London, August 1852.

XVIII. PETTY TRADERS

[New York Daily Tribune, October 2, 1852]

In our last we showed that the struggle between the German governments on the one side, and the Frankfort Parliament on the other, had ultimately acquired such a degree of violence that in the first days of May a great portion of Germany broke out in open insurrection; first Dresden, then the Bavarian Palatinate, parts of Rhenish Prussia, and at last Baden.

In all cases, the real fighting body of the insurgents, that body which first took up arms and gave battle to the troops, consisted of the working classes of the towns. A portion of the poorer country population, labourers and petty farmers, generally joined them after the actual outbreak of the conflict. The greater number of the young men of all classes, below the capitalist class, was to be found, for a time at least, in the ranks of the insurgent armies, but this rather indiscriminate aggregate of young men very soon thinned as soon as the aspect of affairs took a somewhat serious turn. The students, particularly those "representatives of intellect," as they liked to call themselves, were the first to quit their standards, unless they were retained by the bestowal of officer's rank, for which they, of course, had very seldom any qualification.
The working class entered upon this insurrection as they would have done upon any other which promised either to remove some obstacles in their progress toward political dominion and social revolution, or, at least, to tie the more influential but less courageous classes of society to a more decided and revolutionary course than they had followed hitherto. The working class took up arms with a full knowledge that this was, in the direct bearings of the case, no quarrel of its own; but it followed up its only true policy, to allow no class that has risen on its shoulders (as the bourgeoisie had done in 1848) to fortify its class government, without opening, at least, a fair field to the working classes for the struggle for its own interests; and, in any case, to bring matters to a crisis, by which either the nation was fairly and irresistibly launched in the revolutionary career or else the status quo before the revolution restored as near as possible, and, thereby, a new revolution rendered unavoidable. In both cases the working classes represented the real and well-understood interest of the nation at large, in hastening as much as possible that revolutionary course which for the old societies of civilised Europe has now become a historical necessity, before any of them can again aspire to a more quiet and regular development of its resources.

As to country people that joined the insurrection, they were principally thrown into the arms of the revolutionary party, partly by the relatively enormous load of taxation, and partly of feudal burdens pressing upon them.

Without any initiative of their own, they formed the tail of the other classes engaged in the insurrection, wavering between the working men on one side, and the petty trading class on the other. Their own private social position in almost every case, decided which way they turned; the agricultural labourer generally supported the city artisan; the small farmer was apt to go hand in hand with the small shopkeeper.

This class of petty tradesmen, the great importance and influence of which we have already several times adverted to, may be considered as the leading class of the insurrection of May 1849. There being, this time, none of the large towns of Germany among the centre of the movement, the petty trading class, which in mid-

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chance of success there might have been, and thus to ruin the insurrection altogether. Its policy, or rather want of policy, everywhere was the same, and, therefore, the insurrections of May 1849, in all parts of Germany, are all cut out to the same pattern.

In Dresden, the struggle was kept on for four days in the streets of the town. The shopkeepers of Dresden, the "communal guard," not only did not fight, but in many instances favoured the proceedings of the troops against the insurgents. These again consisted almost exclusively of working men from the surrounding manufacturing districts. They found an able and cool-headed commander in the Russian refugee, Michael Bakunin, who afterward was taken prisoner, and now is confined in the dungeons of Munkacs, Hungary. The intervention of numerous Prussian troops crushed this insurrection.

In Rhenish Prussia the actual fighting was of little importance. All the large towns being fortresses commanded by citadels, there could be only skirmishing on the part of the insurgents. As soon as a sufficient number of troops had been drawn together, there was an end to armed opposition.

In the Palatinate and Baden, on the contrary, a rich, fruitful province and an entire state fell into the hands of the insurrection. Money, arms, soldiers, warlike stores, everything was ready for use. The soldiers of the regular army themselves joined the insurgents; nay, in Baden, they were among the foremost of them. The insurrections in Saxony and Rhenish Prussia sacrificed themselves in order to gain time for the organisation of this South German movement. Never was there such a favourable position for a provincial and partial insurrection as this. A revolution was expected in Paris; the Hungarians were at the gates of Vienna; in all the central states of Germany, not only the people, but even the troops, were strongly in favour of the insurrection, and only wanted an opportunity to join it openly. And yet the movement, having got once into the hands of the petty bourgeoisie, was ruined from its very beginning. The petty-bourgeois rulers, particularly of Baden—M. Brentano at the head of them—never forgot that by usurping the place and prerogatives of the "lawful" sovereign, the Grand Duke, they were committing high treason. They sat down in their ministerial arm-chairs with the consciousness of criminality in their hearts. What can you expect of such cowards? They not only abandoned the insurrection to its own uncentralised, and therefore ineffective, spontaneity, they actually did everything in their power to take the sting out of the movement, to unman, to destroy it. And they succeeded, thanks to the zealous support of that deep class of politicians, the "democratic" heroes of the petty bourgeoisie, who actually thought they were "saving the country," while they allowed themselves to be led by their noses by a few men of a sharper cast, such as Brentano.

As to the fighting part of the business, never were military operations carried on in a more slovenly, more stolid way than under the Badish General-in-Chief Sigel, an ex-lieutenant of the regular army. Everything was got into confusion, every good opportunity was lost, every precious moment was loitered away with planning colossal but impracticable projects, until, when at last the talented Pole Miraslawski took up the command, the army was disorganised, beaten, dispirited, badly provided for, opposed to an enemy four times more numerous and withal he could do nothing more than fight, at Waghäusel, a glorious though unsuccessful battle, carry out a clever retreat, offer a last hopeless fight under the walls of Rastatt, and resign. As in every insurrectionary war where armies are mixed of well-drilled soldiers and raw levies, there was plenty of heroism and plenty of unsoldierlike, often un-conceivable panic, in the revolutionary army; but, imperfect as it could not but be, it had at least the satisfaction that four times its number were not considered sufficient to put it to the rout, and that a hundred thousand regular troops, in a campaign against twenty thousand insurgents, treated them, militarily, with as much respect as if they had had to fight the Old Guard of Napoleon.

In May the insurrection had broken out; by the middle of July 1849, it was entirely subdued, and the first German Revolution was closed.

London (undated).

3 This was at the end of June. The Rastatt fortress was still in the possession of the revolutionary army but capitulated on July 23. — Ed.
XIX. THE CLOSE OF THE INSURRECTION

[New York Daily Tribune, October 23, 1852]

While the south and west of Germany was in open insurrection, and while it took the governments from the first opening of hostilities at Dresden to the capitulation of Rastatt, rather more than ten weeks, to stifle this final blazing up of the first German Revolution, the National Assembly disappeared from the political theatre without any notice being taken of its exit.

We left this august body at Frankfort, perplexed by the insolent attacks of the governments upon its dignity, by the impotency and treacherous listlessness of the Central Power it had itself created, by the risings of the petty trading class for its defence, and of the working class for a more revolutionary ultimate end. Desolation and despair reigned supreme among its members; events had at once assumed such a definite and decisive shape that in a few days the illusions of these learned legislators as to their real power and influence were entirely broken down. The conservatives, at the signal given by the governments, had already retired from a body which, henceforth, could not exist any longer, except in defiance of the constituted authorities. The liberals gave the matter up in utter discomfiture; they, too, threw up their commissions as representatives. Honourable gentlemen decamped by hundreds. From eight or nine hundred members the number had dwindled down so rapidly that now one hundred and fifty, and a few days after one hundred, were declared a quorum. And even these were difficult to muster, although the whole of the Democratic Party remained.

The course to be followed by the remnants of a parliament was plain enough. They had only to take their stand openly and decidedly with the insurrection, to give it, thereby, whatever strength legality could confer upon it, while they themselves at once acquired an army for their own defence. They had to summon the Central Power to stop all hostilities at once; and if, as could be foreseen, this power neither could nor would do so, to depose it at once and put another more energetic government in its place. If insurgent troops could not be brought to Frankfort (which, in the beginning when the state governments were little prepared and still hesitating, might have been easily done), then the Assembly could have adjourned at once to the very centre of the insurgent district. All this done at once, and resolutely, not later than the middle or end of May, might have opened chances both for the insurrection and for the National Assembly.

But such a determined course was not to be expected from the representatives of German shopocracy. These aspiring statesmen were not at all freed from their illusions. Those members who had lost their fatal belief in the strength and inviolability of the parliament had already taken to their heels; the Democrats who remained were not so easily induced to give up dreams of power and greatness which they had cherished for a twelvemonth. True to the course they had hitherto pursued, they shrank back from decisive action until every chance of success, nay, every chance to succumb with, at least, the honours of war, had passed away. In order, then, to develop a factitious, busy-body sort of activity, the sheer impotence of which, coupled with its high pretensions, could not but excite pity and ridicule, they continued insinuating resolutions, addresses and requests to an Imperial Lieutenant, who not even once noticed them, to ministers who were in open league with the enemy. And when at last William Wolff, member for Striegau, one of the editors of the New Rhenish Gazette, the only really revolutionary man in the whole Assembly, told them that if they meant what they said, they had better give over talking and declare the Imperial Lieutenant, the chief traitor to the country, an outlaw at once, then the entire compressed virtuous indignation of these parliamentary gentlemen burst out with an energy which they never found when the government heaped insult after insult upon them.

Of course—for Wolff's proposition was the first sensible word spoken within the walls of St. Paul's Church;1 of course, for it was the very thing that was to be done—and such plain language, going so direct to the purpose, could not but insult a set of sentimentalists, who were resolute in nothing but irresolution, and who, too cowardly to act, had once for all made up their minds.

1 The building in which the Assembly held its sessions.—Ed.
that in doing nothing, they were doing exactly what was to be done. Every word which cleared up, like lightning, the infatuated but intentional nebulousity of their minds, every hint that was adapted to lead them out of the labyrinth where they obstinately themselves to take up as lasting an abode as possible, every clear conception of matters as they actually stood, was, of course, a crime against the majesty of this Sovereign Assembly.

Shortly after the position of the honourable gentlemen in Frankfort became untenable, in spite of resolutions, appeals, interpellations and proclamations, they retreated, but not into the insurgent districts; that would have been too resolute a step. They went to Stuttgart, where the Württemberg government kept up a sort of expectative neutrality. There, at last, they declared the Lieutenant of the Empire to have forfeited his power, and elected from their own body a Regency of five. This Regency at once proceeded to pass a Militia Law, which was actually in all due force sent to all the governments of Germany.

They, the very enemies of the Assembly, were ordered to levy forces in its defence! Then there was created—on paper, of course—an army for the defence of the National Assembly. Divisions, brigades, regiments, batteries, everything was regulated and ordained. Nothing was wanting but reality, for that army, of course, never was called into existence.

One last scheme offered itself to the National Assembly. The democratic population from all parts of the country sent deputations to place itself at the disposal of the parliament, and to urge it on to a decisive action. The people, knowing what the intentions of the Württemberg government were, implored the National Assembly to force that government into an open and active participation with their insurgent neighbours. But no. The National Assembly, in going to Stuttgart, had delivered itself up to the tender mercies of the Württemberg government. The members knew it, and repressed the agitation among the people. They thus lost the last remnant of influence which they might yet have retained. They earned the contempt they deserved, and the Württemberg government, pressed by Prussia and the Imperial Lieutenant, put a stop to the democratic farce by shutting up, on the 18th June, 1849, the room where the parliament met, and by ordering the members of the Regency to leave the country.

Next they went to Baden, into the camp of the insurrection, but there they were now useless. Nobody noticed them. The Regency, however, in the name of the sovereign German people, continued to save the country by its exertions. It made an attempt to get recognised by foreign powers, by delivering passports to anybody who would accept of them. It issued proclamations, and sent commissioners to persuade those very districts of Württemberg whose active assistance it had refused when it was yet time; of course, without effect. We have now under our eye an original report, sent to the Regency by one of these commissioners, Mr. Roessler (member for Oels), the contents of which are rather characteristic. It is dated Stuttgart, 30th June, 1849. After describing the adventures of half a dozen of these commissioners in a resultless search for cash, he gives a series of excuses for not having yet gone to his post, and then delivers himself of a most weighty argument respecting possible differences between Prussia, Austria, Bavaria and Württemberg, with its possible consequences. After having fully considered this, he comes, however, to the conclusion that there is no more chance. Next he proposes to establish relays of trustworthy men for the conveyance of intelligence, and a system of espionage as to the intentions of the Württemberg Ministry and the movements of the troops. This letter never reached its address, for when it was written the “Regency” had already passed entirely into the “foreign department,” viz., Switzerland; and while poor Mr. Roessler troubled his head about the intentions of the formidable ministry of a sixth-rate kingdom, a hundred thousand Prussian, Bavarian and Hessian soldiers had already settled the whole affair in the last battle under the walls of Rastatt.

Thus vanished the German parliament, and with it the first and the last creation of the revolution. Its convocation had been the first evidence that there actually had been a revolution in January; and it existed as long as this, the first modern German revolution, was not yet brought to a close. Chosen under the influence of the capitalist class by a dismembered, scattered, rural
population, for the most part only awaking from the dumbness of feudalism, this parliament served to bring in one body upon the political arena all the great popular names of 1820-48, and then to utterly ruin them. All the celebrities of the middle-class liberalism were here collected; the bourgeoisie expected wonders; it earned shame for itself and for its representatives. The industrial and commercial capitalist class were more severely defeated in Germany than in any other country; they were first worsted, broken, expelled from office in every individual state of Germany, and then put to rout, disgraced and hooted in the Central German parliament. Political liberalism, the rule of the bourgeoisie, be it under a monarchical or republican form of government, is forever impossible in Germany.

In the latter period of its existence, the German parliament served to disgrace forever that section which had ever since March 1848 headed the official opposition, the Democrats representing the interests of the small trading, and partially of the farming class. That class was, in May and June 1849, given a chance to show its means of forming a stable government in Germany. We have seen how it failed; not so much by adverse circumstances as by the actual and continual cowardice in all trying movements that had occurred since the outbreak of the revolution; by showing in politics the same short-sighted, pusillanimous, wavering spirit, which is characteristic of its commercial operations. In May 1849, it had, by this course, lost the confidence of the real fighting mass of all European insurrections, the working class. But yet, it had a fair chance. The German parliament belonged to it, exclusively, after the reactionists and liberals had withdrawn. The rural population was in its favour. Two-thirds of the armies of the smaller states, one-third of the Prussian army, the majority of the Prussian Landwehr (reserve or militia), were ready to join it, if it only acted resolutely, and with that courage which is the result of a clear insight in the state of things. But the politicians who led on this class were not more clear-sighted than the host of petty tradesmen which followed them. They proved even to be more infatuated, more ardently attached to delusions voluntarily kept up, more credulous, more incapable

of resolutely dealing with facts than the liberals. Their political importance, too, is reduced below the freezing-point. But [they] not having actually carried their commonplace principles into execution, they were, under very favourable circumstances, capable of a momentary resurrection, when this last hope was taken from them, just as it was taken from their colleagues of the "pure democracy" in France, by the coup d'état of Louis Bonaparte.

The defeat of the southwest German insurrection, and the dispersion of the German parliament, bring the history of the first German Revolution to a close. We have now to throw a parting glance upon the victorious members of the counter-revolutionary alliance; we shall do this in our next letter.¹

London, September 24, 1852.

XX. THE LATE TRIAL AT COLOGNE

[New York Daily Tribune, December 22, 1852]

You will have ere this received by the European papers numerous reports of the Communist Monster Trial at Cologne, Prussia; and of its result. But as none of the reports is anything like a faithful statement of the facts, and as these facts throw a glaring light upon the political means by which the continent of Europe is kept in bondage, I consider it necessary to revert to this trial.

The Communist or Proletarian Party, as well as other parties, had lost, by suppression of the rights of association and meeting, the means of giving to itself a legal organisation on the Continent. Its leaders, besides, had been exiled from their countries. But no political party can exist without an organisation; and that organisation which both the liberal bourgeoisie and the democratic shopkeeping class were enabled more or less to supply by the social station, advantages, and long-established, everyday intercourse of their members, the proletarian class, without such social station and pecuniary means, was necessarily compelled to seek in secret association. Hence, both in France and Germany, sprung up those numerous secret societies which have, ever since 1849.

¹ This article has not been found. —Ed.
one after another, been discovered by the police, and prosecuted as conspiracies; but if many of them were really conspiracies, formed with the actual intention of upsetting the government for the time being—and he is a coward that under certain circumstances would not conspire, just as he is a fool who, under other circumstances, would do so—there were some other societies which were formed with a wider and more elevated purpose, which knew that the upsetting of an existing government was but a passing stage in the great impending struggle, and which intended to keep together and to prepare the party, whose nucleus they formed, for the last decisive combat which must, one day or another, crush forever in Europe the domination, not of mere "tyrants," "despots" and "usurpers," but of a power far superior, and far more formidable than theirs; that of capital over labour.

The organisation of the advanced Communist Party in Germany was of this kind. In accordance with the principles of its Manifesto (published in 1848), and with those explained in the series of articles on "Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany," published in the New York Daily Tribune, this party never imagined itself capable of producing, at any time and at its pleasure, that revolution which was to carry its ideas into practice. It studied the causes that had produced the revolutionary movements in 1848, and the causes that made them fail. Recognising the social antagonism of classes at the bottom of all political struggles, it applied itself to the study of the conditions under which one class of society can and must be called on to represent the whole of the interests of a nation, and thus politically to rule over it. History showed to the Communist Party how, after the landed aristocracy of the Middle Ages, the monied power of the first capitalists arose and seized the reins of government; how the social influence and political rule of this financial section of the capitalists was superseded by the rising strength, since the introduction of steam, of the manufacturing capitalists, and how at the present moment two more classes claim their turn of domination, the petty trading class and the industrial working class. The practical revolutionary experience of 1848-49 confirmed the reasonings of theory, which led to the conclusion that the democracy of the petty traders must first have its turn, before the communist working class could hope to permanently establish itself in power and destroy that system of wages-slavery which keeps it under the yoke of the bourgeoisie. Thus the secret organisation of the Communists could not have the direct purpose of upsetting the present governments of Germany. Being formed to upset not these, but the insurrectionary government which is sooner or later to follow them, its members might, and certainly would, individually lend an active hand to a revolutionary movement against the present status quo in its time; but the preparation of such a movement, otherwise than by secret spreading of communist opinions by the masses, could not be an object of the association. So well was this foundation of the society understood by the majority of its members, that when the place-hunting ambition of some tried to turn it into a conspiracy for making an ex tempore revolution, they were speedily turned out.

Now according to no law upon the face of the earth, could such an association be called a plot, a conspiracy for purposes of high treason. If it was a conspiracy, it was one against, not the existing government, but its probable successors. And the Prussian government was aware of it. That was the cause why the eleven defendants were kept in solitary confinement during eighteen months, spent, on the part of the authorities, in the strangest judicial feats. Imagine that after eight months' detention the prisoners were remanded for some months more, "there being no evidence of any crime against them"! And when at last they were brought before a jury, there was not a single overt act of a treasonable nature proved against them. And yet they were convicted, and you will speedily see how.

