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# The Revolutionary Question

Joseph Déjacque

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1854

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1854



– the REVOLUTION is the REVOLUTION, and LIBERTY, –  
today vilified, in order to be hounded, hunted, but tomorrow  
victorious and powerful and always immortal, – LIBERTY is  
its PROPHET!...

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Let those who feel themselves withering under the fog of physical privations and want to fast and clear their lungs in the climate of less deleterious institutions;

Let those who incubate in their bosom the consumption of moral sorrows and want to cure it;

Let all those who suffer and want to enjoy;

Finally! Let all those who have palms and crowns of misery, rise!... and let their number and their rebellion chill will terror the spectators, organizers and executors of their martyrdom!

Stand up everyone!

And by the arm and the heart,

By speech and by the pen,

By dagger and rifle,

By irony and imprecation,

By pillage and adultery,

By poisoning and fire,

Let us make, – on the highway of principles or in the corner of individual rights, – by insurrection or by assassination, – war to society!... war to civilization!...

Stand up! – And if, by some misfortune, there are some who fall into the hand of governmental authority, – let each of us, – accused at the bar, condemned under the rod, in the dungeons or on the block of detentions or executions, – let each of the new believers confess, – before humanity and taking nature as witness, – that they have acted only by virtue of their right and in order to obey the religion of their conscience...

Stand up, proletarians, everyone stand! – And, unfurl the flag of social war! Stand up! And, – like the fanatics of the Koran, – in the thick of the insurrectionary fray, where those who are slain die to be reborn in the future society – let us repeat that cry of anathema and extermination for religion and the family, for capital and government; that cry of hate and love, – of hatred for privilege, love for legality; – that vengeful cry, that cry of our faith:

tions and better manage their vote. And if, one day, it makes bad laws, the next day, it will be done with them, and put them on the scrap heap, to forge and pound out better ones.

But, before arriving there, there is one material obstacle to overcome, – it is the empire; another means of operation to employ, – it is insurrection. Despite his seven or eight million votes, the emperor is enthroned on a crater. The lava bubbles in the bottom of the pit. The torment of June 48 and the fruitless agitations which preceded or followed have in part, it is true, exhausted the enthusiasm, quelled the insurrectionary energies of the generation which passes; – but the younger generation rises; the social idea boils in their brains and will soon attain its degree of upward force. If Bonaparte does not himself make some larges vents to reduce the pressure and allow the passage of socialism, it will be done for him: one day or another, he will be swept away by a volcanic eruption. The earth trembles under the flowering of the reaction, and the old society, like another Pompeii, will soon be swallowed up by the incandescent flood of the revolution.

To work then! For it is not a question of sitting back and waiting for the day of atonement. We must prepare. Each day, women and proletarians, and in the measure of our strength and convictions, in the household, in the workshop, on deserted street-corners, starting today, at every hour, and at every instant, we must act, rise up, and make revolution.

To the work! And let those who are hungry and want to eat;

Let those who are thirsty and want to drink;

Let those who are naked and want to be clothed;

Let those who are cold in body and soul, and want to warm themselves with the caloric of the brazier of with love;

Let those who carry in their hands and on their face the furrows plowed by a homicidal labor and no longer want to plow their flesh to fatten some idlers;

## Introduction

Any government that does not understand the universality of the people is a de-facto government. The law - if law and government did not swear to be contiguous to one another - would be the people legislating itself, without representation, without delegation.

To date, there have been only de facto governments. The government of Monsieur Bonaparte is of this number.

But, as the former usurpers of the sovereignty of the people claim, royalists of all shades, formalist republicans or mountain men, is Louis Bonaparte outlawed?

If it concerns political law, the law as it has existed under all and by all powers, elective or hereditary, constitutional or absolute, no, Louis Bonaparte is not outlawed. On the contrary, he is the God and the pontiff.

It is in the law in the same way as representative assemblies, legislative or constitutive, granting charter or laws to the people; like the provisional government launching its decrees and proconsuls on the Revolution from Sinai of the Hotel de Ville. Like them, and more than them, he has for him the sanction of universal suffrage.

On this point, no serious dispute is possible. No, Louis Bonaparte is not outlawed - meaning out of political law.

But, there are other laws; social laws, human laws, natural laws.

Even still, is Mr. Bonaparte within the law? Obviously no. He is no more than the Provisional Government taking advantage of February's victory; committing 45 centimes; turning ignorance and fear against the popular demonstration of April 16;

recalling, for his occult plots, the army into the heart of Paris; presiding over the massacres at Rouen, and, under the name of the Executive Committee, the reaction of May 15, to the law against the right of assembly. No more than the Constituent Assembly of Republicans of yesterday, in search of a childish bourgeois constitution, a mountain giving birth to a mouse; the Constituent Assembly imprisoned, deported, shot and guillotined socialism in June 1848; putting themselves, in defiance of the freedom of the people and their solemn declaration, on a campaign against Roman liberty. No more than the Legislative Assembly voting on and enacting thanks to their poverty tax; the suppression of constituents by their representatives, the capital execution of universal suffrage; all this liberticidal legality deduced or extorted from the Marrast Constitution.

Not only then is M. Bonaparte outlawed as were all the governments that preceded him, not only he, the prince, the president, the emperor, but outlawed also is the bourgeois, proprietor, banker, shopkeeper, industrialist - the master exploiting the work, the production, the misery and the hunger of the proletarian.

Yes, outlawed! And it is right, and it is duty-when one has the means, the power, to protest against bourgeois or princely oppression, and by the rifle by rebelling en masse, banner in the wind, barricades under the sun, and by the knife, rising individually, alone, at the corner of a deserted street and under the veil of the night. To kill and rob a prince of his scepter, to kill and rob a bourgeois of his gold, is not to kill and rob a man; it is to destroy a ferocious beast and strip him of his fur; it is for the proletarian, at any moment of the twenty-four hours of the day, a case of self-defense.

Who of you would dare to anathematize the serf of the Middle Ages shaking the torch at the threshold of his lord, and burying him in his bloody bed, in the middle of his feudal mansion cracking and writhing under the fire's embrace? Who

## Conclusion.

Thus, as solution, liberty, equality and fraternity.

Liberty of thought,

Liberty of love,

Liberty of labor,

Liberty of action :

Liberty in everything and for everyone.

Equality of rights, equality of duties: social equality.

Fraternity, that is social character impressed by the simultaneous action of liberty and equality on the page of humanity; vignette which follows from the text; last syllable which concludes the formula according to the spelling out of two others; qualifier of solidarity and unity.

And, as means of operation, as transitional means, direct legislation.

And let no one repeat that the people are too ignorant; that it is to put into their hands an instrument of which they will no know how to make use; that they must wait, and wait for those who have the science to govern them. No, I would respond to these leather-breeches of the revolution, to these Decembraillards of the dictatorship. It is only by working at the forge that one learns to be a blacksmith; it is only by making law that the people will learn to make them well. I know well that the apprentice blacksmith strikes himself more than once on the fingers before knowing to forge well. That teaches him to pay more attention to what he does, and, as they say, "to make the trade enter the fingers." The people, apprentice legislators, will also sometimes strike themselves by legislating, which will teach them to examine more closely the proposi-

To deny the needs and faculties, the rights and intelligence of women, is to do as bourgeois and aristocrats deny the rights and the intelligence of the proletarian, as white Americans deny the human race in the negro. Whose fault is it, if women are no other than what they are? Is it the fault of the master or the slave if the negro cultivates the sugar cane instead of cultivating his mind? If the workman works the material instead of working his intelligence, and if the woman scours his pots or is studying to adorn his body like a doll for the pleasure of the rich, instead of polishing the faculties of his brain and to adorn it with solid knowledge? Men, do not boast, do not outrage the woman; we have no right to it: the slave is only the reflection of the master.