One of the emissaries of the society was arrested in May 1851, and from documents found upon him, other arrests followed. A Prussian police officer, a certain Stieber, was immediately ordered to trace the ramifications, in London, of the pretended plot. He succeeded in obtaining some papers connected with the above-mentioned seceders from the society, who had, after being turned

3 This refers to the Willich/Schapper fraction which was expelled from the League in September 1850.—Ed.
out, formed an actual conspiracy in Paris and London. These papers were obtained by a double crime. A man named Reuter was bribed to break open the writing desk of the secretary of the society, and steal the papers therefrom. But that was nothing yet. This thief led to the discovery and conviction of the so-called Franco-German plot, in Paris, but it gave no clue as to the great Communist Association. The Paris plot, we may as well here observe, was under the direction of a few ambitious imbeciles and political chevaliers d'industrie in London, and of a formerly convicted forger, then acting as a police spy in Paris; their dupes made up, by rabid declamations and bloodthirsty rantings, for the utter insignificance of their political existence.

The Prussian police, then, had to look out for fresh discoveries. They established a regular office of secret police at the Prussian Embassy in London. A police agent, Greiff by name, held his odious vocation under the title of an attaché to the Embassy—a step which would suffice to put all Prussian embassies out of the pale of international law, and which even the Austrians have not yet dared to take. Under him worked a certain Fleury, a merchant in the city of London, a man of some fortune and rather respectably connected, one of those low creatures who do the basest actions from an innate inclination to infamy. Another agent was a commercial clerk named Hirsch, who, however, had already been denounced as a spy on his arrival. He introduced himself into the society of some German Communist refugees in London, and they, in order to obtain proofs of his real character, admitted him for a short time. The proofs of his connection with the police were very soon obtained, and Mr. Hirsch, from that time, absented himself. Although, however, he thus resigned all opportunities of gaining the information he was paid to procure, he was not inactive. From his retreat in Kensington, where he never met one of the Communists in question, he manufactured every week pretended reports of pretended sittings of a pretended Central Committee of that very conspiracy which the Prussian police could not get hold of. The contents of these reports were of the most absurd nature; not a Christian name was correct, not a name correctly spelt, not a single individual made to speak as he would be likely to speak. His master, Fleury, assisted him in this forgery, and it is not yet proved that "Attaché" Greiff can wash his hands of these infamous proceedings. The Prussian government, incredible to say, took these silly fabrications for gospel truth, and you may imagine what a confusion such depictions created in the evidence to be brought before the jury. When the trial came on, Mr. Stieber, the already mentioned police officer, got into the witness-box, swore to all these absurdities, and, with no little self-complacency, maintained that he had a secret agent in the very closest intimacy with those parties in London who were considered the prime movers in this awful conspiracy. This secret agent was very secret indeed, for he had bid his face for eight months in Kensington, for fear he might actually see one of the parties whose most secret thoughts, words and doings he pretended to report week after week.

Messrs. Hirsch and Fleury, however, had another invention in store. They worked up the whole of the reports they had made into an "original minute book" of the sittings of the Secret Supreme Committee, whose existence was maintained by the Prussian police; and Mr. Stieber, finding that this book wondrously agreed with the reports already received from the same parties, at once laid it before the jury, declaring upon his oath that after serious examination, and according to his fullest conviction, that book was genuine. It was then that most of the absurdities reported by Hirsch were made public. You may imagine the surprise of the pretended members of that Secret Committee when they found things stated of them which they never knew before. Some who were baptised William were here christened Louis or Charles; others, at the time they were at the other end of England, were made to have pronounced speeches in London; others were reported to have read letters they never had received, they were made to have met regularly on a Thursday, when they used to have a convivial reunion, once a week, on Wednesdays; a working man, who could hardly write, figured as one of the takers of minutes, and signed as such; and they all of them were made to speak in a language which, if it may be that of Prussian police stations, was certainly not that of a reunion in which literary men, favour-
ably known in their country, formed the majority. And, to
crown the whole, a receipt was forged for a sum of money, pret-
tended to have been paid by the fabricators to the pretended secre-
tary of the fictitious Central Committee for this book; but the
existence of this pretended secretary rested merely upon a hoax that
some malicious Communist had played upon the unfortunate Hirsch.

This clumsy fabrication was too scandalous an affair not to
produce the contrary of its intended effect. Although the London
friends of the defendants were deprived of all means to bring the
facts of the case before the jury—although the letters they sent
to the counsel for the defence were suppressed by the post—al-
though the documents and affidavits they succeeded in getting into
the hands of these legal gentlemen were not admitted in evidence,
yet the general indignation was such that even the public accusers,
nay, even Mr. Stieber—whose oath had been given as a guarantee
for the authenticity of that book—were compelled to recognise
it as a forgery.

This forgery, however, was not the only thing of the kind of
which the police was guilty. Two or three more cases of the sort
came out during the trial. The documents stolen by Reuter were
interpolated by the police so as to disfigure their meaning. A
paper, containing some rabid nonsense, was written in a hand-
writing imitating that of Dr. Marx, and for a time it was pret-
tended that it had been written by him, until at last the prosecu-
tion was obliged to acknowledge the forgery. But for every police
infamy that was proved as such, there were five or six fresh ones
brought forward, which could not, at the moment, be unveiled,
the defence being taken by surprise, the proofs having to be got
from London, and every correspondence of the counsel for the
defence with the London Communist refugees being in open court
treated as complicity in the alleged plot!

That Greiff and Fleury are what they are here represented to
be has been stated by Mr. Stieber himself, in his evidence; as to
Hirsch, he has before a London magistrate confessed that he forged
the “minute book,” by order and with the assistance of Fleury,
and then made his escape from this country in order to evade a
criminal prosecution.

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The government could stand few such branding disclosures as
came to light during the trial. It had a jury such as the Rhenish
provinces had not yet seen. Six nobles, of the purist reactionist
water, four lords of finance, two government officials. These were
not the men to look closely into the confused mass of evidence
heapèd before them during six weeks, when they heard it con-
tinually dined into their ears that the defendants were the chiefs
of a dreadful communist conspiracy, got up in order to subvert
everything sacred—property, family, religion, order, government
and law! And yet, had not the government, at the same time,
brought it to the knowledge of the privileged classes that an
acquittal in this trial would be the signal for the suppression
of the jury; and that it would be taken as a direct political demon-
stration—as a proof of the middle-class liberal opposition being
ready to unite even with the most extreme revolutionists—the
verdict would have been an acquittal. As it was, the retroactive
application of the new Prussian code enabled the government to
have seven prisoners convicted, while four merely were acquitted,
and those convicted were sentenced to imprisonment varying from
three to six years, as you have, doubtless, already stated at the
time the news reached you.

London, December 1, 1852.
ADDRESS OF THE CENTRAL COUNCIL TO THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE

THE CENTRAL COUNCIL TO THE LEAGUE

BROTHERS! In the two revolutionary years 1848-49, the League has proved itself in double fashion: firstly, in that its members have energetically taken part in the movement in all places, that in the press, on the barricades and in the battlefields, they have stood in the front ranks of the only decisively revolutionary class, the proletariat. The League has further proved itself in that its

2 When in the beginning of 1859 the Communist League was counting on a new upsurge of the revolution, it adopted a series of energetic measures in order to establish illegal organisations in Germany and to strengthen those already existing. The address of the Central Council to the League, here reprinted, was dispatched to Germany by a special plenipotentiary or emissary. In it Marx gave an exact analysis of the prospects of the revolution in Germany and sketched the fundamental tactical principles of the Communists on the basis of the experiences of the Revolution of 1848. This address of the Central Council to the League is one of the most important historical documents of Marxism formulating the strategy and tactics of the proletariat. Marx’s theory of permanent revolution, expounded in this document, found its further development and embodiment in new concrete conditions in the strategy and tactics of Lenin and the Bolsheviks in the Russian Revolution. Lenin and the Bolshevik Party defended Marx’s revolutionary strategy and tactics from innumerable distortions and class-compromising interpretations by opportunists of all shades-German revisionists, Russian Mensheviks, Trotskyists, etc. It is well known that Trotsky attempted to conceal his capitulatory views in regard to the prospects, the character and the driving forces of the Russian Revolution by an appeal to Marx, to the latter’s theory of permanent revolution. But the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution has in reality nothing in common with the theory of Marx.

“Lenin was the only Marxist who correctly understood and developed the idea of permanent revolution. What distinguishes Lenin from the ‘permanentists’ on this question is that these latter distorted Marx’s idea of permanent revolution and transformed it into a lifeless, bookish wisdom, whereas Lenin took it in its pure form and made it one of the bases of his

conception of the movement as laid down in the circulars of the congresses and of the Central Council of 1847 and in The Communist Manifesto has proved to be the only correct one, that the expectations expressed in those documents have been completely fulfilled and the conception of present-day social conditions, previously only propagated in secret by the League, is now on everyone’s lips and is openly preached in the market places. At the same time the former firm organisation of the League has been

own theory of revolution. It should be remembered that the idea of the bourgeois-democratic revolution growing into the socialist revolution, propounded by Lenin as long ago as 1905, is one of the forms of the embodiment of the Marxist theory of permanent revolution. Here is what Lenin wrote about this in 1905:

“... From the democratic revolution we shall pass at once, according to the degree of our strength, the strength of the class conscious and organised proletariat, to pass over to the socialist revolution. We stand for continuous revolution [my italics—J.S.] we shall not stop halfway. Without indulging in any adventurism or betraying our scientific conscience, without striving after cheap popularity, we can and do say only one thing: we shall with all our might help the whole of the peasantry to make the democratic revolution in order that it may be easier for us, the part of the proletariat, to pass on as quickly as possible to the new and higher task, the socialist revolution.” (Stalin, Leninism, Vol. I, “Problems of Leninism.”) pp. 265-66.)

In his lectures, “Foundations of Leninism,” Stalin points out the essence of the accretions of opinion in this question between the Bolsheviks and the Trotskyists. He also answers the question of why Lenin had ruthlessly to combat the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution:

“Because Lenin proposed that the revolutionary capacities of the peasantry be utilised ‘to the utmost’ and that full use be made of their revolutionary energy for the complete liquidation of tsarism and the transition to the proletarian revolution; whereas the adherents of ‘permanent revolution’ did not understand the important role of the peasantry in the Russian Revolution, underestimated the revolutionary energy of the peasantry, underestimated the strength and capacity of the Russian proletariat to lead the peasantry, and so hampered the work of emancipating the peasantry from the influence of the bourgeoisie, the work of rallying the peasantry around the proletariat.

“Because Lenin proposed to crown the revolution with the coming into power of the proletariat, while the adherents of ‘permanent’ revolution wanted to begin at once by establishing the power of the proletariat, not realising that by so doing they were closing their eyes to such ‘trifles’ as the existence of survivals of serfdom and overlooking, in their calculations, so important a force as the Russian peasantry; nor did they realise that this policy would retard the winning over of the peasantry to the side of the proletariat.

“Lenin, then, fought the adherents of ‘permanent’ revolution not over
KARL MARX—FREDERICK ENGELS

considerably slackened. A large part of the members who directly participated in the revolutionary movement believed the time for secret societies to have gone by and public activities alone sufficient. The individual circles and local sections allowed their connections with the Central Council to grow slack and gradually die away. Consequently, while the Democratic Party, the party of the petty bourgeoisie, organised itself more and more in Germany, the Workers’ Party lost its only firm foothold, remained organised at the most in separate localities for local purposes and thereby in the general movement came completely under the question of “uninterruptedness,” because he himself held the point of view of uninterrupted revolution, but because they underestimated the role of the peasantry, the proletariat’s greatest reserve power, and because they failed to grasp the idea of the hegemony of the proletariat.” (Ibid., “Foundations of Leninism,” pp. 37-38.)

And further, in his analysis of the Address, Comrade Stalin proves that:

“a) The plan of our ‘permanentists’ notwithstanding, Marx did not at all propose to begin the revolution in the Germany of the ’fifties with the direct establishment of the proletariat power.

“b) Marx proposed the establishment of proletarian state power merely as the crowning event of the revolution, after hurling step by step one section of the bourgeoisie after another from its heights of power, in order to ignite the torch of the revolution in every country after the proletariat had come to power. Now, this is perfectly consistent with all that Lenin taught, with all that he did in the course of our revolution in pursuit of his theory of the proletarian revolution in an imperialist environment. . . .

“It turns out that our Russian ‘permanentists’ have not only underestimated the role of the peasantry in the Russian Revolution and the importance of the conception of the hegemony of the proletariat, but have modified (for the worse) the Marxian idea of ‘permanent’ revolution and deprived it of all practical value.” (Ibid., pp. 36-39.)

Since the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution rested on lack of faith in the forces of the proletariat, on denial of the hegemony of the proletariat and its capacity to lead the peasantry, and on the non-understanding of the revolutionary character of the peasant movement, all this inevitably led Trotsky and his adherents to a defeatist position in regard to the fate of the Russian Revolution, to denial of the possibility of the victory of socialism in one country, to a conception of the inevitable downfall and degeneration of the Soviet power in the Soviet Union as much as the world revolution had not yet led to the victory of the proletariat in the West. The transformation of Trotskyism into a vanguard of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie is the most convincing proof of the correctness of the ruthless struggle waged by Lenin, Stalin, the Bolshevik Party and the Communist International against the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution, in defence of Marx’s revolutionary strategy and tactics, developed in application to the concrete conditions of the epoch of imperialism.—Ed.

ADDRESS OF CENTRAL COUNCIL TO COMMUNIST LEAGUE

domination and leadership of the petty-bourgeois Democrats. An end must be put to this state of affairs, the independence of the workers must be restored. The Central Council realised this necessity and, therefore, already in the winter of 1848-49 it sent an emissary, Joseph Moll, to Germany for the reorganisation of the League. Moll’s mission, however, remained without lasting effect, partly because the German workers at that time had not acquired sufficient experience, and partly because it was interrupted by the insurrection of last May. Moll himself took up the musket, entered the Baden-Palatinate army and fell on July 19 in the encounter at the Murz. The League lost in him one of its oldest, most active and most trustworthy members, one who had been active in all the congresses and Central Councils and had already previously carried out a series of missions with great success. After the defeat of the revolutionary parties of Germany and France in July 1849, almost all the members of the Central Council came together again in London, supplemented their numbers with new revolutionary forces, and set about the reorganisation of the League with renewed zeal.

Reorganisation can only be carried out by an emissary and the Central Council considers it extremely important that the emissary should leave precisely at this moment when a new revolution3 is imminent, when the Workers’ Party, therefore, must act in the most organised, most united and most independent fashion if

1 When the Address of the Central Council to the Communist League was written in March 1850, Marx still believed that a new upsurge of the revolutionary wave was imminent. However, in September 1850, after a careful analysis of the world economic situation, he had already come to the conclusion that an upward movement in the development of capitalism had set in. This upward movement is the “mother of counter-revolution,” just as “the world trade crisis of 1847 has been the real mother of the February and March Revolutions.” On these errors of Marx and Engels in timing the approach of the revolution, Lenin wrote as follows:

“But such mistakes of the giants of revolutionary thought, who tried to raise and did raise the proletariat of the whole world above the level of petty, common and farthing tasks, are a thousand times more noble, magnificent and historically more valuable and more truthful than the wisdom of official liberalism singing, shouting, appealing and speaking about the vanity of revolutionary vatsies, the uselessness of revolutionary struggle and the charm of counter-revolutionary ‘constitutional’ nonsense.” (Lenin, Marx-Engels-Marxism, p. 112.)—Ed.
it is not to be exploited and taken in tow again by the bourgeoisie as in 1848.

Brothers! We told you as early as 1843 that the German liberal bourgeoisie would soon come to power and would immediately turn their newly acquired power against the workers. You have seen how this has been fulfilled. In fact, it was the bourgeoisie who, after the March movement of 1848, immediately took possession of the state power and used this power at once to force back the workers, their allies in the struggle, into their former oppressed position. If the bourgeoisie was not able to accomplish this without uniting with the feudal party which had been defeated in March, without finally even surrendering power once again to this feudal absolutist party, still it has secured conditions for itself which, in the long run, owing to the financial embarrassment of the government would have placed power in its hands and would have safeguarded all its interests, if it were possible that the revolutionary movement was already passing into a so-called peaceful development. The bourgeoisie would not even have found it necessary, in order to safeguard their domination, to make themselves obnoxious to the people by violent measures since all such violent steps had already been taken by the feudal counter-revolution. Developments however, will not take this peaceful course. On the contrary, the revolution which will accelerate this development is near at hand, whether it will be called forth by an independent upheaval of the French proletariat or by the invasion of the Holy Alliance against the revolutionary Babylon.

And the role, this so treacherous role, which the German liberal bourgeoisie of 1848 have played against the people, will in the coming revolution be taken over by the democratic petty bour-geois, who at present occupy the same position in the opposition as the liberal bourgeoisie before 1848. This party, the Democratic Party, which is far more dangerous to the workers than the previous liberal one, consists of three elements.

I. Of the most advanced sections of the big bourgeoisie, which pursue the aim of the immediate, complete overthrow of feudalism and absolutism. This section is represented by the one-time Berlin compromisers, by the tax resisters. 1

II. Of the democratic-constitutional petty bourgeoisie, whose main aim during the previous movement was the establishment of a more or less democratic federal state as striven for by their representatives, the Lefts in the Frankfort Assembly, 2 and later by the Stuttgart parliament, and by themselves, in the campaign for an Imperial Constitution. 3

III. Of the republican petty bourgeoisie whose ideal is a German Federated Republic after the manner of Switzerland and who now call themselves "Red" and "Social-Democratic" because they cherish the pious desire of abolishing the pressure of big capital on small, of the big bourgeois on the small bourgeois. The representatives of this section were the members of the democratic congresses and committees, the leaders of the democratic associations, the editors of the democratic newspapers.

All these fractions now, after their defeat, call themselves "republicans" or "Reds," just as the republican petty bourgeoisie in France now call themselves socialists. Where, as in Württemberg,

1 This refers to the bourgeois deputies of the Berlin Constituent Assembly, who answered the declaration of martial law in Berlin and the threatened dispersal by force of the Constituent Assembly, not with a call for insurrection, but only with "passive and legal resistance" and with the proposal "to organise the refusal of taxes." See Marx and Engels, Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution, chap. XIII, in the present volume.—Ed.

2 The Frankfort National Assembly—the constituent assembly for the whole of Germany which, after the victory of the March Revolution, was convened in Frankfort on May 18, 1848, and was in session there until May 30, 1849. It was later removed to Stuttgart where it was dispersed by the Württemberg government on June 18, 1849. For further details, see Marx and Engels, Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution, chap. VII and XIX.—Ed.

3 The Holy Alliance was the alliance concluded between the emperors of Russia and Austria and the King of Prussia in Paris in 1815 after the victory over Napoleon I, and in 1818 was also joined by France. It was a tool of European reaction which aimed at the suppression of the revolutionary movement.—Ed.

4 By the revolutionary Babylon is meant the French capital, Paris, which after the first French bourgeois revolution at the end of the eighteenth century was looked upon as the seat of revolution.—Ed.