Proletarians who want to free us, let us extend a fraternal hand to the woman, and let us marry with her the conquest of freedom, the overthrow of the exploitation of man by man and the exploitation by man of wife.

O family! Sodom of all corruptions, feast of Balthazar of all vices, I call upon you the rain of fire of human curses, the vengeful thunders of socialism! May you, O family! who carry in your organs the virus of prostitution, on your lips the rodent canker of social demoralisation, may you soon disappear from the soil of our institutions and give way to the great principle of human unity, to the edification and the organization in the world of freedom of feeling and feeling ...

would dare to anathematize this serf reclaiming his delightful freedom by iron and fire?

Who of you would dare to anathematize the slave of the ancient times, striking the patrician in the light of an orgy, tearing his solid gold cup from his hands and lips, and, after having emptied it fleeing, carrying off in his loot and seal escape sealed with the seal of a murder?

Who of you would dare to lay the anathema to the republican of old Rome, who, wishing to deliver the Republic from a tyrant, plunges his dagger into the side of the Caesar, thus whipping out the shame of servitude?

Well! The times are the same. Caesar still exists. Yesterday it was called Provisional Government, Constituent Assembly, Legislative Assembly, President of Coup d'Etat; today he is called Napoleon III, the Emperor. Tomorrow perhaps, we will have named Ledru-Rollin or Blanqui our Populist Dictator.

Brutus, all the Alibauds, all those that committed regicide, would they be dead?

Is the patrician and the feudal lord not the bourgeois?

Is the slave and the serf not the proletarian?

Republicans, slaves, serfs of modern times, logic is inexorable, it commands our conduct. Come on, stand up! And let's renew the tradition with the Brutus, the Spartacus and the Jacques of old!

- Standing! Action! Insurrection! Revolution!

- Action, insurrection, yes; but why? -

- To imprison us without profit; to bequeath to our women and our children mourning and misery? How sad!

- Revolution, yes; but which ?

- That which would replace power with another power, a man with other men? Again, how sad! - All of us have the right and, - now the right moment has come, - the duty to act; to use the muscles that nature has given us to violently break the shackles of slavery that violence has riveted to our throats and wrists. Individually, we can do little; Collectively, we can do ev-

everything - we have the strength. - What we lack is successful action, what too little, alas! We possess within our great numbers, an idea; it is faith, passion, fanaticism to this idea; faith, passion, fanaticism, without which one can not lift mountains, perform miracles; an idea without which the force is infertile and sows only to collect catastrophes. The force without the idea is a locomotion machine heated to full steam and which, launched on a path devoid of rails, will not delay, in its disorderly course, to tumble and crush itself in its fall; it is an unmanned and compassless ship sailing all over, in the midst of reefs, the chasm that will engulf it.

Thus, no action, no insurrection, no revolution can be without a social goal, if we do not want to "replace a crime with another crime".

However, immobility is impossible. We must act, revolt, revolutionize. That each one questions his thought, the thought of others, draws on it and throws ideas into it. That all these individual convictions, without losing anything of their individuality, are grouped in a unity of principle, like the leaves with the bundle of the same tree. That one or more of these questions, for example, questions of government, religion, property, family, be asked. That all those who will resolve them in the affirmative rank on one side, negatively on the other. Thus, without being in agreement with all who are queuing up to these four great heads of the Hydra which, under the scales of civilization, is nothing but modern barbarism; thus, and reserving the ramifications of detail where we all differ, - thus one could constitute the unity of the revolutionary party. Then the ship would have a pilot, a compass, the locomotive of the rails; strength would serve the idea of the mighty revolution.

velopment, and where he will be free to exercise his right to existence and education, if he does not prefer to remain with his father and mother, whose paternity and maternity can not be oppressive, having no longer any legal sanction.