4 On the campaign for the Imperial Constitution, see Marx and Engels, Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution, chap. XVIII.—Ed.
Bavaria, etc., they still find opportunity to pursue their aims along the constitutional path, they seize the occasion to retain their old phrases and to prove by deeds that they have not altered in the least. It is evident, moreover, that the altered name of this party does not make the slightest change in relation to the workers, but merely proves that they are now obliged to turn against the bourgeoisie, which is united with absolutism, and to support themselves on the proletariat.

The petty-bourgeois Democratic Party in Germany is very powerful; it comprises not only the great majority of the bourgeoisie inhabitants of the towns, the small industrial businessmen and guild masters, it numbers among its following the peasants and the rural proletariat, in so far as the latter has not yet found a support in the independent proletariat of the towns.

The relation of the revolutionary workers' party to petty-bourgeois democracy is this: it marches together with it against the section which it aims at overthrowing, it opposes the petty-bourgeois in everything by which they desire to establish themselves.

The democratic petty bourgeoisie, far from desiring to revolutionise all society for the revolutionary proletarians, strive for a change in social conditions by means of which existing society will be made as tolerable and comfortable as possible for them. Hence they demand above all diminution of state expenditure by restricting the bureaucracy and shifting the chief taxes on to the big landowners and bourgeoisie. Further, they demand the abolition of the pressure of big capital on small, through public credit institutions and laws against usury, by which means it will be possible for them and the peasants to obtain advances, on favourable conditions, from the state instead of from the capitalists; and, further, they demand the establishment of bourgeois property relations in the countryside by the complete abolition of feudalism. In order to accomplish all this, they require a democratic state constitution, whether constitutional or republican, giving a majority to them and their allies, the peasants, as well as a democratic local government which would give them control over municipal property and over a series of functions now performed by the bureaucrats.

ADDRESS OF CENTRAL COUNCIL TO COMMUNIST LEAGUE

The domination and speedy increase of capital is further to be counteracted partly by limiting the right of inheritance and partly by transferring as many works as possible to the state. As far as the workers are concerned, it remains certain above all that they are to remain wage workers as before; the democratic petty bourgeoisie only desire better wages and a secure existence for the workers and hope to achieve this through partial employment by the state and through charity measures, in short, they hope to bribe the workers by more or less concealed alms and to break their revolutionary force by making their position tolerable for the moment. The demands of petty-bourgeois democracy here summarised are not put forward by all of its fractions at the same time and as a whole are held in view as a definite goal by a very small section of them. The further separate persons or sections among them go, the more of these demands will they make their own, and those few who see their own programme in what has been outlined above would believe that thereby they have put forward the utmost that can be demanded from the revolution. But these demands can in no wise suffice for the party of the proletariat. While the democratic petty bourgeoisie wish to bring the revolution to a conclusion as quickly as possible and with the achievement at most of the above demands, it is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent, until all more or less possessing classes have been displaced from domination, until the proletariat has conquered state power, and the association of proletarians, not only in one country but in all the dominant countries of the world, has advanced so far that competition among the proletarians of these countries has ceased and that at least the decisive productive forces are concentrated in the hands of the proletarians. For us the issue cannot be the alteration of private property but only its abolition, not the smoothing over of class antagonisms but the abolition of classes, not the improvement of existing society but the foundation of a new one. That, during the further development of the revolution, petty-bourgeois democracy will for a moment obtain predominating influence in Germany is not open to doubt. The question, therefore, arises
as to what the attitude of the proletariat and in particular of the League will be in relation to it:

1. During the continuance of the present conditions where the petty-bourgeois democrats are likewise oppressed;
2. In the next revolutionary struggle which will give them the upper hand;
3. After this struggle, during the period of preponderance over the overthrown classes and the proletariat.

1. At the present moment, when the democratic petty bourgeois are everywhere oppressed, they preach in general unity and reconciliation to the proletariat, they offer them their hand and strive for the establishment of a large opposition party which will embrace all shades of opinion in the Democratic Party, i.e., they strive to involve the workers in a party organisation in which general Social-Democratic phrases predominate, behind which their special interests are concealed and in which the particular demands of the proletariat may not be brought forward for the sake of beloved peace. Such a union would turn out solely to their advantage and altogether to the disadvantage of the proletariat. The proletariat would lose its whole independent, laboriously obtained position and once more sink down to being an appendage of official bourgeois democracy. This union must, therefore, be most decisively rejected. Instead of once again stooping to serve as the applauding chorus of the bourgeois democrats, the workers, and above all the League, must strive to establish an independent, secret and open, organisation of the Workers' Party alongside the official democrats and make each local section the central point and nucleus of workers' associations in which the attitude and interests of the proletariat will be discussed independently of bourgeois influences. How little serious the bourgeois democrats are in regard to an alliance in which the proletarians would stand side by side with them with equal power and equal rights is shown, for example, by the Breslau democrats who, in their organ, the *Neue Oderzeitung*, most furiously attack the independently organised workers, whom they call socialists. In the case of a struggle against a common opponent no special union is required. As soon as such an opponent has to be fought directly,
general, they must in every way restrain as far as possible the intoxication of victory and the enthusiasm for the new state of things, which make their appearance after every victorious street battle, by a calm and cold-blooded estimate of the conditions and by un concealed mistrust in the new government. Alongside of the new official governments they must establish simultaneously their own revolutionary workers’ governments, whether in the form of municipal committees and municipal councils or in the form of workers’ clubs or workers’ committees, so that the bourgeois-democratic governments not only immediately lose their backing by the workers but from the outset see themselves supervised and threatened by authorities which are backed by the whole mass of the workers. In a word, from the first moment of victory mistrust must be directed not against the conquered reactionary party, but against the workers’ previous allies, against the party that wishes to exploit the common victory for itself alone.

2. But in order to be able energetically and threateningly to oppose this party whose treachery to the workers will begin from the first hour of victory, the workers must be armed and organised. The arming of the whole proletariat with rifles, muskets, cannon and munitions must be put through at once, the revival of the old Citizens’ Guard directed against the workers must be opposed. However, where the latter cannot be achieved the workers must attempt to organise themselves independently as a proletarian guard with a commander elected by themselves and with a general staff of their own choosing and put themselves at the command not of the state authority but of the revolutionary local councils set up by the workers. Where workers are employed at the expense of the state they must see that they are armed and organised in a special corps with commanders of their own choosing or as part of the proletarian guard. Weapons and munitions must not be surrendered on any pretext; any attempt at disarming must if necessary be frustrated by force. Destruction of the influence of the bourgeois democrats on the workers, immediate independent and armed organisation of the workers and the bringing about of conditions as difficult and compromising as possible for the immediately inevitable rule of bourgeois democracy, these

are the main points which the proletariat and hence the League must keep in view during and after the coming insurrection.

3. As soon as the new governments have consolidated themselves to some extent, their struggle against the workers will immediately begin. In order here to oppose the democratic petty bourgeois by force it is above all necessary that the workers shall be independently organised and centralised through their clubs. After the overthrow of the existing governments, the Central Council will, as soon as it is at all possible, betake itself to Germany, immediately convene a congress and put before the latter the necessary provisions for the centralisation of the workers’ clubs under a leadership established in the chief seat of the movement. The speedy organisation of at least a provincial union of the workers’ clubs is one of the most important points for the strengthening and development of the Workers’ Party; the immediate consequence of the overthrow of the existing governments will be the election of a National Assembly. Here the proletariat must see to it:

I. That under no pretext are numbers of workers excluded by any kind of trickery on the part of local authorities or government commissioners.

II. That everywhere workers’ candidates are put up alongside of the bourgeois-democratic candidates, that they should consist as far as possible of members of the League, and that their election is promoted by all possible means. Even where there is no prospect whatsoever of their being elected, the workers must put up their own candidates in order to preserve their independence, to count their forces and to bring before the public their revolutionary attitude and party standpoint. In this connection they must not allow themselves to be seduced by the phrases of the democrats, such as, for example, that by this action they are splitting the Democratic Party and giving the reaction the possibility of victory. The final intention of all such phrases is that the proletariat shall be duped. The advance which the proletarian party is bound to make by such an independent action is infinitely more important than the disadvantage that might be caused by the presence of a few reactionaries in the representative body. If the democracy
from the outset comes out decisively and with the use of terror against the reaction, then the influence of the latter in the elections will be destroyed in advance.

The first point on which the bourgeois democrats will come into conflict with the workers will be the abolition of feudalism. As in the first French Revolution, the petty bourgeois will give the feudal lands to the peasants as free property, that is to say, try to leave the rural proletariat in existence and form a petty-bourgeois peasant class which will go through the same cycle of impoverishment and indebtedness which the French peasant is now going through.

The workers must oppose this plan in the interests of the rural proletariat and in their own interests. They must demand that the confiscated feudal property remain state property and be converted into labour colonies cultivated by the associated rural proletariat with all the advantages of large-scale agriculture, through which the principle of common property immediately obtains a firm basis in the midst of the tottering bourgeois property relations. Just as the democrats combine with the peasants so must the workers combine with the rural proletariat. Further, the democrats will work either directly for the federated republic or, at least, if they cannot avoid the single and indivisible republic, they will attempt to cripple the central government by the utmost possible autonomy and independence on the part of the municipalities and provinces. The workers, in opposition to this plan, must not only strive for the single and indivisible German republic, but also strive in it for the most decisive centralisation of power in the hands of the state authority. They must not allow themselves to be led astray by the democratic talk of freedom for the municipalities, of self-government, etc. In a country like Germany where there are so many relics of the Middle Ages to be abolished, where there is so much local and provincial obstinacy to be broken, it must under no circumstances be permitted that every village, every town, and every province should put a new obstacle in the path of revolutionary activity, which can proceed in its force only from the centre. It is not to be tolerated that the present state of things should be renewed, whereby Germans must fight separately for one and the same advance in every town and in every province. Least of all is it to be tolerated that there should be perpetuated by a so-called free municipal constitution a form of property, namely municipal property, which still lags behind modern private property and which everywhere is necessarily passing into the latter, together with the quarrels resulting from it between poor and rich municipalities, as well as the municipal civil law, with its trickery against the workers, that exists alongside of state civil law. As in France in 1793 so today in Germany the carrying through of the strictest centralisation is the task of the really revolutionary party.

We have seen how the democrats will come to power with the next movement, how they will be compelled to propose more or less socialist measures. It will be asked what measures the workers ought to propose in reply. At the beginning of the movement, of course, the workers cannot yet propose any directly communist measures. But they can:

1. Compel the democrats to interfere in as many spheres as

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1 On the relics of the Middle Ages in Germany, see Marx and Engels, *Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, chap. I. —Ed.
possible of the existing social order, to disturb its regular course and to compromise themselves, as well as to concentrate the utmost possible productive forces, means of transport, factories, railways, etc., in the hands of the state;

2. They must drive the proposals of the democrats, who in any case will not act in a revolutionary but in a merely reformist manner, to the extreme and transform them into direct attacks against private property; thus, for example, if the petty bourgeoisie propose purchase of the railways and factories, then the workers must demand that these railways and factories shall be simply confiscated by the state without compensation as being the property of reactionaries. If the democrats propose proportional taxes, the workers must demand progressive taxes; if the democrats themselves put forward a moderate progressive tax, the workers must insist on a tax with rates which rise so steeply that large-scale capital is ruined by it; if the democrats demand the regulation of state debts, the workers demand state bankruptcy. Thus, the demands of the workers must everywhere be governed by the concessions and measures of the democrats.

If the German workers are not able to attain power and achieve their own class interests without completely going through a lengthy revolutionary development, they have at least the certainty this time that the first act of this approaching revolutionary drama coincides with the direct victory of their own class in France and will be very much accelerated by it.

But they themselves will have to do the most for their final victory by becoming enlightened as to their class interests, by taking up their own independent party position as soon as possible and by not allowing themselves for a single moment to be led astray from the independent organisations of the party of the proletariat by the hypocritical phrases of the democratic petty bourgeoisie. Their battle-cry must be: the permanent revolution.

London, March 1850.

THE CLASS STRUGGLES IN FRANCE 1848-50

INTRODUCTION 1 by FREDERICK ENGELS

This newly republished work was Marx's first attempt to explain a section of contemporary history with the aid of his materialist conception, on the basis of the given economic situation. In The Communist Manifesto, the theory was applied in broad outline

1 This introduction of Engels to The Class Struggles in France has a history of its own. On its publication in the Vorwärts in 1895, the text was subjected to such cuts that Engels' arguments were completely distorted. Engels wrote about this to Lafargue on April 3, 1895, as follows:

"X. [Engels has in mind Wilhelm Liebknecht] has played a pretty trick on me. I sent my Introduction to the articles of Marx about France of 1848 to 1850, he has taken everything which could serve to defend the tactics of peace and anti-violence at all costs, which he has found it convenient to preach for some time past, especially at the present moment when the Exceptional Law is being prepared in Berlin. But I recommend these tactics only for the Germany of the present time, and that too with essential reservations. In France, Belgium, Italy and Austria it is impossible to follow this tactic in its entirety and in Germany it can become unsuitable tomorrow."

Indignant at the uncourteous "editorial" work performed on his Introduction, Engels also wrote to Kautsky on April 1, 1895:

"To my astonishment I see today in Vorwärts an extract from my Introduction printed without my knowledge and dealt with in such a fashion that I appear as a peaceful worshipper of legality quand même [at all costs]. I am therefore so much the more glad that the whole is appearing in its entirety in the Neue Zeit so that this disgraceful impression will be wiped out.

"I shall very definitely express my opinion about this to Liebknecht and also to those, whoever they may be, who have given him this opportunity to distort my opinion."

Nevertheless, the Neue Zeit also, although it gave a more complete text, did not give the Introduction in full.

It was no accident that German Social-Democracy has never found time up to now to publish the full text of Engels' Introduction. It is the case rather that Eduard Bernstein in his Prerequisites of Socialism opportunistically attempted to represent the Introduction published in the Neue Zeit in an incomplete form as a "political testament" in which Engels
to the whole of modern history, while in the articles by Marx and myself in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, it was constantly used to interpret political events of the day. Here, on the other hand, the question was to demonstrate the inner causal connection in the course of a development which extended over some years, a development as critical, for the whole of Europe, as it was typical; that is, in accordance with the conception of the author, to trace political events back to the effects of what are, in the last resort, economic causes.

In judging the events and series of events of day-to-day history, it will never be possible for anyone to go right back to the *final* economic causes. Even today, when the specialised technical press provides such rich materials, in England itself it still remains impossible to follow day by day the movement of industry and trade in the world market and the changes which take place in the methods of production in such a way as to be able to draw the general conclusion, at any point of time, from these very complicated and ever changing factors: of these factors, the most important, into the bargain, generally operate a long time in secret before they suddenly and violently make themselves felt on the surface. A clear survey of the economic history of a given period is never contemporaneous; it can only be gained subsequently, after collecting and sifting of the material has taken place. Statistics are a necessary help here, and they always lag behind. For this reason, it is only too often necessary, in the current history of the time, to treat the most decisive factor as constant, to treat the economic situation existing at the beginning of the period concerned as given and unalterable for the whole period, or else to take notice only of such changes in this situation as themselves arise out of events clearly before us, and as, there-

is supposed to have broken with his revolutionary past. The full text of Engels' *Introduction* was only published for the first time in the U.S.S.R. by the Bolshevik Party, the genuine guardian of the traditions of revolutionary Marxism. The passages omitted in the first edition are given here in italics and square brackets.—Ed.

1 On the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, see Engels' article, “Marx and the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*” in the present volume.—Ed.

INTRODUCTION TO THE CLASS STRUGGLES IN FRANCE

fore, can likewise be clearly seen. Hence, the materialist method has here often to limit itself to tracing political conflicts back to the struggles between the interests of the social classes and fractions of classes encountered as the result of economic development, and to show the particular political parties as the more or less adequate political expression of these same classes and fractions of classes.

It is self-evident that this unavoidable neglect of contemporaneous changes in the economic situation, of the very basis of all the proceedings subject to examination, must be a source of error. But all the conditions of a comprehensive presentation of the history of the day unavoidably imply sources of error—which, however, keeps nobody from writing contemporary history.

When Marx undertook this work, the sources of error mentioned were to a still greater degree impossible to avoid. It was quite impossible during the period of the Revolution of 1848-49 to follow the economic transformations which were being consummated at the same time, or even to keep a general view of them. It was just the same during the first months of exile in London, in the autumn and winter of 1849-50. But that was just the time when Marx began this work. And in spite of these unfavourable circumstances, his exact knowledge both of the economic situation in France and of the political history of that country since the February Revolution made it possible for him to give a picture of events which laid bare their inner connections in a way never attained since, and which later brilliantly withstood the double test instituted by Marx himself.

The first test resulted from the fact that after the spring of 1850 Marx once again found leisure for economic studies, and first of all took up the economic history of the last ten years. In this study, what he had earlier deduced, half *a priori*, from defective material, was made absolutely clear to him by the facts themselves, namely, that the world trade crisis of 1847 had been the true mother of the February and March Revolutions and that the industrial prosperity which had been returning gradually since the middle of 1846, and which attained full bloom in 1849 and
1850, was the revivifying force of the newly strengthened European reaction. That was decisive. Whereas in the three first articles (which appeared in the January, February and March numbers of the N. Rh. Z., politisch-ökonomische Revue, Hamburg, 1850) there was still the expectation of an imminent new upsurge of revolutionary energy, the historical review written by Marx and myself for the last number, which was published in the autumn of 1850 (a double number, May to October), breaks once and for all with these illusions: “A new revolution is only possible as a result of a new crisis. It is just as certain, however, as this.” But that was the only essential change which had to be made. There was absolutely nothing to alter in the interpretation of events given in the earlier chapters, or in the causal connections established therein, as the continuation of the narrative from March 10 up to the autumn of 1850, in the review in question, proves. I have therefore included this continuation as the fourth article in the present new edition.

The second test was even more severe. Immediately after Louis Bonaparte’s coup d’état of December 2, 1851, Marx worked out anew the history of France from February 1848, up to this event, which concluded the revolutionary period for the time being. (The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte. Third edition, Meissner, Hamburg, 1885.) In this brochure the period which we had depicted in our present publication is again dealt with, although more briefly. Compare this second production, written in the light of decisive events which happened over a year later, with our present publication, and it will be found that the author had very little to change.

The thing which still gives our work a quite special significance is that, for the first time, it expresses the formula in which, by common agreement, the workers’ parties of all countries in the world briefly summarise their demand for economic reconstruction: the appropriation by society of the means of production. In the second chapter, in connection with the “right to work,” which is characterised as “the first clumsy formula wherein the revolutionary aspirations of the proletariat are summarised,” it is said: “But behind the right to work stands the power over capital; behind the power over capital, the appropriation of the means of production, their subjection to the associated working class and, therefore the abolition of wage labour as well as of capital and of their mutual relationships.” Thus, here, for the first time, the proposition is formulated by which modern working class socialism is equally sharply differentiated both from all the different shades of feudal, bourgeois, petty-bourgeois, etc., socialism and also from the confused community of goods of utopian and spontaneous worker-communism. If, later, Marx extended the formula to appropriation of the means of exchange also, this extension, which in any case was self-evident after The Communist Manifesto, only expressed a corollary to the main proposition. A few wiseacres in England have of late added that the “means of distribution” should also be handed over to society. It would be difficult for these gentlemen to say what these economic means of distribution are, as distinct from the means of production and exchange; unless political means of distribution are meant, taxes, poor relief, including the Sachsenwald and other endowments. But, first, these are means of distribution now already in collective possession, either of the state or of the municipality and, secondly, it is precisely these we wish to abolish.

* * *

When the February Revolution broke out, we all of us, as far as our conception of the conditions and the course of revolutionary movements was concerned, were under the spell of previous historical experience, namely that of France. It was, indeed, the latter which had dominated the whole of European history since 1789, and from which now once again the signal had gone forth for general revolutionary change. It was therefore natural and unavoidable that our conceptions of the nature and the path of the “social”

1 On the feudal bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeois socialism see The Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels, chap. III, in Volume I of this edition.—Ed.

2 An extensive estate presented to the German Chancellor Bismarck.—Ed.
revolution proclaimed in Paris in February 1848, of the revolution of the proletariat, were strongly coloured by memories of the models of 1789-1830. Moreover, when the Paris upheaval found its echo in the victorious insurrections in Vienna, Milan and Berlin; when the whole of Europe right up to the Russian frontier was swept into the movement; when in Paris the first great battle for power between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie was fought; when the very victory of their class so shook the bourgeoisie of all countries that they fled back into the arms of the monarchist-feudal reaction which had just been overthrown—for us under the circumstances of the time, there could be no doubt that the great decisive struggle had broken out, that it would have to be fought out in a single, long and changeful period of revolution, but that it could only end with the final victory of the proletariat.

After the defeats of 1849 we in no way shared the illusions of the vulgar democracy grouped around the would-be provisional governments in partibus. This vulgar democracy reckoned on a speedy and finally decisive victory of the “people” over the “usurpers”; we looked to a long struggle after the removal of the “usurpers,” between the antagonistic elements concealed within this “people” itself. Vulgar democracy expected a renewed outbreak from day to day; we declared as early as autumn 1850 that at least the first chapter of the revolutionary period was closed and that nothing further was to be expected until the outbreak of a new world crisis. For this reason we were excommunicated, as traitors to the revolution, by the very people who later, almost without exception, made their peace with Bismarck—so far as Bismarck found them worth the trouble.

But we, too, have been shown to have been wrong by history, which has revealed our point of view of that time to have been an illusion. It has done even more: it has not merely destroyed our error of that time; it has also completely transformed the conditions under which the proletariat has to fight. The mode of struggle of 1848 is today obsolete from every point of view,

1 i.e., the French bourgeois revolution at the end of the eighteenth century, and the July Revolution in France in 1830.—Ed.

2 In partibus (infidelium). See note 1 on p. 40.—Ed.

and this is a point which deserves closer examination on the present occasion.

All revolutions up to the present day have resulted in the displacement of one definite class rule by another: all ruling classes up to now have been only minorities in relation to the ruled mass of the people. A ruling minority was thus overthrown; another minority seized the helm of state and remodelled the state apparatus in accordance with its own interests. This was on every occasion the minority group, enabled and called to rule by the degree of economic development, and just for that reason, and only for that reason, it happened that the ruled majority either participated in the revolution on the side of the former or else passively acquiesced in it. But if we disregard the concrete content in each case, the common form of all these revolutions was that they were minority revolutions. Even where the majority took part, it did so—whether wittingly or not—only in the service of a minority; but because of this, or simply because of the passive, unresisting attitude of the majority, this minority acquired the appearance of being the representative of the whole people.

As a rule, after the first great success, the victorious minority became divided; one half was pleased with what had been gained, the other wanted to go still further, and put forward new demands, which, to a certain extent at least, were also in the real or apparent interests of the great mass of the people. In individual cases these more radical demands were realised, but often only for the moment; the more moderate party again gained the upper hand, and what had eventually been won was wholly or partly lost again; the vanquished shrieked of treachery, or ascribed their defeat to accident. But in truth the position was mainly this: the achievements of the first victory were only safeguarded by the second victory of the more radical party; this having been attained, and, with it, what was necessary for the moment, the radicals and their achievements vanished once more from the stage.

All revolutions of modern times, beginning with the Great English Revolution of the seventeenth century, 1 showed these features,

1 On the English Revolution, see Engels’ article On Historical Materialism, in Volume I of the present edition.—Ed.
which appeared inseparable from every revolutionary struggle. They appeared applicable, also, to the struggles of the proletariat for its emancipation; all the more applicable, since in 1848 there were few people who had any idea at all of the direction in which this emancipation was to be sought. The proletarian masses themselves, even in Paris, after the victory, were still absolutely in the dark as to the path to be taken. And yet the movement was there, instinctive, spontaneous, irrepresible. Was not this just the situation in which a revolution had to succeed, led certainly by a minority, but this time not in the interests of the minority, but in the real interests of the majority? If, in all the longer revolutionary periods, it was so easy to win the great masses of the people by the merely plausible and delusive views of the minorities which are thrusting themselves forward, how could they be less susceptible to ideas which were the truest reflex of their economic position, which were nothing but the clear, comprehensible expression of their needs, of needs not yet understood by themselves, but only vaguely felt? To be sure, this revolutionary mood of the masses had almost always, and usually very speedily, given way to lassitude or even to a revulsion to its opposite, so soon as illusion evaporated and disappointment set in. But here it was not a question of delusive views, but of giving effect to the very special interests of the great majority itself, interests, which at that time were certainly by no means clear to this great majority, but which must soon enough become clear in the course of giving practical effect to them, by their convincing obviousness. And if now, as Marx showed in the third article, in the spring of 1850, the development of the bourgeois republic that had arisen out of the "social" revolution of 1848 had concentrated the real power in the hands of the big bourgeoisie—monarchistically inclined as it was—and, on the other hand, had grouped all the other social classes, peasants as well as petty bourgeoisie, round the proletariat, so that, during and after the common victory, not they, but the proletariat grown wise by experience must become the decisive factor—was there not every prospect here of turning the revolution of the minority into the revolution of the majority?

History has proved us, and all who thought like us, wrong. It has made it clear that the state of economic development on the Continent at that time was not, by a long way, ripe for the removal of capitalist production; it has proved this by the economic revolution which, since 1848, has seized the whole of the Continent, has really caused big industry for the first time to take root in France, Austria, Hungary, Poland and, recently, in Russia, while it has made Germany positively an industrial country of the first rank—all on a capitalist basis, which in the year 1848, therefore, still had great capacity for expansion. But it is just this industrial revolution which has everywhere for the first time produced clarity in the class relationships, which has removed a number of transition forms handed down from the manufacturing period and in Eastern Europe even from guild handicraft, and has created a genuine bourgeoisie and a genuine large-scale industrial proletariat and has pushed them into the foreground of social development. But owing to this, the struggle of these two great classes, which, apart from England, existed in 1848 only in Paris and, at the most, in a few big industrial centres, has been spread over the whole of Europe and has reached an intensity such as was unthinkable in 1848. At that time the many obscure evangelists of the sects, with their panaceas; today the one generally recognised, transparently clear theory of Marx, sharply formulating the final aims of the struggle. At that time the masses, sullered and differing according to locality and nationality, linked only by the feeling of common suffering, undeveloped, tossed to and fro in their perplexity from enthusiasm to despair; today a great international army of socialists, marching irresistibly on and growing daily in number, organisation, discipline, insight and assurance of victory. If even this mighty army of the proletariat has still not reached its goal, if, a long way from winning victory with one mighty stroke, it has slowly to press forward from position to position in a hard, tenacious struggle, this only proves, once and for all, how impossible it was in 1848 to win social transformation by a simple surprise attack.

A bourgeoisie split into two monarchist sections adhering to

1The parties referred to are the Legitimists, the supporters of the "legitimate" monarchy of the Bourbons who were in power in France up
two dynasties, a bourgeoisie, however, which demanded, above all,
peace and security for its financial operations, faced with a pro-
letariat vanquished, indeed, but still a constant menace, a pro-
letariat round which petty bourgeois and peasants grouped them-
| selves more and more—the continual threat of a violent outbreak,
which, nevertheless, offered no prospect of a final solution—such
was the situation, as if created for the coup d'état of the third, the
pseudo-democratic pretender, Louis Bonaparte. On December 2,
1851, by means of the army, he put an end to the tense situation
and secured for Europe the assurance of domestic tranquillity,
in order to give it the blessing of a new era of wars. The period
of revolutions from below was concluded for the time being;
there followed a period of revolutions from above.

The imperial reaction of 1851 gave a new proof of the un-
ripeness of the proletarian aspirations of that time. But it was it-
selves to create the conditions under which they were bound to
ripen. Internal tranquillity ensured the full development of the
new industrial boom; the necessity of keeping the army occupied
and of diverting the revolutionary currents outwards produced
wars, in which Bonaparte, under the pretext of asserting "the
principle of nationality," sought to sneak annexations for France.
His imitator, Bismarck, adopted the same policy for Prussia;
he made his coup d'état, his revolution from above, in 1866, against the German Confederation and Austria, and no less against
the Prussian Konfiktshammer. But Europe was too small for
the Revolution of 1789 and also during the epoch of the Restoration
(1814-30), and the Orleanists, the supporters of the Orleans dynasty who
came to power during the July Revolution of 1830 and who were over-
thrown by the Revolution of 1848. The first represented the interests of
the big landowners, the second those of the bankers and financial aristocracy.
On this see Marx's statements in the present volume, p. 195.—Ed.

1 During the period of Napoleon III, France took part in the Crimean
War (1854-56), carried on war with Austria on account of Italy (1859),
organised an expedition into Syria (1860), took part together with England
in the war against China, conquered Cambodia (Indo-China), waged war
against the Mexican republic in 1867, and finally in 1870 made war against
Prussia.—Ed.

2 On the events of 1866 in Prussia, see Engels' Prefatory Note to The
Peasant War in Germany, in the present volume.—Ed.

3 Konfiktshammer, i.e., the Prussian Chamber then in conflict with the
government.—Ed.

INTRODUCTION TO THE CLASS STRUGGLES IN FRANCE two Bonapartes and historical irony so willed it that Bismarck
overthrew Bonaparte, and King William of Prussia not only
established the Little German empire, but also the French republic. The general result, however, was that in Europe the auton-
omy and internal unity of the great nations, with the exception of
Poland, had become a fact. Within relatively modest limits, it is true, but, for all that, on a scale large enough to allow the
development of the working class to proceed without finding national complications any longer a serious obstacle. The grave-
diggers of the Revolution of 1848 had become the executors of its will. And alongside of them rose threateningly the heir of 1848,
the proletariat, in the International.

After the war of 1870-71, Bonaparte vanishes from the stage
and Bismarck's mission is fulfilled, so that he can now sink back
again into the ordinary Junker. The period, however, is brought
to a close by the Paris Commune. An underhand attempt by
Thiers to steal the cannon of the Paris National Guard called
forth a victorious rising. It was shown once more that in Paris
none but a proletarian revolution is any longer possible. After
the victory power fell, wholly of its own accord and quite un-
questioned, into the hands of the working class. And once again,
twenty years after the time described in this work of ours, it was
proved how impossible, even then, was this rule of the working
class. On the one hand, France left Paris in the lurch, looked on
while it bled from the bullet of MacMahon; on the other hand,
the Commune was consumed in unfruitful strife between the two
parties which divided it, the Blanquists (the majority) and the
Proudhonists (the minority), neither of which knew what was
to be done. The victory which came as a gift in 1871 remained just
as unfruitful as the surprise attack of 1848.

1 As a result of the victories over France during the Franco-Prussian
War of 1870-71, there arose the German empire from which, however, Austria
was excluded. (Hence the term "Little German empire.") The defeat
of Napoleon III gave an impulse to the revolution in France which overthrew
Louis Bonaparte and which led, on September 4, 1870, to the establish-
ment of the republic.—Ed.

2 On the Paris Commune, the Blanquists and Proudhonists, see Engels'
Introduction to The Civil War in France, and Marx, The Civil War in
France, in the present volume.—Ed.
It was believed that the militant proletariat had been finally buried with the Paris Commune. But, completely to the contrary, it dates its most powerful advance from the Commune and the Franco-Prussian War. The recruitment of the whole of the population able to bear arms into armies that could be counted in millions, and the introduction of firearms, projectiles and explosives of hitherto undreamt of efficacy created a complete revolution in all warfare. This, on the one hand, put a sudden end to the Bonapartist period and insured peaceful industrial development, since any war other than a world war of unheard of cruelty and absolutely incalculable outcome had become an impossibility. On the other hand it caused military expenditure to rise in geometrical progression and thereby forced up taxes to exorbitant levels and so drove the poorer classes of people into the arms of socialism. The annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, the most immediate cause of the mad competition in armaments, might set the French and German bourgeoisie chauvinistically at each other’s throats; for the workers of the two countries it became a new bond of unity. And the anniversary of the Paris Commune became the first universal commemoration day of the whole proletariat.

The war of 1870-71 and the defeat of the Commune had transferred the centre of gravity of the European workers’ movement for the time being from France to Germany, as Marx foretold. In France it naturally took years to recover from the bloodletting of May 1871. In Germany, on the other hand, where industry was, in addition, furthered (in positively hot-house fashion) by the blessing of the French milliards and developed more and more quickly, Social-Democracy experienced a much more rapid and enduring growth. Thanks to the understanding with which the German workers made use of the universal suffrage introduced in 1866 the astonishing growth of the Party is made plain to all the world by incontestable figures: 1871, 102,000; 1874, 352,000; 1877, 493,000 Social-Democratic votes. Then came recognition of this advance by high authority in the shape of the Anti-Socialist Law: the Party was temporarily disrupted; the number of votes sank to 312,000 in 1881. But that was quickly overcome, and then, though oppressed by the Exceptional Law, without press, without external organisation and without the right of combination or meeting, the rapid expansion really began: 1884, 550,000; 1887, 763,000; 1890, 1,427,000 votes. Then the hand of the state was paralysed. The Anti-Socialist Law disappeared; socialist votes rose to 1,787,000, over a quarter of all the votes cast. The government and the ruling classes had exhausted all their expedients—uselessly, to no purpose, and without success. The tangible proofs of their impotence, which the authorities, from night watchman to the imperial chancellor, had had to accept—and that from the despised workers—these proofs were counted in millions. The state was at the end of its Latin, the workers only at the beginning of theirs.

But the German workers rendered a second great service to their cause in addition to the first, which they performed by their mere existence as the strongest, best disciplined and most rapidly growing Socialist Party. They supplied their comrades of all countries with a new weapon, and one of the sharpest, when they showed them how to use universal suffrage.

There had long been universal suffrage in France, but it had fallen into disrepute through the misuse to which the Bonapartist government had put it. After the Commune there was no workers’ party to make use of it. Also in Spain it had existed since the republic, but in Spain boycott of the elections was ever the rule of all serious opposition parties. The Swiss experiences of universal suffrage, also, were anything but encouraging for a workers’ party. The revolutionary workers of the Latin countries had been wont to regard the suffrage as a snare, as an instrument of government trickery. It was otherwise in Germany. The Communist Manifesto had already proclaimed the winning of universal suffrage, of democracy, as one of the first and most important tasks of the militant proletariat, and Lasalle had again

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1 On the conclusion of the Franco-Prussian War, Germany, by the Peace Treaty of 1871, took Alsace-Lorraine from France and compelled the latter to pay an indemnity of five milliards francs.—Ed.

2 The Paris Commune was suppressed with unprecedented ferocity during May 21-28, 1871.—Ed.

3 See note 3 on p. 530.—Ed.
taken up this point. When Bismarck found himself compelled to introduce the franchise 4 as the only means of interesting the mass of the people in his plans, our workers immediately took it in earnest and sent August Bebel to the first, constituent Reichstag. And from that day on, they have used the franchise in a way which has paid them a thousandfold and has served as a model to the workers of all countries. The franchise has been, in the words of the French Marxist programme, 5 "transformé, de moyen de duperie qu’il a été jusqu’ici, en instrument d’émancipation"—they have transformed it from a means of deception, which it was heretofore, into an instrument of emancipation. And if universal suffrage had offered no other advantage than that it allowed us to count our numbers every three years; that by the regularly established, unexpectedly rapid rise in the number of votes it increased in equal measure the workers' certainty of victory and the dismay of their opponents, and so became our best means of propaganda; that it accurately informed us concerning our own strength and that of all hostile parties, and thereby provided us with a measure of proportion for our actions second to none, safeguarding us from untimely timidity as much as from untimely foolhardiness—if this had been the only advantage we gained from the suffrage, then it would still have been more than enough. But it has done much more than this. In election agitation it provided us with a means, second to none, of getting in touch with the mass of the people, where they still stand aloof from us; of forcing all parties to defend their views and actions against our attacks before all the people; and, further, it opened to our representatives in the Reichstag a platform from which they could speak to their opponents in parliament and to the masses without, with quite other authority and freedom than in the press or at meetings. Of what avail to the government and the bourgeoisie was their Anti-Socialist Law

1 Universal suffrage was introduced by Bismarck in 1866 for the elections to the North German Reichstag, and in 1871 for the elections to the Reichstag of the united German Empire.—Ed.

2 The reference is to the programme of the French Workers' Party drawn up by Guesde and Paul Lafargue the Introductory portion of which was drafted by Marx. On this, see Engels' letter to Bernstein of Oct. 23, 1881, in the present volume.—Ed.

when election agitation and socialist speeches in the Reichstag continually broke through it?

With this successful utilisation of universal suffrage, an entirely new mode of proletarian struggle came into force, and this quickly developed further. It was found that the state institutions, in which the rule of the bourgeoisie is organised, offer still further opportunities for the working class to fight these very state institutions. They took part in elections to individual Diet, to municipal councils and to industrial courts; they contested with the bourgeoisie for every post in the occupation of which a sufficient part of the proletariat had a say. And so it happened that the bourgeoisie and the government came to be much more afraid of the legal than of the illegal action of the Workers' Party, of the results of elections than of those of rebellion.

For here, too, the conditions of the struggle had essentially changed. Rebellion in the old style, the street fight with barricades, which up to 1848 gave everywhere the final decision, was to a considerable extent obsolete.

Let us have no illusions about it: a real victory of an insurrection over the military in street fighting, a victory as between two armies, is one of the rarest exceptions. But the insurgents, also, counted on it just as rarely. For them it was solely a question of making the troops yield to moral influences, which, in a fight between the armies of two warring countries do not come into play at all, or do so to a much less degree. If they succeed in this, then the troops fail to act, or the commanding officers lose their heads, and the insurrection wins. If they do not succeed in this, then, even where the military are in the minority, the superiority of better equipment and training, of unified leadership, of the planned employment of the military forces and of discipline makes itself felt. The most that the insurrection can achieve in actual tactical practice is the correct construction and defence of a single barricade. Mutual support; the disposition and employment of reserves; in short, the co-operation and harmonious working of the individual detachments, indispensable even for the defence of one quarter of the town, not to speak of the whole of a large town, are at best defective, and mostly not attainable at all;
concentration of the military forces at a decisive point is, of course impossible. Hence the passive defence is the prevailing form of fight: the attack will rise here and there, but only by way of exception, to occasional advances and flank assaults; as a rule, however, it will be limited to occupation of the positions abandoned by the retreating troops. In addition, the military have, on their side, the disposal of artillery and fully equipped corps of skilled engineers, resources of war which, in nearly every case, the insurgents entirely lack. No wonder, then, that even the barricade struggles conducted with the greatest heroism—Paris, June 1848; Vienna, October 1848; Dresden, May 1849—ended with the defeat of the insurrection, so soon as the leaders of the attack, unhampered by political considerations, acted from the purely military standpoint, and their soldiers remained reliable.