The child must no more be at the discretion of the family authority than the man at the discretion of the governmental authority. It is not under the bell of the little family, of the dung of the selfish group that the child must vegetate; he needs, as with the oak, to grow and become a man in his strong individuality, space and freedom.

The woman, - I am ashamed of my sex, to be reduced to saying of those things which should be in the mind and heart of all, - the woman is in human nature the parallel of the man, she is his equal in need of satisfaction, in right to satisfy them. Wanting to establish a superiority or an inferiority on one side or the other is to distort the scales of the scale, to violate the weighting and balance, it is to do to nature.

Let the aristocrat, baron of the turf or of the bank, placing the woman in the same rank as his horses or his dogs, make, as of a luxury animal, the exhibition at the Bois de Boulogne or at Chantilly; that the aristocrat, artist or beautiful spirit, the living frame in the rosewood or the gilding, giving him for stem or envelope the satin and the lace, exposes it to the museum or in the greenhouse of his living room between two vases of China or two statuettes of Pradier, like a price painting or a rare flower; that the bourgeois himself, a small manufacturer or a small shopkeeper, considers it only as a job at Jacquart to mend his stockings, or as an automaton to align his accounts; it is conceivable, and they are in their role by doing so. But let the proletarian, the workman, see only a utensil to skim the pot, a trough for the male's appetites: that is what is less understandable. And when they are so-called democrats, so-called socialists who, by thought and action, insult human nature and insult women, this forms a strange anomaly!



the moral disturbance, the material disturbance, debauchery or want, the rending of the fibers of the stomach and the heart.

In the question of government, I concluded to unity by direct legislation. In the question of religion, to unity by the cult of positive sciences. It is with all my strength that I tend to the unity of property by communism, as to the unity of the human family by the destruction of the little family.

To destroy this feudalism of the family, what does it take? Abolish heredity, that apple of discord which disunites the brethren; this apple of Eve who tempts the offspring, fascinates her, and leads her to parricide; the heredity which honors in the father the use of all the fraudulent means, all the meanness and all the crimes devoted to the acquisition of a fortune to bequeath to his children; finally, heredity, which makes the children enjoy a good they have not won, and that most often, not to say always, the father has stolen from his neighbor; property which, lawfully or unlawfully acquired, is and becomes by the death of the holder the patrimony of all.

What does it still need? Abolish marriage, this legal prostitution, this trafficking of women who survived the slave trade. That the one who wants the free man claims the enfranchisement of the woman. Who has been breastfed by a slave has slave blood in his veins. Who has been moralised by a slave has slave thoughts in the brain. Who is betrothed to a slave, who is the owner of a slave, is betrothed to slavery, is possessed of slavery. If we want for man new destinies, let us engrave the right, this morality of nature, in the heart of his companion; let's make the oak crown for the girl instead of the orange crown, let's give, let's give a new mold to the human embryo.

Thus, the enfranchisement of women by the abolition of marriage and the organization of the right to work, by the destruction of the tyranny of man and of hunger.

Emancipation of the child by the equality of all before the common inheritance; by the institution of schools where he will find all that is necessary for his physical and moral de-

## Of the Revolution.

Principles :

Liberty, equality, fraternity

Consequences:

Abolition of government in all its forms, monarchic or republican, the supremacy of one alone or of majorities;

But anarchy, individual sovereignty, complete, unlimited, absolute liberty of everyone to do everything which is in the nature of the human being.

Abolition of Religion, whether catholic or Israelite, protestant or any other sort. Abolition of the clergy and the altar, of the priest,—curate or pope, minister or rabbi;—of the Divinity, idol in one or three persons, universal autocracy or oligarchy;

But the human being,—at once creature and creator,—no longer having anything but nature for God, science for priest, and humanity for altar.

Abolition of private property, property in the soil, in buildings, in the workshop, in the shop, property in everything which is an instrument of labor, production or consumption;

But collective property, unified and indivisible, possession in common.