The numerous successes of the insurgents up to 1848 were due to a great variety of causes. In Paris in July 1830 and February 1848, as in most of the Spanish street fights, there stood between the insurgents and the military a citizens’ guard,¹ which either directly took the side of the insurrection, or else by its lukewarm, indecisive attitude caused the troops likewise to vacillate, and supplied the insurrection with arms’ into the bargain. Where this citizens’ guard opposed the insurrection from the outset, as in June 1848 in Paris, the insurrection was vanquished. In Berlin in 1848, the people were victorious partly through a considerable accession of new fighting forces during the night and the morning of the 19th, partly as a result of the exhaustion and bad victualling of the troops, and, finally, partly as a result of the paralysed command. But in all cases the fight was won because the troops failed to obey, because the officers lost their power of decision or because their hands were tied.

Even in the classic time of street fighting, therefore, the barricade produced more of a moral than a material effect. It was a means of shaking the steadfastness of the military. If it held out until this was attained, then victory was won; if not, there

¹This civic militia arose in the period of the first French bourgeois revolution. During the July monarchy (1830-48), the National Guard consisted of various bourgeois elements.—Ed.

was defeat. [This is the main point, which must be kept in view, likewise when the chances of contingent future street fights are examined.]

The chances, however, were in 1849 already pretty poor. Everywhere the bourgeoisie had thrown in its lot with the government, “culture and property” had hailed and feasted the military moving against the insurrections. The spell of the barricade was broken; the soldier no longer saw behind it “the people,” but rebels, agitators, plunderers, levellers, the scum of society; the officer had in the course of time become versed in the tactical forms of street fighting, he no longer marched straight ahead and without cover against the improvised breastwork, but went round it through gardens, yards and houses. And this was now successful, with a little skill, in nine cases out of ten.

But since then there have been very many more changes, and all in favour of the military. If the big towns have become considerably bigger, the armies have become bigger still. Paris and Berlin have, since 1848, grown less than fourfold, but their garrisons have grown more than that. By means of the railways, the garrisons can, in twenty-four hours, be more than doubled, and in forty-eight hours they can be increased to huge armies. The arming of this enormously increased number of troops has become incomparably more effective. In 1848 the smooth-bore percussion muzzle-loader, today the small-calibre magazine breech-loading rifle, which shoots four times as far, ten times as accurately and ten times as fast as the former. At that time the relatively ineffective round-shot and grape-shot of the artillery; today the percussion shells, of which one is sufficient to demolish the best barricade. At that time the pick-axe of the sapper for breaking through walls; today the dynamite cartridge.

On the other hand, all the conditions on the insurgents’ side have grown worse. An insurrection with which all sections of the people sympathise will hardly recur; in the class struggle all the middle sections will never group themselves round the proletariat so exclusively that the reactionary parties gathered round the bourgeoisie well-nigh disappear. The “people,” therefore, will always appear divided, and with this a powerful lever,
so extraordinarily effective in 1848, is lacking. If more soldiers who have seen service came over to the insurrectionists, the arm-  
ing of them would become so much the more difficult. The hunting  
and luxury guns of the munitions shops—even if not previously  
made unusable by removal of part of the lock by the police—are far from being a match for the magazine rifle of  
the soldier, even in close fighting. Up to 1848 it was possible to  
made the necessary ammunition oneself out of powder and lead;  
today the cartridges differ for each rifle, and are everywhere alike  
only in one point, that they are a special product of big industry,  
and therefore not to be prepared ex tempore, with the result that  
most rifles are useless as long as one does not possess the am-  
munition specially suited to them. And, finally, since 1848 the  
newly built quarters of the big towns have been laid out in long,  
straight, broad streets, as though made to give full effect to the  
new cannons and rifles. The revolutionary would have to be mad,  
who himself chose the working class districts in the North and  
East of Berlin for a barricade fight. [Does that mean that in the  
future the street fight will play no further role? Certainly not.  
It only means that the conditions since 1848 have become far more  
unfavourable for civil fights, far more favourable for the military.  
A future street fight can therefore only be victorious when this  
unfavourable situation is compensated by other factors. Accord-  
ingly, it will occur more seldom in the beginning of a great revolu-  
tion than in its further progress, and will have to be undertaken  
with greater forces. These, however, may then well prefer, as in the  
whole Great French Revolution or on September 4 and October 31,  
1870, in Paris, the open attack to the passive barricade tactics.]  

Does the reader now understand, why the ruling classes de-  
cidedly want to bring us to where the guns shoot and the sabres  
slash? Why they accuse us today of cowardice, because we do  

1 At a moment's notice.—Ed.
2 On September 4, 1870, the government of Louis Bonaparte was over-  
thrown and the republic proclaimed, and on October 31 of the same year  
there took place the unsuccessful attempt of the workers' battalions,  
led by Blanquiets, to make an insurrection against the government of national  
defence. For further details see Marx, The Civil War in France, in the  
present volume.—Ed.
3 Frederick II, King of Prussia (1712-86).—Ed.
4 At the battle of Wagram in 1809 Napoleon I defeated the Austrian  
army, while at Waterloo on July 18 he suffered a decisive defeat at the  
hands of the allied armies (the British, Prussian, etc.).—Ed.
5 The words in parentheses were deleted by Engels himself.—Ed.
6 Sudden attack.—Ed.
Germany—even in France the Socialists are realising more and more that no lasting victory is possible for them, unless they first win the great mass of people, i.e., in this case, the peasants. Slow propaganda work and parliamentary activity are being recognised here, too, as the most immediate tasks of the Party. Successes were not lacking. Not only have a whole series of municipal councils been won; fifty Socialists have seats in the Chambers, and they have already overthrown three ministries and a president of the republic. In Belgium last year the workers enforced the franchise, and have been victorious in a quarter of the constituencies. In Switzerland, in Italy, in Denmark, yes, even in Bulgaria and Rumania the Socialists are represented in the parliaments. In Austria all parties agree that our admission to the Reichsrat\(^1\) can no longer be withheld. We will get in, that is certain, the only question still in dispute is: by which door? And even in Russia, when the famous Zemsky Sobor meets, that National Assembly to which young Nicholas offers such vain resistance, even there we can reckon with certainty on also being represented in it.

Of course, our foreign comrades do not renounce their right to revolution. The right to revolution is, after all, the only real “historical right” the only right on which all modern states without exception rest. Mecklenburg included, whose aristocratic revolution was ended in 1755 by the “hereditary settlement,” the glorious charter of feudalism still valid today. The right to revolution is so incontestably recognised in the general consciousness that even General von Boguslawski derives the right to a coup d'état, which he vindicates for his Kaiser, solely from this popular right.

But whatever may happen in other countries, German Social-Democracy has a special situation and therewith, at least in the first instance, a special task. The two million voters whom it sends to the ballot box, together with the young men and women who stand behind them as non-voters, form the most numerous, most compact mass, the decisive “shock force” of the international proletarian army. This mass already supplies over a fourth of the recorded votes; and as the by-elections to the Reichstag, the diet elections in individual states, the municipal council and industrial court elections demonstrate, it increases uninterruptedly. Its growth proceeds as spontaneously, as steadily, as irresistibly, and at the same time as tranquilly as a natural process. All government intervention has proved powerless against it. We can count even today on two and a half million voters. If it continues in this fashion, by the end of the century we shall conquer the greater part of the middle section of society, petty bourgeois and small peasants, and grow into the decisive power in the land, before which all other powers will have to bow, whether they like it or not. To keep this growth going without interruption until of itself it gets beyond the control of the ruling governmental system [not to fritter away this daily increasing shock force in advance guard fighting, but to keep it intact until the day of the decision] that is our main task. And there is only one means by which the steady rise of the socialist fighting forces in Germany could be momentarily halted, and even thrown back for some time: a clash on a big scale with the military, a bloodbath like that of 1871 in Paris. In the long run that would also be overcome. To shoot out of the world a party which numbers millions—all the magazine rifles of Europe and America are not enough for this. But the normal development would be impeded [the shock force would, perhaps, not be available at the critical moment], the decisive struggle\(^1\) would be delayed, protracted and attended by heavy sacrifices.

The irony of world history turns everything upside down. We, the “revolutionaries,” the “rebels”—we are thriving far better on legal methods than on illegal methods and revolt. The parties of order, as they call themselves, are perishing under the legal conditions created by themselves. They cry despairingly with Odilon Barrot: *la légalité nous tue*, legality is the death of us; whereas we, under this legality, get firm muscles and rosy cheeks and look like eternal life. And if we are not so crazy as to let ourselves be driven into street fighting in order to please them, then nothing else is finally left for them but themselves to break through this legality so fatal to them.

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\(^1\) Austrian Parliament.—Ed.

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\(^1\) In the falsified text, the words "die Entscheidung" (the decision) have been substituted for "der Entscheidungskampf" (the decisive struggle).—Ed.
Meanwhile they make new laws against revolution. Again everything is turned upside down. These anti-revolt fanatics of today, are they not themselves the rebels of yesterday? Have we perchance, evoked the civil war of 1866? Have we driven the King of Hanover, the Elector of Hesse, the Duke of Nassau from their hereditary, lawful domains, and annexed these hereditary domains? And do these rebels against the German Confederation and three crowns by the grace of God complain of overthrow? Quis tulerit Gracchus de seditione querentes? Who could allow the Bismarck worshippers to rail at revolt?

Let them, nevertheless, put through their anti-revolt bills, make them still worse, transform the whole penal law into india-rubber, they will achieve nothing but a new proof of their impotence. In order seriously to hit Social-Democracy, they will have to resort to quite other measures. They can only hold in check the Social-Democratic revolt which is just now doing so well by keeping within the law, by revolt on the part of the parties of order, which cannot live without breaking the laws. Herr Roessler, the Prussian bureaucrat, and Herr von Boguslawski, the Prussian general, have shown them the only way in which the workers, who refuse to let themselves be lured into street fighting, can still, perhaps, be held in check. Breach of the constitution, dictatorship, return to absolutism, regis voluntas suprema lex. Therefore, only courage, gentlemen; here is no backing out of it, here you are in for it!

But do not forget that the German empire, just as all small states and generally all modern states, is a product of contract: of the contract, firstly, of the princes with one another and, secondly, of the princes with the people. If one side breaks the contract, the whole contract falls to the ground; the other side is then also no longer bound fas Bismarck showed its so beautifully in 1866. If, therefore, you break the constitution of the Reich, then Social-Democracy is free, can do and refrain from doing what it will with regard to you. But what it will do then it will hardly give away to you today!]

It is now, almost to the year, sixteen hundred years since a dangerous party of revolt made a great commotion in the Roman empire. It undermined religion and all the foundations of the state; it flatly denied that Caesar’s will was the supreme law; it was without a fatherland, international; it spread over all countries of the empire from Gaul to Asia, and beyond the frontiers of the empire. It had long carried on an underground agitation in secret; for a considerable time, however, it had felt itself strong enough to come out into the open. This party of revolt, of those known by the name of Christians, was also strongly represented in the army; whole legions were Christian. When they were ordered to attend the sacrificial ceremonies of the pagan-established church, in order to do the honours there, the rebel soldiers had the audacity to stick peculiar emblems—crosses—on their helmets in protest. Even the wonted barrack cruelties of their superior officers were fruitless. The Emperor Diocletian could no longer quietly look on while order, obedience and discipline in his army were being undermined. He intervened energetically, while there was still time. He passed an anti-Socialist, I should say anti-Christian, law. The meetings of the rebels were forbidden, their meeting halls were closed or even pulled down, the Christian badges, crosses, etc., were, like the red handkerchiefs in Saxony, prohibited. Christians were declared incapable of holding offices in the state, they were not to be allowed even to become corporals. Since there were not available at that time judges so well trained in “respect of persons” as Herr von Köllner’s anti-revolt bill assumes, the Christians were forbidden out of hand to seek justice before a court. This exceptional law was also without effect. The Christians tore it down from the walls with scorns; they are even supposed to have burnt the Emperor’s palace in Nicomedia over his head. Then the latter avenged himself by the great persecution of Christians in the year 303, according to our chronology. It was the last of its kind.

1 On this, see Engels’ Prefatory Note to the Peasants War in Germany in the present volume.—Ed.

2 Who would suffer the Gracchi to complain of sedition?—Ed.

3 The king’s will is the supreme law.—Ed.

4 The draft of the new law against the Socialists was introduced in the Reichstag on December 6, 1894; the bill was handed over to a commission which discussed it up to April 25, 1895. On May 11, the bill was rejected.—Ed.
And it was so effective that seventeen years later the army consisted overwhelmingly of Christians, and the succeeding autocrat of the whole Roman Empire, Constantine, called the Great by the priests, proclaimed Christianity as the state religion.

F. ENGELS

London, March 6, 1895.

THE CLASS STRUGGLES IN FRANCE

I

FROM FEBRUARY TO JUNE 1848

With the exception of a few short chapters, every important part of the annals of the revolution from 1848 to 1849 carries the heading: Defeat of the revolution!

But what succumbed in these defeats was not the revolution. It was the pre-revolutionary traditional appendages, results of social relationships, which had not yet come to the point of sharp class antagonisms—persons, illusions, conceptions, projects, from which the revolutionary party before the February Revolution was not free, from which it could be freed, not by the victory of February, but only by a series of defeats.

In a word: revolutionary advance made headway not by its immediate tragi-comic achievements, but on the contrary by the creation of a powerful, united counter-revolution, by the creation of an opponent, by fighting whom the party of revolt first ripened into a real revolutionary party.

To prove this is the task of the following pages.

I. The Defeat of June 1849

After the July Revolution, when the Liberal banker, Laffitte, led his godfather, the Duke of Orleans, in triumph to the Hôtel de Ville,¹ he let fall the words: "From now on the bankers will rule." Laffitte had betrayed the secret of the revolution.²

¹ Town Hall.—Ed.
² After the victory of the July Revolution, the Duke of Orleans (Louis Philippe) was proclaimed "vice-regent" and afterwards king.—Ed.

THE CLASS STRUGGLES IN FRANCE 1848-1850

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It was not the French bourgeoisie that ruled under Louis Philippe, but a fraction of it, bankers, stock exchange kings, railway kings, owners of coal and iron works and forests, a part of the landed proprietors that rallied round them—the so-called finance aristocracy. It sat on the throne, it dictated laws in the Chambers, it conferred political posts from cabinet portfolios to the tobacco bureau.

The real industrial bourgeoisie formed part of the official opposition, i.e., it was represented only as a minority in the Chambers. Its opposition was expressed all the more decisively, the more unalloyed the autocracy of the finance aristocracy became, and the more it itself imagined that its domination over the working class was ensured after the mutinies of 1832, 1834 and 1839, which had been drowned in blood. Granat', the Rouen manufacturer, the most fanatical instrument of bourgeois reaction in the Constituent Assembly, as well as in the legislative National Assembly,² was the most violent opponent of Guizot in the Chamber of Deputies. Leon Faucher, later renowned for his impotent endeavours to push himself forward as the Guizot of the French counter-revolution, in the last days of Louis Philippe, waged a war of the pen for industry against speculation and its train bearer, the government. Bastiat agitated against the ruling system

¹ June 5, 1832, was the date of the uprising in Paris organised by the Society of the Friends of the People and other revolutionist unions. The occasion was furnished by the burial of General Lamarque, the leader of the republican group in the Chamber of Deputies. The revolutionary organisations proposed to arrange merely a demonstration but it ended in bloodshed. When the demonstrators brought out the Red flag with the inscription "Liberty or death," the troops hurled themselves upon them. Barricades were thrown up, the last of which were only destroyed by cannon fire on the evening of June 6.

² On April 9, 1834, a new rising of the Lyons workers broke out (the first took place in 1833). The immediate cause was the verdict pronounced by the court against certain workers as instigators of the struggle for increased wages. After a stubborn and bloody struggle, which lasted several days, the rising ended in a defeat for the workers.

³ On May 12, 1839 an unsuccessful attempt at insurrection by the Blanquist Society of the Seasons took place. See note 3 on p. 5 of the present volume.—Ed.

⁴ The Constituent Assembly sat from May 4, 1848, to May 26, 1849, and the Legislative Assembly from May 26, 1849, to December 2, 1851.—Ed.
in the name of Bordeaux and the whole of wine-producing France.

The petty bourgeoisie of all degrees, and the peasantry also, were completely excluded from political power. Finally, in the official opposition or entirely outside the pays légal, there were the ideological representatives and spokesmen of the above classes, their savants, lawyers, doctors, etc., in a word: their so-called talents.

The July monarchy, owing to its financial need, was dependent from the beginning on the big bourgeoisie, and its dependence on the big bourgeoisie was the inexhaustible source of a growing financial need. It was impossible to subordinate state administration to the interests of national production without balancing the budget, establishing a balance between state expenses and income. And how was this balance to be established, without limiting state expenditure, i.e., without encroaching on interests which were so many supports of the ruling system, and without redistributing taxes, i.e., without putting a considerable share of the burden of taxes on the shoulders of the big bourgeoisie itself?

Moreover the fraction of the bourgeoisie that ruled and legislated through the Chambers had a direct interest in state indebtedness. The state deficit was even the main object of its speculation and played the chief role in its enrichment. At the end of each year a new deficit. After expiry of four or five years a new loan. And every new loan offered new opportunities to the finance aristocracy for defrauding the state which was kept artificially on the verge of bankruptcy—it had to contract with the bankers under the most unfavourable conditions. Each new loan gave a further opportunity for plundering the public, that had invested its capital in state bonds, by stock exchange manipulations into the secrets of which the government and the majority in the Chambers were admitted. In general, the fluctuation of state credits and the possession of state secrets gave the bankers and their associates in the Chambers and on the throne the possibility of evoking sudden, extraordinary fluctuations in the quotations of state bonds, the result of which was always bound to be the ruin of a mass of smaller capitalists and the fabulously rapid enrichment of the big gamblers. If the state deficit was in the direct interest of the ruling fraction of the bourgeoisie, then it is clear why the extraordinary state expenditure in the last years of Louis Philippe's government was far more than double the extraordinary state expenditure under Napoleon, indeed reached a yearly sum of nearly 400,000,000 francs, whereas the whole annual export of France seldom attained a volume amounting to 750,000,000 francs. The enormous sums which, in this way, flowed through the hands of the state facilitated, moreover, swindling contracts for deliveries, bribery, defalcations and all kinds of roguery. The defrauding of the state, just as it occurred on a large scale in connection with loans, was repeated in detail, in the state works. The relationship between Chamber and government multiplied itself as the relationship between individual departments and individual entrepreneurs.

In the same way as the ruling class exploited state expenditure in general and state loans, they exploited the building of railways. The Chambers piled the main burdens on the state, and secured the golden fruits to the speculating finance aristocracy. One recalls the scandals in the Chamber of Deputies, when by chance it came out that all the members of the majority, including a number of ministers, had taken part as shareholders in the very railway construction which as legislators they caused to be carried out afterwards at the cost of the state.

On the other hand, the smallest financial reform was wrecked by the influence of the bankers. For example, the postal reform. Rothschild protested. Was it permissible for the state to curtail sources of income out of which interest was to be paid on its ever increasing debt?

The July monarchy was nothing other than a joint stock company for the exploitation of French national wealth, the dividends...
of which were divided among ministers, Chambers, 240,000 voters and their adherents. Louis Philippe was the director of this company—Robert Macaire\(^1\) on the throne. Trade, industry, agriculture, shipping, the interests of the industrial bourgeoisie, were bound to be continually prejudiced and endangered under this system. The bourgeoisie in the July days had inscribed on its banner: gouvernement à bon marché, cheap government.

While the finance aristocracy made the laws, was at the head of the administration of the state, had command of all the organised public powers, dominated public opinion through facts and through the press, the same prostitution, the same shameless cheating, the same mania to get rich was repeated in every sphere, from the court to the Café Borgne,\(^2\) to get rich not by production, but by pocketing the already available wealth of others. In particular there broke out, at the top of bourgeois society, clashing every moment with the bourgeois laws themselves, an unbridled display of unhealthy and dissolute appetites, wherein the wealth having its source in gambling naturally seeks its satisfaction, where pleasure becomes crapuleux,\(^3\) where gold, Fifth and blood flow together. The finance aristocracy, in its mode of acquisition as well as in its pleasures, is nothing but the resurrection of the lumpenproletariat at the top of bourgeoisie society.

And the non-ruling sections of the French bourgeoisie cried: corruption! The people cried: à bas les grands voleurs! à bas les assassins!\(^4\) when in 1847, on the most prominent stages of bourgeois society, the same scenes were publicly enacted which regularly lead the lumpenproletariat to brothels, to workhouses and lunatic asylums, before the Bench, to Bagno\(^5\) and to the scaffold. The industrial bourgeoisie saw its interests endangered,

\(^1\) Robert Macaire is a typical clever swindler, a character in the comedy of Benjamin Antier and F. Lemaitre, entitled Robert and Bertrand (1834).

\(^2\) This term was applied in France to cafés of a doubtful character.—\textit{Ed.}

\(^3\) Debouched.—\textit{Ed.}

\(^4\) Down with the big thieves, down with the assassins!—\textit{Ed.}

\(^5\) In France, formerly, one of the prisons substituted for the galleys.—\textit{Ed.}

\(^6\) The petty bourgeoisie was filled with moral indignation, the imagination of the people was offended, Paris was flooded with pamphlets—"la dynastie Rothschild," "les juifs rois de l'époque," etc.\(^6\) in which the rule of the finance aristocracy was denounced and stigmatised with greater or less wit.

Rien pour la gloire! Glory brings no profit: \textit{La paix partout et toujours}? War depresses the quotations of the three and four per cents! The France of the Bourgeois Jews had inscribed on her banner. Her foreign policy was therefore lost in a series of mortifications to French national feeling, which reacted all the more vigorously when the robbery of Poland was brought to an end with the annexation of Cracow by Austria, and when Guizot came out actively on the side of the Holy Alliance in the Swiss separatist war. The victory of the Swiss liberals in this mimic war raised the self-respect of the bourgeois opposition in France; the bloody uprising of the people in Palermo worked like an electric shock on the paralysed masses of the people and awoke their great revolutionary memories and passions.\(^8\)

The eruption of the general discontent was finally accelerated and the sentiment for revolt ripened by two economic world events.

The potato blight and the bad harvests of 1845 and 1846 increased the general ferment among the people. The high cost of living of 1847 called forth bloody conflicts in France as well as on the rest of the Continent. As against the shameless orgies of the finance aristocracy, the struggle of the people for the first necessities of life! At Buzançais\(^4\) the hunger rioters executed; in Paris the over-satiated escrocs\(^5\) snatched from the courts by the royal family.

\(^6\) The Rothschild dynasty, the Jewish kings of the epoch.—\textit{Ed.}

\(^7\) Peace everywhere and always.—\textit{Ed.}

\(^8\) Annexation of Cracow by Austria in agreement with Russia and Prussia on November 11, 1846.—Swiss separatist war, November 4 to 28, 1847.—Rising in Palermo January 12, 1848; at the end of January, nine days' bombardment of the town by the Neapolitans. [Note by F. Engels.]

\(^4\) In 1847 in Buzançais, in connection with the incipient famine, two rich landowners notorious as grain usurers were killed by an excited crowd; five persons were executed or account of this murder.—\textit{Ed.}

\(^5\) Swindlers.—\textit{Ed.}
The second great economic event which hastened the outbreak of the revolution was a *general commercial and industrial crisis* in England. Already heralded in the autumn of 1845 by the wholesale reverses of the speculators in railway shares, delayed during 1846 by a number of incidents such as the impending abolition of the corn duties, in the autumn of 1847 the crisis finally burst forth with the bankruptcy of the London grocers, on the heels of which followed the insolvencies of the land banks and the closing of the factories in the English industrial districts. The after effect of this crisis on the Continent had not yet spent itself when the February Revolution broke out.

The devastation of trade and industry caused by the economic epidemic made the autocracy of the finance aristocracy still more unbearable. Throughout the whole of France the bourgeoisie opposition evoked the *banquet agitation* for an *electoral reform* which should win for them the majority in the Chambers and overthrow the Ministry of the Bourse. In Paris the industrial crisis had, in particular, the result of throwing a number of manufacturers and big traders, who under the existing circumstances could no longer do any business in the foreign market, on to the home market. They set up large establishments, the competition of which ruined the *épiciers* and *boutiquiers* en masse. Hence the innumerable bankruptcies among this section of the Paris bourgeoisie, and hence their revolutionary action in February. It is known how Guizot and the Chambers answered the reform proposals with a plain challenge, how Louis Philippe too late resolved on a Ministry led by Barrot, how hand-to-hand fighting took place between the people and the army, how the army was disarmed by the passive conduct of the National Guard, how the July monarchy had to give way to a Provisional Government.

The *Provisional Government* which emerged from the February barricades necessarily mirrored in its composition the different parties which shared in the victory. It could not be anything but a *compromise between the different classes* which together had overturned the July throne, but whose interests were mutually antagonistic. The great *majority* of its members consisted of representatives of the bourgeoisie. The republican petty bourgeoisie were represented by Ledru-Rollin and Flocon, the republican bourgeoisie by the people from the *National,* the dynastic opposition by Cremieux, Dupont de l'Eure, etc. The working class had only two representatives, Louis Blanc and Albert. Finally, Lamartine as a member of the Provisional Government; this was actually no real interest, no definite class, this was the February Revolution itself, the common uprising with its illusions, its poetry, its imagined content and its phrases. For the rest, the spokesman of the February Revolution, by his position and his views, belonged to the bourgeoisie.

If Paris, as a result of political centralisation, rules France, the workers, in moments of revolutionary earthquakes, rule Paris. The first act in the life of the Provisional Government was an attempt to escape from this overpowering influence, by an appeal from intoxicated Paris to sober France. Lamartine disputed the right of the barricade fighters to proclaim the republic, on the ground that only the majority of Frenchmen had that right; they must await their votes, the Parisian proletariat must not desecrate its victory by a usurpation. The bourgeoisie allowed the proletariat only one usurpation—that of fighting.

Up to noon on February 25, the republic had not yet been proclaimed; on the other hand, the whole of the Ministries had already been divided among the bourgeois elements of the Provisional Government and among the generals, bankers and lawyers of the *National.* But the workers were this time determined not to put up with any swindling like that of July 1830. They were...

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1 Grocers and shopkeepers.—*Ed.*
2 To demands for electoral reform the minister Guizot answered, "Get rich and you will become electors."—*Ed.*
3 Louis Philippe, frightened by the popular uprising which was beginning, dismissed the Guizot ministry on February 23 and on the morning of the 24th appointed the ministry of Odilon Barrot.—*Ed.*
ready to take up the fight anew and to enforce the republic by force of arms. With this message, Raspail betook himself to the Hôtel de Ville. In the name of the Parisian proletariat he commanded the Provisional Government to proclaim the republic; if this order of the people were not fulfilled within two hours, he would return at the head of 200,000 men. The bodies of the fallen were scarcely cold, the barricades were not yet cleared away, the workers not yet disarmed, and the only force which could be opposed to them was the National Guard. Under these circumstances the prudent state doubts and juristic scruples of conscience of the Provisional Government suddenly vanished. The interval of two hours had not expired before all the walls of Paris were resplendent with the tremendous historical words:

République française! Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité!

Even the memory of the limited aims and motives which drove the bourgeoisie into the February Revolution was extinguished by the proclamation of the republic on the basis of universal suffrage. Instead of a few small fractions of the bourgeoisie, whole classes of French society were suddenly hurled into the circle of political power, forced to leave the boxes, the stalls and the gallery and to act in person upon the revolutionary stage! With the constitutional monarchy the semblance of a state power independently confronting bourgeois society also vanished, as well as the whole series of subordinate struggles which this semblance of power called forth!

The proletariat, by dictating the republic to the Provisional Government and through the Provisional Government to the whole of France, stepped into the foreground forthwith as an independent party, but at the same time challenged the whole of bourgeois France to enter the lists against it. What it won was the terrain for the fight for its revolutionary emancipation, but in no way this emancipation itself.

The first thing that the February republic had to do was rather to complete the rule of the bourgeoisie by allowing, besides the finance aristocracy, all the propertied classes to enter the circle of political power. The majority of the great landowners, the Legitimists, were emancipated from the political nullity to which they had been condemned by the July Monarchy. Not for nothing had the Gazette de France agitated in common with the opposition papers, not for nothing had Larocque-Jaquelin taken the side of the revolution in the session of the Chamber of Deputies on February 24. The nominal proprietors, who form the great majority of the French people, the peasants, were put by universal suffrage in the position of arbiters of the fate of France. The February republic finally brought the rule of the bourgeoisie clearly into prominence, since it struck off the crown behind which capital kept itself concealed.

Just as the workers by fighting in the July days had won the bourgeois monarchy, so by fighting in the February days they won the bourgeois republic. Just as the July monarchy had to proclaim itself as a monarchy surrounded by republican institutions so the February republic was forced to proclaim itself a republic surrounded by social institutions. The Parisian proletariat compelled this concession, too.

Marx, a worker, dictated the decree by which the newly formed Provisional Government pledged itself to secure the existence of the workers by work, to provide work for all citizens, etc. And when, a few days later, it forgot its promises and seemed to have lost sight of the proletariat, a mass of 20,000 workers marched on the Hôtel de Ville with the cry: Organisation of labour! Formation of a special Ministry of Labour! The Provisional Government, with reluctance and after long debates, nominated a permanent, special commission, charged with finding means of improving the lot of the working classes! This commission consisted of delegates from the corporations of Parisian artisans and was presided over by Louis Blanc and Albert. The

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1 The old royalist newspaper. — Ed.

2 By agreeing to the establishment of the Luxembourg Commission Louis Blanc assisted the manoeuvre of the bourgeoisie which was playing for time by means of empty promises. In entering the government, Louis
Karl Marx

Luxembourg was assigned to it as a meeting place. In this way the representatives of the working class were exiled from the seat of the Provisional Government, the bourgeois section of which held the real state power and the reins of administration exclusively in its hands, and side by side with the Ministries of Finance, Trade and Public Works, side by side with the banks and the Bourse, there arose a socialist synagogue whose high priests, Louis Blanc and Albert, had the task of discovering the promised land, of preaching the new gospel and of occupying the attention of the Parisian proletariat. Unlike any profane state power, they had no budget, no executive authority at their disposal. With their heads they had to break the pillars of bourgeois society. While the Luxembourg sought the philosopher’s stone, in the Hôtel de Ville they minted the current coinage.

And yet the claims of the Parisian proletariat, so far as they went beyond the bourgeois republic, could win no other existence than the nebulous one of the Luxembourg.

In common with the bourgeoisie the workers had made the February Revolution, and alongside the bourgeoisie they sought to put through their interests, just as they had installed a worker in the Provisional Government itself alongside the bourgeois majority. Organisation of labour! But wage labour is the existing.

Blanc showed himself to be an appendage of the bourgeoisie, an obedient tool in its hands. Lenin drew a parallel between the role of Louis Blanc in the Revolution of 1848 and the role of the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries in that of 1917 in his article, "In Louis Blanc's Footsteps": "The French Socialist, Louis Blanc, gained deplorable fame in the Revolution of 1848 by changing from the position of the class struggle to the position of petty-bourgeois illusions, adorned with the phraseology of 'socialist' phrasology, but in reality tending to strengthen the influence of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat. Louis Blanc expected to receive aid from the bourgeoisie; he hoped, and aroused hopes in others, that the bourgeoisie could aid the workers in the matter of 'organisation of labour'—this vague term having been supposed to express a 'socialist' tendency." (Lenin, Collected Works, English ed., Vol. XX, Book I, p. 111.) The example of Louis Blanc afterwards found numerous followers. The isolated examples of the entry of Socialists into bourgeois governments were converted by the Second International after the war into a regular practice. The parties of the Second International sent their representatives into bourgeois governments where their presence frequently served the purpose of masking the dictatorship of capitalism. —Ed.

The Class Struggles in France 1848-1850

bourgeois organisation of labour. Without it there is no capital, no bourgeoisie, no bourgeois society. Their own Ministry of Labour! But the Ministries of Finance, of Trade, of Public Works—are not these the bourgeois Ministries of Labour? And alongside these a proletarian Ministry of Labour must be a Ministry of impotence, a Ministry of pious wishes, a commission of the Luxembourg. Just as the workers thought to emancipate themselves side by side with the bourgeoisie, so they thought they would be able to consummate a proletarian revolution within the national walls of France, side by side with the remaining bourgeois nations. But French production relations are conditioned by the foreign trade of France, by her position on the world market and the laws thereof; how should France break them without a European revolutionary war, which would strike back at the despot of the world market, England?

A class in which the revolutionary interests of society are concentrated, so soon as it has risen up, finds directly in its own situation the content and the material of its revolutionary activity: foes to be laid low, measures, dictated by the needs of the struggle, to be taken; the consequence of its own deeds drive it on. It makes no theoretical inquiries into its own task. The French working class had not attained this standpoint; it was still incapable of accomplishing its own revolution.

The development of the industrial proletariat is, in general, conditioned by the development of the industrial bourgeoisie. Only under its rule does the proletariat win the wider national existence which can raise its revolution to a national one, and itself create the modern means of production, which become just so many means of its revolutionary emancipation. Only bourgeois rule tears up the roots of feudal society and levels the ground on which a proletarian revolution is alone possible. In France industry is more developed and the bourgeois more revolutionary than elsewhere on the Continent. But was not the February Revolution directed immediately against the finance aristocracy? This fact proved that the industrial bourgeoisie did not rule France. The industrial bourgeoisie can only rule where modern industry shapes all property relations in conformity with itself, and industry can
only win this power when it has conquered the world market, for national bounds are not wide enough for its development. But French industry, to a great extent, maintains its command even of the national market only through a more or less modified system of prohibitive duties. If, therefore, the French proletariat, at the moment of a revolution, possesses in Paris actual power and influence which spur it on to a drive beyond its means, in the rest of France it is crowded into single, scattered industrial centres, being almost lost in the superior numbers of peasants and petty bourgeoisie. The struggle against capital in its developed, modern form, in its culminating phase, the struggle of the industrial wage workers against the industrial bourgeoisie is in France a partial fact, which after the February days could so much the less supply the national content of the revolution, since the struggle against capital's secondary modes of exploitation, that of the peasants against the usury in mortgages, of the petty bourgeoisie against the wholesale dealer, banker and manufacturer, in a word, against bankruptcy, was still hidden in the general uprising against the finance aristocracy. Nothing is more understandable, then, than that the Paris proletariat sought to put through its own interests side by side with those of the bourgeoisie, instead of enforcing them as the revolutionary interests of society itself, and that it let the red flag be lowered to the tricolour. The French workers could not take a step forward, could not touch a hair of the bourgeois order before the course of the revolution had forced the mass of the nation, peasants and petty bourgeoisie, standing between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie to revolt against this order, against the rule of capital, to attach itself to the proletariat as its vanguard. The workers could only buy this victory through the huge defeat of June.

1 The economic policy of the July Monarchy was distinguished by a system of extreme protectionism. The import of pig iron, iron and steel manufactures, yarn, cotton goods, etc., was subject to such high duties that they practically could not reach the French market.—Ed.

2 A struggle arose on the question of the flag of the French republic. The workers demanded that the red flag should be proclaimed the flag of the republic. The bourgeoisie defended the tricolour. The struggle ended in the typical compromise of the February days; the flag of the republic was declared to be the tricolour with a red rosette.—Ed.

To the Luxembourg commission, this creation of the Paris workers, remains the merit of having disclosed from the European tribune the secret of the revolution of the nineteenth century: the emancipation of the proletariat. The Moniteur raged when it had to propagate officially the "wild ravings" which up to that time lay buried in the apocryphal writings of the Socialists and only reached the ears of the bourgeoisie from time to time as remote, half terrifying, half ludicrous legends. Europe awoke astonished from its bourgeoisie doze. In the ideas of the proletarians, therefore, who confused the finance aristocracy with the bourgeoisie in general; in the imagination of good old republicans who denied the very existence of classes or, at most, admitted them as a result of the constitutional monarchy; in the hypocritical phrases of the section of the bourgeoisie up to now exculded from power, the rule of the bourgeoisie was abolished with the introduction of the republic. All the royalists were transformed into republicans and all the millionaires of Paris into workers. The phrase which corresponded to this imagined liquidation of class relations was fraternité, universal fraternisation and brotherhood. This pleasant abstraction from class antagonisms, this sentimental equalisation of contradictory class interests, this fantastic elevation above the class struggle, fraternité, this was the special catchword of the February Revolution. The classes were divided by a mere misunderstanding and Lamartine baptised the Provisional Government on February 24 as "un gouvernement qui suspend ce malentendu terrible qui existe entre les différentes classes." 1 The Parisian proletariat revelled in this generous intoxication of fraternity.