Abolition of the family, the family based on marriage, on paternal and marital authority, on heredity;

But the great human family, the family united and indivisible like property.

The enfranchisement of women, the emancipation of children.

Finally, the abolition authority, privilege, and antagonism;

But liberty, equality, fraternity incarnated in humanity;

But all the consequences of the triple formula, passed from theoretical abstraction into practical reality, into positivism.

That is to say Harmony, that oasis of our dreams, no longer fleeing like a mirage before the caravan of the generations and delivering to each and all, under the shade of fraternity and in universal unity, the sources of happiness, the fruits of liberty: a life of delights, finally, after an agony of more than eighteen centuries in the sandy desert of Civilization!

It is on one side, at the end of a house of debauchery, with girls in the Chaussée-d'Antin or lorettes de la Cité; on the morning of a ball at the Opera or Courtille; on the return from the circle or the tavern, where he lingered, where he drank, played, lost, dissipated the revenue of fifteen years of his fortune, pays him fifteen days of his labor. It is the man, - worker or bourgeois, - imposing silence on tears and reproaches by a reverse of hand, or a promise of adornment, adornment of Indian for the housekeeper, adornment of diamonds for the lady of House.

It is on the other side the insurrection of the woman or the child, the child and the woman: insurrection by the lie to escape the souring of the paternal or marital authority, insurrection by the false in keeping accounts, by flying with escalation for satisfaction with gluttony or coquetry; insurrection by the truant school to evade the tax of study, the unpleasant work of the class; insurrection by the sweet note, to escape from boredom, to the barracks of the household; insurrection by disorder and din to obey the need for action of young age; insurrection by arsenic and adultery to obey the suppressed passions of the soul and the senses.

It is for all disillusionment; it is the desecration of all true feelings, of all the pure and sweet aspirations of love. It is prostitution sanctioned and catechized by religion and by the government. It is the girl sold to the old man or thrown into the arms of a stranger. It is the trade of youth and beauty. It is the ball of forced mating riveted to the footsteps of the two sexes by the cessation of prejudice or material interest: the interest or prejudice approximating here what is unpleasant and condemning them to live under the same roof; prejudice or interest dividing what is sympathetic and condemning them to separation, to removal. It is the sacrifice of the soul and the body offered in perpetual holocaust to the golden calf.

It is everywhere, finally, the tribulations, the scandals. It is sickness, unemployment, bankruptcy, bringing in their wake

## Of the Family.

Government, religion, property and family all stand together, all are linked, all coincide. All are cause and effect, parallel and consequence, logical induction and deduction of one another.

A creation of religion, the family is the branch onto which property and government have been grafted, the flank that has borne them; it is the sap that feeds them, the breast that nourishes them. It is not enough to cut the branches, we must also dig up the trunk and tear up the roots. It is not only the children that must be taken and slaughtered, it is also the mother that must be driven back to her lair, if we do not want the tree or the beast to give us new offspring.

The family... see how it has preserved across the ages, and despite its successive transformations, the marks of its origin [*stigmata*]. It has remained to the patriarchy what representative government is to absolute authority.

A little State,—in which the man is sovereign, the wife and children subjects,—it constantly places individual duty in antagonism with nature, material interest in hostility with conscience.

A confederation of private principalities, it makes society a permanent battleground where each group, in the name of its domestic economy, comes to fight against other groups. Inside, it is the insurrection of the subjects, woman and child, that man, a mixed despot of liberalism, is powerless to contain. On the one hand, there is brutality and corruption erected as a system of government; on the other, hypocrisy and intrigue, as reprisals.

## Of Government.

No more government, that constricting machine, that fulcrum of the reactionary lever.