The Provisional Government, on its side, once it was compelled to proclaim the republic, did everything to make it acceptable to the bourgeoisie and to the provinces. The bloody terror of the first French republic was disavowed by the abolition of the death penalty for political offences; the press was opened to all opinions; the army, the courts, the administration remained with a few exceptions in the hands of their old dignitaries; none

1 A government that removes this terrible misunderstanding which exists between different classes.—Ed.
of the July monarchy's great offenders was brought to book. The bourgeoisie republicans of the National amused themselves by exchanging monarchist names and costumes for old republican ones. For them the republic was only a new ball dress for the old bourgeoisie society. The young republic sought its chief merit, not in being alarming, but rather in constantly taking fright itself, and through the soft compliance and non-resistance of its existence, sought to win existence and to disarm resistance. At home to the privileged classes, abroad to the despotic powers, it was loudly announced that the republic was of a peaceful nature. Live and let live was its motto. In addition thereto, shortly after the February Revolution the Germans, Poles, Austrians, Hungarians and Italians, revolted, each people in accordance with its immediate situation. Russia and England—the latter itself agitated, the former vowed—were not prepared. The republic, therefore, had no national enemy. Consequently, there were no great foreign complications which could fire the energies, hasten the revolutionary process, drive the Provisional Government forward or throw it overboard. The Parisian proletariat, which recognised its own creation in the republic, naturally acclaimed each act of the Provisional Government which allowed it to take its place more easily in bourgeois society. It willingly allowed itself to be employed on police service by Caussidière, in order to protect property in Paris, just as it allowed Louis Blanc to arbitrate wage disputes between workers and masters. It was its point d'honneur to preserve unblemished the bourgeois honour of the republic in the eyes of Europe.

The republic encountered no resistance either abroad or at home. It was thereby disarmed. Its task was no longer the revolutionary transformation of the world, it was only to adapt itself to the relations of bourgeois society. Concerning the fanaticism with which the Provisional Government undertook this task, there is no more eloquent testimony than its financial measures.

1 Marx had in mind the March Revolutions of 1848 in Prussia and Austria, the uprising of the Poles in 1848 and the Revolutions of 1848 in Hungary and Italy. —Ed.

2 Under the influence of the 1848 Revolution in France there took place in England a new and final upsurge of the Chartist movement. —Ed.

Public and private credit were naturally shattered. Public credit rests on confidence that the state will allow itself to be exploited by the Jews of finance. But the old state had vanished and the revolution was directed above all against the finance aristocracy. The vibrations of the last European commercial crisis had not yet ceased. Bankruptcy still followed bankruptcy.

Private credit was therefore paralysed, circulation restricted, production at a standstill before the February Revolution broke out. The revolutionary crisis increased the commercial crisis. And if private credit rests on confidence that bourgeois production in the entire scope of its relations, that the Bourgeois order, is untouched and inviolable, what effect must a revolution have had, which questioned the basis of bourgeois production, the economic slavery of the proletariat, and set up against the Bourse the sphinx of the Luxembourg? The uprising of the proletariat is the abolition of bourgeois credit; for it is the abolition of bourgeois production and its order. Public and private credit is the economic thermometer by which the intensity of a revolution can be measured. To the same degree as they fall, the fervour and generative force of the revolution rises.

The Provisional Government wanted to strip the republic of its anti-bourgeois appearance. And so it had, above all, to try to ensure the exchange value of this new form of state, its quotation on the Bourse. With the current quotation of the republic on the Bourse, private credit necessarily rose again.

In order to turn aside the very suspicion that it would not or could not comply with the obligations assumed by the monarchy, in order to build up confidence in bourgeois morality and capacity to pay, the Provisional Government took refuge in a boast as undignified as it was childish. In advance of the legal date of payment they paid out 5 per cent, 4.5 per cent and 4 per cent interest to the state creditors. The bourgeois aplomb, the self-respect of the capitalists suddenly awoke when they saw the anxious haste with which it was sought to buy their confidence.

The financial embarrassment of the Provisional Government was naturally not lessened by a theatrical stroke which robbed
it of its stock of ready cash. The financial pinch could no longer be concealed and *petty bourgeois domestic servants and workers* had to pay for the pleasant surprise which had been prepared for the state creditors.

The *savings bank books* with an amount of more than one hundred francs were declared no longer changeable into gold. The sums deposited in the savings banks were confiscated and by decree transformed into unredeemable state debt. This embittered the already hard pressed *petty bourgeois* against the republic. Since he received, in place of his savings bank books, state debt certificates, he was forced to go to the Bourse in order to sell them and in this way delivered himself directly into the hands of the Bourse Jews, against whom he had made the February Revolution.

The finance aristocracy which ruled under the July monarchy had its high church in the *Bank*. Just as the Bourse governs state credit, the Bank governs *commercial credit*.

The Bank, directly threatened not only in its rule, but in its very existence, by the February Revolution, tried from the beginning to discredit the republic by making the lack of credit general. It suddenly withdrew the credits of the bankers, the manufacturers and the merchants. This manœuvre, as it did not immediately call forth a counter-revolution, necessarily reacted on the Bank itself. The capitalists drew out the money which they had deposited in the vaults of the Bank. The possessors of bank notes rushed the pay office in order to change them for gold and silver.

The Provisional Government could, without forcible interference, force the Bank into *bankruptcy* in a legal manner; it had only to remain passive and leave the Bank to its fate. The *bankruptcy of the Bank*—that was the deluge which in a trice would sweep away from French soil the finance aristocracy, the most powerful and dangerous enemy of the republic, the golden pedestal of the July monarchy. And once the Bank was bankrupt, the bourgeoisie itself would have to regard it as a last, desperate attempt at rescue if the government formed a national bank and subjected national credit to the control of the nation.

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The Provisional Government, on the contrary, fixed a compulsory quotation for the notes of the Bank. It did more. It transformed all provincial banks into branches of the *Banque de France* and allowed it to cast its net over the whole of France. Later it pledged the *state forests* to the Bank as a guarantee for a loan that it contracted from it. In this way the February Revolution directly strengthened and enlarged the bankocracy which it was to have overthrown.

Meanwhile the Provisional Government was bowed beneath the burden of a growing deficit. In vain it begged for patriotic sacrifices. Only the workers threw in their alms. Recourse had to be had to a heroic measure, to the imposition of a *new tax*. But whom were they to tax? The Bourse wolves, the bank kings, the state creditors, the *rentiers*, the manufacturers? That was not the way to ingratiate the republic with the bourgeoisie. That meant, on the one hand, to endanger state credit and commercial credit, while, on the other, attempts were made to purchase them with such great sacrifices and humiliations. But someone had to fork out the cash. Who was sacrificed to bourgeois credit? *Jacques le bon-homme*, the peasant.

The Provisional Government imposed an additional tax of 45 centimes in the franc on the four direct taxes. The government press humbugged the Paris proletariat into thinking that this tax would fall chiefly on the big landed property, on the possessors of the milliard granted by the Restoration. But in truth it hit the *peasant class* above all, i.e., the large majority of the French people. *They had to pay the costs of the February Revolution*; in them the counter-revolution gained its main material. The 45 centimes tax was a life question for the French peasant; he made it a life question for the republic. From that moment the republic meant the 45 centimes tax for the French peasant, and he saw in the Paris proletariat the spendthrift who did himself well at his expense.

Whereas the Revolution of 1789 began by shaking the feudal burdens off the peasants, the Revolution of 1848 announced itself

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1 A contemptuous nickname applied by the French landowners to the peasants.—*Ed.*
with a new tax on the rural population, in order not to endanger capital and to keep its state machine going.  

There was only one means by which the Provisional Government could set aside all these inconveniences and jerk the state out of its old rut—the declaration of state bankruptcy. We recall how Ledru-Rollin in the National Assembly subsequently recited the virtuous indignation with which he repudiated this demand of the Bourse Jew, Fould, now French Finance Minister. Fould had handed him the apple from the tree of knowledge.

The Provisional Government, having honoured the bill drawn on the state by the old bourgeois society, succumbed to the latter. It had become the hard pressed debtor of bourgeois society instead of confronting it as the pressing creditor that had to collect the revolutionary debts of many years. It had to consolidate the shaky bourgeois relationship, in order to fulfil obligations which are only to be fulfilled within these relationships. Credit becomes a condition of life for it and the concessions to the proletariat, the promises made to it, become so many fetters which have to be struck off. The emancipation of the workers—even as a phrase—became an unbearable danger to the new republic, for it was a standing protest against the restoration of credit, which rests on undisturbed and untroubled recognition of the existing economic class relations. Therefore, it was necessary to have done with the workers.

The February Revolution had cast the army out of Paris. The National Guard, i.e., the bourgeoisie in its different grades, formed the sole power. Alone, however, it did not feel itself a match for the proletariat. Moreover, it was forced slowly and bit by bit to open its ranks and allow armed proletarians to enter the National Guard, albeit after the most tenacious resistance and after setting up a hundred different obstacles. There consequently remained but one way out: to set one part of the proletariat against the other.

For this purpose the Provisional Government formed 24 battalions of Mobile Guards, each of a thousand men, out of young men from 15 to 20 years. They belonged for the most part to the lumpenproletariat, which, in all big towns form a mass strictly differentiated from the industrial proletariat, a recruiting ground for thieves and criminals of all kinds, living on the crumbs of society, people without a definite trade, vagabonds, gens sans jou et sans sceu, 2 varying according to the degree of civilisation of the nation to which they belong, but never renouncing their lazzaroni character; at the youthful age at which the Provisional Government recruited them, thoroughly malleable, as capable of the most heroic deeds and the most exalted sacrifices, as of the basest banditry and the d nastest corruption. The Provisional Government paid them 1 franc 50 centimes a day, i.e., it bought them. It gave them their own uniform, i.e., it made them outwardly distinct from the bloudes of the workers. In part they had assigned to them as leaders, officers from the standing army; in part they themselves—elected young sons of the bourgeoisie whose rhodomontades about death for the fatherland and devotion to the republic captivated them. And so the Paris proletariat was confronted with an army, drawn from its own midst, of 24,000 young, strong and foolhardy men. It gave cheers for the Mobile Guard on its marches through Paris. It recognised in it its champions of the barricades. It regarded it as the proletarian guard in opposition to the bourgeoisie National Guard. Its error was pardonable.

Besides the Mobile Guard, the government decided to gather round itself an industrial army of workers. A hundred thousand workers thrown on the streets through the crisis and the revolution were enrolled by the Minister Marie in so-called National Ateliers. 3 Under this grand name was hidden nothing but the

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1 Compare Lenin's remark: "In France, in 1789, it was a matter of overthrowing absolutism and the nobility. At the level of economic and political development then prevailing, the bourgeoisie believed in harmony of interests, it had no fears concerning the stability of its rule, and was prepared to enter into an alliance with the peasantry. . . . In 1848, it was a matter of the proletariat overthrowing the bourgeoisie. The proletariat failed to win over the petty bourgeoisie, whose treachery caused the defeat of the revolution." (Lenin, Selected Works, Vol. V, English ed., "The Two Lines of the Revolution," pp. 150-59.)—Ed.

2 Folk without fire and without faith, i.e., rabble.—Ed.

3 Idlers and beggars of Naples.—Ed.

4 National Workshops.—Ed.
employment of the workers on tedious, monotonous, unproductive earthworks at a wage of 23 sou. English workhouses in the open—that is what these National Ateliers were. The Provisional Government believed that it had formed in them a second proletarian army against the workers themselves. This time the bourgeoisie was mistaken in the National Ateliers, just as the workers were mistaken in the Mobile Guard. It had created an army for mutiny.

But one purpose was achieved. National Ateliers—that was the name of the people's workshops, which Louis Blanc preached in the Luxembourg. The Ateliers of Marie, devised in direct antagonism to the Luxembourg, thanks to the common name, offered occasion for a plot of errors worthy of the Spanish comedy of servants. The Provisional Government itself secretly spread the report that these National Ateliers were the discovery of Louis Blanc, and this seemed the more plausible because Louis Blanc, the prophet of the National Ateliers, was a member of the Provisional Government. And in the half-naive, half-intentional confusion of the Paris bourgeoisie, in the artificially maintained opinion of France and of Europe, these workhouses were the first realisation of socialism, which was put in the pillory with them.

In their title, though not in their content, the National Ateliers were the embodiment of the proletariat against bourgeois industry, bourgeois credit and the bourgeois republic. The whole hate of the bourgeoisie was therefore turned upon them. At the same time, it had found in them the point against which it could direct the attack, as soon as it was strong enough to break openly with the February illusions. All the discontent, all the ill humour of the petty bourgeoisie was simultaneously directed against these National Ateliers, the common target. With real fury they reckoned up the sums that the proletarian loafers swallowed, while their own situation became daily more unbearable. A state pension for

1 The new Poor Law adopted in England in 1834 provided for building "workhouses" for the poor instead of "relief" in money or kind. The food given in these workhouses was disgustingly bad, and the work extremely heavy; consequently they were called "Bastilles for the poor" and were objects of terror to the poor. Ed.

sham labour, that is socialism! They growled to themselves. They sought the basis of their misery in the National Ateliers, the declarations of the Luxembourg, the marches of the workers through Paris. And no one was more fantastic about the alleged machinations of the Communists than the petty bourgeoisie who hovered hopelessly on the brink of bankruptcy.

Thus in the approaching mêlée between bourgeoisie and proletariat, all the advantages, all the decisive posts, all the middle sections of society were in the hands of the bourgeoisie, at the same time as the waves of the February Revolution rose high over the whole Continent, and each new post brought a new bulletin of revolution, now from Italy, now from Germany, now from the remotest parts of Southeastern Europe, and maintained the general exuberance of the people, giving it constant testimony of a victory that it had already lost.

March 17 and April 16 were the first skirmishes in the big class struggle which the bourgeois republic hid under its wings.

March 17 revealed the ambiguous situation of the proletariat, which permitted no decisive act. Its demonstration originally had the purpose of pushing the Provisional Government back on to the path of the revolution, of effecting the exclusion of its bourgeois members according to circumstances, and of compelling the postponement of the election days for the National Assembly and the National Guard. But on March 16 the bourgeoisie represented in the National Guard made a hostile demonstration against the Provisional Government. With the cry: à bas Ledru-Rollin, it surged to the Hôtel de Ville. And the people were forced, on March 17, to shout: Long live Ledru-Rollin! Long live the Provisional Government! They were forced to take sides against the bourgeoisie in support of the bourgeois republic, which seemed to them to be in danger. They strengthened the Provisional Government, instead of subordinating it to themselves. March 17 went off in a melodramatic scene, and the Paris proletariat on this day once more displayed its giant body, the bourgeoisie both inside and outside the Provisional Government were all the more determined to break it.

2 Down with Ledru-Rollin.—Ed.
April 16 was a misunderstanding organised by the Provisional Government and the bourgeoisie. The workers had gathered in great numbers in the Field of Mars and in the Hippodrome, in order to prepare their selections for the general staff of the National Guard. Suddenly throughout Paris, from one end to the other, a rumour spread as quick as lightning, to the effect that the workers had met, armed, in the Field of Mars, under the leadership of Louis Blanc, Blanqui, Cabot and Raspail, in order to march thence on the Hôtel de Ville, overthrow the Provisional Government and proclaim a communist government. The general alarm is sounded—Ledru-Rollin, Marrast and Lamartine later contended for the honour of having initiated this—in an hour 100,000 men are under arms; the Hôtel de Ville is occupied at all points by the National Guard; the cry: Down with the Communists! Down with Louis Blanc, with Blanqui, with Raspail, with Cabot! thunders throughout Paris, and innumerable deputations pay homage to the Provisional Government, all ready to save the fatherland and society. When the workers finally appeared before the Hôtel de Ville, in order to hand over to the Provisional Government a patriotic collection which they had made in the Field of Mars, they learned to their amazement that bourgeoisie Paris had defeated their shadow in a very carefully calculated sham fight. The terrible attempt of April 16 furnished the excuse for recalling the army to Paris—the actual purpose of the clumsily constructed comedy—and for the reactionary federalist demonstrations in the provinces.

On May 4 the National Assembly met, the result of the direct general elections. Universal suffrage did not possess the magic power which republicans of the old school had ascribed to it. They saw in the whole of France, at least in the majority of Frenchmen, citoyens, with the same interests, the same understanding, etc. This was their cult of the people. Instead of their imaginary people, the elections brought the real people to the light of day, i.e., representatives of the different classes into which it falls. We have seen why peasants and petty bourgeoisie had to vote under the leadership of a bourgeoisie spoiling for a fight and big landowners frantic for restoration. But if universal suffrage was not the miraculous magic wand for which the republican duffers had taken it, it possessed the incomparably higher merit of unchaining the class struggle, of letting the various middle sections of petty-bourgeoisie society rapidly live through their illusions and disappointments, of tossing all the fractions of the exploiting class at one throw to the head of the state, and thus tearing from them their treacherous mask, whereas the monarchy with its property qualification only let definite fractions of the bourgeoisie compromise themselves, and let the others lie hidden behind the scenes and surrounded them with the halo of a common opposition.

In the Constituent National Assembly, which met on May 4, the bourgeois republicans, the republicans of the National had the upper hand. Legitimists and even Orleanists at first only dared to show themselves under the mask of bourgeois republicanism. Only in the name of the republic could the fight against the proletariat be undertaken.

The republic dates from May 4, not from February 25, i.e., the republic recognised by the French people; it is not the republic which the Paris proletariat thrust upon the Provisional Government, not the republic with social institutions, not the dream picture which hovered before the fighters on the barricades. The republic proclaimed by the National Assembly, the sole legitimate republic, is the republic which is no revolutionary weapon against the bourgeoisie order, but rather its political reconstitution, the political re-consolidation of bourgeois society, in a word, the bourgeois republic. From the tribune of the National Assembly this contention resounded and in the entire republican and anti-republican bourgeoisie press it found its echo.

And we have seen how the February republic in reality was not and could not be other than a bourgeois republic; how the Provisional Government, nevertheless, was forced by the immediate pressure of the proletariat to announce it as a republic with social institutions, how the Paris proletariat was still incapable of going beyond the bourgeois republic otherwise than in ideas, in imagina-
tion; how it everywhere acted in its service when it really came to action; how the promises made to it became an unbearable danger for the new republic; how the whole life process of the Provisional Government was comprised in a continuous fight against the demands of the proletariat.

In the National Assembly all France sat in judgment on the Paris proletariat. It broke immediately with the social illusions of the February Revolution; it roundly proclaimed the bourgeois republic, nothing but the bourgeois republic. It at once excluded the representatives of the proletariat, Louis Blanc and Albert, from the Executive Commission appointed by it; it threw out the proposal of a special Labour Ministry, and received with stormy applause the statement of the Minister Trélat: “The question is merely one of bringing labour back to its old conditions.”

But all this was not enough. The February republic was won by the workers with the passive support of the bourgeoisie. The proletarians regarded themselves, and rightly, as the victors of February, and they made the proud claims of victors. They had to be vanquished on the streets, they had to be shown that they were worsted as soon as they fought, not with the bourgeoisie, but against the bourgeoisie. Just as the February republic, with its socialist concessions, required a battle of the proletariat, united with the bourgeoisie, against monarchy, so a second battle was necessary in order to sever the republic from the socialist concessions, in order to officially work out the bourgeois republic as dominant. The bourgeoisie had to refute the demands of the proletariat with arms in its hands. And the real birthplace of the bourgeois republic is not the February victory; it is the June defeat.

The proletariat hastened the decision when, on the 15th of May, it pushed into the National Assembly, sought in vain to recapture its revolutionary influence and only delivered its energetic leaders to the jailers of the bourgeoisie.\(^1\) Il faut en finir!

\(^1\) In connection with the events of May 15, 1848, Barbes, Albert, Raspail, Sobrier, and within a few days Blanqui also, were arrested and cast into the Vincennes prison.—Ed.
weeks later that they began to have an inkling of the meaning of the June fight. They were stupefied by the gunpowder smoke in which their fantastic republic dissolved.

The immediate impression which the news of the June defeat made on us, the reader will allow us to describe in the words of the *N. Rh. Z.*

"The last official remnant of the February Revolution, the Executive Commission, has melted, away, like an apparition, before the seriousness of events. The fireworks of Lamartine have turned into the war rockets of Cavaignac. Fraternité, the fraternity of antagonistic classes of which one exploits the other, this fraternité, proclaimed in February, written in capital letters on the brow of Paris, on every prison, on every barricade—its true, unadulterated, its prosaic expression is civil war, civil war in its most fearful form, the war of labour and capital. This fraternity flamed in front of all the windows of Paris on the evening of June 22, when the Paris of the bourgeoisie was illuminated, whilst the Paris of the proletariat burnt, bled, moaned. Fraternity endured just as long as the interests of the bourgeoisie were in fraternity with the interests of the proletariat. Pedants of the old revolutionary traditions of 1793; socialist doctrinaires who begged at the doors of the bourgeoisie on behalf of the people and were allowed to preach long sermons and to compromise themselves as long as the proletariat saw therein to be lulled to sleep; republicans who demanded the old bourgeoisie order in its entirety, with the exception of the crowned head; adherents of the dynasty among the opposition upon whom fortune foisted the overthrow of the dynasty instead of a change of ministers; Legitimists who wanted, not to throw away the livery, but to change its cut, these were the allies with whom the people made its February. The February Revolution was the beautiful revolution, the revolution of universal sympathy, because the antagonisms, which had flared up in it against the monarchy, smothered peacefully side by side, still undeveloped, because the social struggle which formed its background had won only a joyous existence, an existence of phrases, of words. The June revolution is the ugly revolution, the repulsive revolution, because things have taken the place of phrases, because the republic uncovered the head of the monster itself, by striking off the crown that shielded and concealed it. Order! was the battle cry of Guizot. Order! cried Sebastiani, the follower of Guizot, when Warsaw became Russian. Order! shouted Cavaignac, the brutal echo of the French National Assembly and of the republican bourgeoisie. Order! thundered his grape-shot, as it ripped up the body of the proletariat. None of the numerous revolutions of the French bourgeoisie since 1789 was an attack on order; for they allowed the rule of the class, they allowed the slavery of the workers, they allowed the bourgeoisie order to endure, however often the political form of this rule and of this slavery changed. June has attacked this order. Woe to June!" (N. Rh. Z., June 29, 1848.)

Woe to June! re-echoes Europe.

The Paris proletariat was forced into the June insurrection by the bourgeoisie. In this lay its doom. Its immediate, admitted needs did not drive it to want to win the forcible overthrow of the bourgeoisie, nor was it equal to this task. The *Moniteur* had to inform it officially that the time was past when the republic saw any occasion to do honour to its illusions, and its defeat first convinced it of the truth that the slightest improvement in its position remains a utopia within the bourgeois republic, a utopia that becomes a crime as soon as it wants to realise it. In place of its demands, exuberant in form, but petty and even bourgeois still in content, the concession of which it wanted to wring from the February republic, there appeared the hold slogan of revolutionary struggle: Overthrow the bourgeoisie! Dictatorship of the working class!

By making its burial place the birth place of the bourgeois republic, the proletariat compelled the latter to come forth with its pure form as the state whose admitted object is to perpetuate the rule of capital, the slavery of labour. Constantly faced by the scarred, irreconcilable, invincible enemy—invincible because its existence is the condition of the bourgeoisie's own life—bourgeois rule, freed from all fetters, was bound to turn immediately into bourgeois terrorism. With the proletariat removed for the time being from the stage and bourgeois dictatorship recognised officially, the middle sections, in the mass, had more and more to side with the proletariat as their position became more unbearable and their antagonism to the bourgeoisie became more acute. Just as earlier in its upsurge, so now they had to find in its defeat the cause of their misery.

If the June insurrection raised the self-reliance of the bourgeoisie all over the Continent, and caused it to league itself openly with the feudal monarchy against the people, what was the first sacrifice to this alliance? The Continental bourgeoisie itself. The June defeat prevented it from consolidating its rule and from bringing the people, half satisfied and half out of humour, to a
standstill at the lowest stage of the bourgeois revolution.

Finally, the defeat of June divulged to the despotic powers of Europe the secret that France under all conditions must maintain peace abroad in order to be able to wage civil war at home. Thus the peoples who had begun the fight for their national independence were abandoned to the superior power of Russia, Austria and Prussia, but, at the same time, the fate of these national revolutions was subordinated to the fate of the proletarian revolution, robbed of its apparent independence, its independence of the great social revolution. The Hungarian shall not be free, nor the Pole, nor the Italian, as long as the worker remains a slave!

Finally, with the victory of the Holy Alliance, Europe took on a form that makes every fresh proletarian upheaval in France directly coincide with a world war. The new French revolution is forced to leave its national soil forthwith and conquer the European terrain, on which alone the revolution of the nineteenth century can be carried through.

Only through the defeat of June, therefore, were all the conditions created under which France can seize the initiative of the European revolution. Only after baptism in the blood of the June insurgents did the tricolour become the flag of the European revolution—the red flag.

And we cry: The revolution is dead!—Long live the revolution!

**The Class Struggles in France 1848-1850**

II

From June 1848 to June 13, 1849

February 25, 1848, had granted the republic to France, June 25 thrust the revolution on her. And revolution, after June, meant: overthrow of bourgeois society, whereas, before February, it had meant overthrow of the form of state.

The June fight had been led by the republican fraction of the bourgeoisie; with victory, the state power inevitably fell to its share. The state of siege laid Paris, gagged, unrestraining at its feet, and in the provinces there was a moral state of siege, the threatening, brutal arrogance of the victorious bourgeoisie and the unleashed property fanaticism of the peasants. No danger, therefore, from below!

The smashing of the revolutionary force of the workers simultaneously shattered the political influence of the democratic republicans, i.e., of the republicans in the sense of the petty bourgeoisie, who were represented in the Executive Commission by Ledru-Rollin, in the Constituent National Assembly by the party of the Mountain and in the press by the Réforme. Together with the bourgeois republicans they had conspired on April 16 against the proletariat, together with them they had warred against it in the June days. Thus they themselves blasted the background against which their party stood out as a power, for the petty bourgeoisie can only preserve a revolutionary attitude to the bourgeoisie as long as the proletariat stands behind it. They were

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1 The Party of the Mountain (the Montagnards) was the name applied during the time of the 1848 Revolution to the representatives of the democratic petty-bourgeois republicans in the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies. This name dated from the time of the French bourgeois revolution when the designation of the Mountain was applied to the Left wing in the Convention, who received this title owing to the benches on which Left Deputies were seated being situated high up. The "Mountain" of 1848 which represented "the mass of the nation wavering between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat" (Marx) was only a pitiful parody of the "Mountain" of the period of the French bourgeois revolution at the end of the eighteenth century. The Réforme was the organ of the Mountain in 1848.—Ed.
dismissed. The sham alliance which the bourgeois republicans, reluctantly and with reservations, concluded with them during the epoch of the Provisional Government and the Executive Commission was openly broken by the bourgeois republicans. Spurned and repulsed as allies, they sank down to subordinate henchmen of the tricolour, from which they could not wring any concessions, but the domination of which they had to support whenever this, and with it the republic, was put in question by the anti-republican bourgeois factions. Finally, these factions, the Orleanists and the Legitimists, found themselves, as a matter of course, in a minority in the Constituent National Assembly. Before the June days, they themselves only dared to react under the mask of bourgeois republicanism; the June victory allowed for a moment the whole of bourgeois France to greet its deliverer in Cavaignac, and when, shortly after the June days, the anti-republican bourgeois republicans, reconstituted themselves as an independent party, the military dictatorship and the state of siege in Paris permitted it to put out its antennae only very timidly and bashfully.

Since 1830, the bourgeois republican fraction, with its writers, its speakers, its men of talent and ambition, its deputies, generals, bankers, and lawyers had grouped itself round a Parisian journal, the *National*. In the provinces this journal had its branch newspapers. The coterie of the *National* was the *dynasty of the tricolour republic*. It immediately took possession of all state offices, of the ministries, the prefecture of police, the post-office management, the positions of prefect, the higher posts of army officers now vacant. At the head of the executive power stood its general, Cavaignac; its editor-in-chief, Marrast, became permanent president of the Constituent National Assembly. As master of ceremonies in his saloons, he at the same time did the honours of the honest republic.

Even revolutionary French writers awed, as it were, by the republican tradition, have encouraged the mistake that the royalists dominated the Constituent National Assembly. On the contrary, after the June days, the Constituent Assembly remained the *exclusive representative of bourgeois republicanism*, and it put this face forward all the more decidedly, the more the influence of course, the whole essence of the class position and aspirations of the petty bourgeoisie consists in wanting the impossible, in aspiring towards the impossible, *i.e.* towards just such a middle course.

"The third, determining class force was the proletariat which aspired not towards a 'conciliation' with the bourgeoisie, but towards a victory over it, towards a fearless development of the revolution onward, and, what is more, on an international scale.

"This was the objective historical soil which gave rise to Cavaignac. The vacillations of the petty bourgeoisie 'pushed it aside' from the role of an active participant, and the French Cadet, General Cavaignac, taking advantage of the fear of the petty bourgeoisie to entrust itself to the proletariat, decided to disarm the Paris workers, to shoot them down en masse.

"The revolution was terminated by this historical shooting: the petty bourgeoisie, numerically preponderant, had been and remained the politically impotent appendage of the bourgeoisie, and three years later France again saw the restoration of a particularly vile form of Cesarist monarchy." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, English ed., Vol. XX, Book II, pp. 255-56.)—Ed.
of the tricolour republicans collapsed outside the Assembly. If the question was one of maintaining the form of the bourgeois republic, then the Assembly had the votes of the democratic republicans at its disposal, if one of maintaining the content, then even its mode of speech no longer separated it from the royalist bourgeois factions. For it is precisely the interests of the bourgeois, the material conditions of its class rule and class exploitation, that form the content of the bourgeois republic.

Therefore it was not royalism, but bourgeois republicanism that was realised in the life and deeds of this Constituent Assembly, which in the end did not die, nor was it killed, but simply decayed.

For the entire duration of its rule, as long as it played the principal and state role on the prosenium, an unbroken sacrificial feast went on in the background—the continual sentencing by courts martial of the imprisoned June insurgents or their deportation without trial. The Constituent Assembly had the tact to admit that in the insurgents of June it was not judging criminals but wiping out enemies.

The first act of the Constituent National Assembly was the setting up of a commission of enquiry into the events of June and of May 15, and into the part played by the socialist and democratic party leaders during these days. The enquiry was directed against Louis Blanc, Ledru-Rollin, and Caussidière. The bourgeois republicans burned with impatience to rid themselves of these rivals. They could have entrusted the venting of their spleen to no more suitable subject than M. Odilon Barrot, the former chief of the dynastic opposition, the incarnation of liberalism, the nullité grave, the profoundly shallow person, who not only had a dynasty to revenge, but even had to settle accounts with the revolutionaries for thwarting his premiership. A sure guarantee of his relentlessness. This Barrot was therefore appointed chairman of the commission of enquiry, and he constructed a complete legal process against the February Revolution, which may be summarised thus: March 17, demonstration; April

16, conspiracy; May 15, attempt; June 23, civil war! Why did he not stretch his erudite researches into criminal law as far back as February 24? The Journal des Débats answered: February 24—that is the foundation of Rome. The origin of states gets lost in a myth, in which one may believe, but which one may not discuss. Louis Blanc and Caussidière were handed over to the courts. The National Assembly completed the work of cleansing itself which it had begun on May 15.

The plan formed by the Provisional Government, and again taken up by Goudchaux, of taxing capital—in the form of a mortgage tax—was rejected by the Constituent Assembly; the law that limited the working day to ten hours was repealed; imprisonment for debt was once more introduced; the large section of the French population that could neither read nor write was excluded from the service of juries. Why not from the franchise also? Sureties for journals were again demanded; the right of association was restricted.

But in their haste to give back to the old bourgeois relationships their old guarantees, and to wipe out every trace left behind by the waves of the revolution, the bourgeois republicans came up against an obstacle which threatened them with unexpected danger.

No one had fought more fanatically in the June days for the salvation of property and the restoration of credit than the Parisian petty bourgeois—keepers of cafés and restaurants, marchands de vins, small traders, shopkeepers, handicraftsmen, etc. The shopkeeper had pulled himself together and marched against the barricades, in order to restore the traffic which leads from the streets into the shop. But behind the barricade stood the customers and the debtors; before it the creditors of the shop. And when the barricades were thrown down and the workers were crushed and the shopkeepers, drunk with victory, rushed back to their shops, they found the entrance barred by a saviour of property, an official agent of credit, who presented them with threatening letters:

1 The organ of the Party of Order. On this party, see p. 251 et seq., in the present volume. Ed.

2 Wine merchants. Ed.
due bill of exchange! Overdue house rent! Overdue promissory note! Ruined shop! Ruined shopkeeper!

Salvation of property! But the house in which they lived was not their property; the shop which they kept was not their property; the commodities in which they dealt were not their property. Neither their business, nor the plate from which they ate, nor the bed on which they slept belonged to them any longer. As against them, precisely this property had to be saved for the house owner, who let the house; for the banker, who discounted the bills of exchange; for the capitalist, who made the advances in cash; for the manufacturer, who entrusted the sale of the commodities to these retailers; for the wholesale dealer, who had credited the raw materials to these handicraftsmen. Restoration of credit! But credit, having regained strength, proved itself a vigorous and jealous god, for it turned out of his four walls, the debtor who could not pay, together with wife and child, surrendered his presumed property to capital, and threw the man himself into the debtors' prison, which had once more reared itself threateningly over the corpses of the June insurgents.

The petty bourgeoisie saw with horror that, by striking down the workers, they had delivered themselves up unrehearing into the hands of their creditors. Their bankruptcy, which since February had been dragging on in chronic fashion and had been apparently ignored, was openly declared after June.

Their nominal property had been left unassailed as long as it was of consequence to drive them to the battlefield in the name of property. Now that the great issue with the proletariat had been settled, the small matter of the grocer could in turn be settled. In Paris the mass of liabilities amounted to over 21,000,000 francs; in the provinces to over 11,000,000. Business tenants of more than 7,000 Paris houses had not paid their rent since February.

While the National Assembly had instituted an enquiry into the political guilt beginning with February, the petty bourgeoisie, on their part, now demanded an enquiry into the civil debts up to February 24. They assembled en masse in the Bourse hall

A play on words: politische Schuld—bürgerliche Schulden.—Ed.

and threateningly demanded on behalf of every dealer who could prove that his bankruptcy was due solely to the stagnation caused by the revolution, and that his business was good on February 24, a lengthening of the terms of payment by judgment of a commercial court and the compelling of the creditor, in consideration of a moderate percentage payment, to liquidate his claim. As a legislative proposal, this question was dealt with in the National Assembly in the form of concordats à l'amiéable. The Assembly vacillated; then it suddenly discovered that, at the same time, at Porte St. Denis, thousands of wives and children of the insurgents had prepared an amnesty petition.

In the presence of the resurrected spectre of June, the petty bourgeoisie trembled and the National Assembly again retrieved its sternness: The concordats à l'amiéable, the friendly understanding between creditors and debtors, was rejected in its essential points.

Thus, after the democratic representatives of the petty bourgeoisie had long been repulsed by the republican representatives of the bourgeoisie within the National Assembly, this parliamentary breach received its civil, real economic meaning, when the petty bourgeoisie as debtors were handed over to the bourgeoisie as creditors. A large part of the former were completely ruined and the remainder were only allowed to continue their business under conditions which made them absolute serfs of capital. On August 22, 1848, the National Assembly rejected the concordats à l'amiéable; on September 19, 1848, in the midst of the state of siege. Prince Louis Bonaparte and the prisoner of Vincennes, the Communist Raspeil, were elected as representatives of Paris. The bourgeoisie, however, elected the Jewish money-changer and Orleanist, Fould. From all sides at once, therefore, open declaration of war against the Constituent Assembly, against bourgeois republicanism, against Cavaignac.

It needs no argument to show how the mass bankruptcy of the Paris petty bourgeoisie was bound to produce its effects far beyond its immediate victims, and convulse bourgeois commerce once more, while the state deficit was swollen anew by the costs

1 Amicable agreements.—Ed.
of the June insurrection, and the state income sank continuously through the hold up of production, the restricted consumption and the decreasing imports. Cavaignac and the National Assembly could have recourse only to the expedient of a new loan, which forced them still further under the yoke of the finance aristocracy.

If the petty bourgeoisie had harvested bankruptcy and legal liquidation as the fruit of the June victory, the Janissaries 1 of Cavaignac, the Mobile Guards, found their reward in the soft arms of the courtesans and as "the youthful saviours of society" they received all kinds of homage in the salons of Marrast, the gentilhomme 2 of the tricoulor, who at the same time served as the Amphitryon 3 and the troubadour of the honest republic. Meanwhile, this social favouritism and the disproportionately higher pay of the Mobile Guard embittered the army, while at the same time all those national illusions vanished with which bourgeois republicanism had been able to attach to itself a part of the army and peasant class under Louis Philippe by means of its journal, the National. The role of mediator which Cavaignac and the National Assembly played in North Italy, in order, together with England, to betray it to Austria—this one day of rule destroyed eighteen years of opposition on the part of the National. No government was less national than the National, none more dependent on England, and, under Louis Philippe, it lived by paraphrasing daily the saying of Cato: Cartaginem esse delendam 4; none was more servile towards the Holy Alliance, and it had demanded from a Guizot the tearing up of the Treaties of Vienna. 5 The irony of history made Bastide, the ex-editor for foreign affairs of the National, the Minister for Foreign Affairs

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1. Soldiers of the Turkish Guard.—Ed.
2. Nobleman.—Ed.
3. Host: entertainer after the fashion of the hero of Molière’s play, Amphitryon.—Ed.
4. Carthage must be destroyed.—Ed.
5. The decree of the Vienna Congress of the chief European powers (1814-15), which were of a purely reactionary character and attempted to restore the political order which had existed before the French bourgeois revolution and Napoleon I and deprived France of all its territorial conquests.—Ed.

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of France, so that he might refute every one of his articles in every one of his dispatches.

For a moment, the army and the peasant class had believed that, simultaneously with the military dictatorship, war abroad and the gloire had been placed on the order of the day in France. But Cavaignac was not the dictator of the sabre over bourgeois society; he was the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie through the sabre. And of the soldier they now required only the gendarme. Cavaignac concealed under the stern features of old republican resignation humdrum submission to the humiliating conditions of his bourgeois office. L'argent n’a pas de maître! Money has no master! He idealised this old election cry of the tiers-état 6 as, in general, the Constituent Assembly did, by translating it into political speech: The bourgeoisie has no king; the true form of its rule is the republic.

And the "great organic work" of the Constituent National Assembly consisted in working out this form, in producing a republican constitution. The re-christening of the Christian calen-

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1. Third estate.—Ed.