All government,— and by government I mean all delegation, all power apart from the people,—is conservative in its essence,—blinker and retrograde,—as it is in the essence of man to be selfish. Among men, the selfishness of one is tempered by the selfishness of the others, by the solidarity that nature has established, whatever he does, between the man and his fellows. But the government being unique and consequently without counterbalance, it results that it takes everything for itself, that everything that does not prostrate itself before its image, everything that challenges its oracles, everything that threatens its lifespan, in short, everything that is progress, is inevitable its enemy. — Thus, let a government emerge, — an improvement in the beginning over the government that preceded it, — and soon, in order to maintain itself, and in the face of the new ideas that undermine it, it will call to its aid reaction after reaction; it will draw from the arsenal of arbitrariness the measures most unfriendly to the needs of its era; will make a barrage of *lois d'exception* until, — the mine packed and lit with the wick of revolution, — it explodes, surrounded by all the paraphernalia of its means of defense. Could it act otherwise, to abandon a single one of its bastions?—The enemy, which is to say the revolution, would only have seized it in order to establish its batteries there. Capitulate? It had arranged its surrender; and it knew that in the hands of the victor it was the looting of its interests, its enslavement and then death.

O you, soldiers of progress, but timid lovers of liberty, who still bear at the bottom of your hearts – like a remainder of the familial and catholic education of your youth, – the prejudice of authority, the superstition of power, remember 1830 and Louis-Philippe, 1848 and the Provisional Government; the programs of the Hôtel de Ville and the Luxembourg; the promises of July and of February. Recall the lies and hypocrisy capturing the confidence of the people; trickery and violence gagging them before the expiration of their vow of silence, of their three months of misery.

And do not hope for better men, a more fortunate choice. It is not the men, but the thing itself that is bad. Depending on the milieu, the conditions under which it works, the men are useful or harmful to those who surround them.

What is necessary is to not place them outside the common law, in order not to put them in the necessity of harming. What is necessary is not to give ourselves shepherds if we do not want to be a flock, or rulers if we do not want to be slaves.

No more government, and thus no more of these destructive ambitions that only use the shoulders of the people, ignorant and credulous, to make of them a step-stool for its covetousness. No more of these candidates-acrobats dancing on the rope of the professions of faith, with the right foot for this one and the left foot for that. No more of these political prestidigitators juggling the three words of the republican motto, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, as with three balls that they pass before the eyes of the gawkers and then make disappear in the depths of their conscience, that other pocket of malice... No more of these acrobats of the public square who, from the height of the balcony of the Tuileries or the Hôtel de Ville, on the boards of a Convention or a Constituent Assembly, have for so many years made us witness the same parades, the pasquinade of the best of republics, and who, in the end, we must always pay, – poor simple sorts that we are, – with our sweat and our blood.

And let no one be mistaken. If I only propose a palliative to the scourge of propertarianism, it is not because that is all that I desire. The aim, as I have said, is collective property, possession in common. But, the sovereignty of the people being given, and nothing being possible but what the people want; convinced, furthermore, that it would not be in the will any more than in the power of any dictatorship to do violence to them on this subject, I bow before its prejudice, forced and constrained as I am, by proposing only the redemption of property, instead of expropriation pure and simple.

And, that proposition tending to the abolition of individual property through the elimination of the exploitation of labor by capital, the proletarians most wrapped up in the routine of the past will vote for it with both hands.

Capital! An octopus of gigantic proportions which has for suckers the leeches of exploitation; horrible mollusk of the ocean of labor that, like the other with its venom, disrupts the tide of production with your gold, you who, attaching yourself to the virile parts of humanity, to all that gives birth through labor, sucks and pumps through all the pores the blood of its veins and the marrow of its bones; – monster of nervous plunder, your hour has also struck on the dial of public condemnation, and you will not escape the harpoon of the right to labor! The individual property that you have vomited up cannot escape, some day, the same destiny, and humanity will bathe freely in the blue waves of community!

anything at all, lodgings or lands, workshops or tools. Declare the exploitation of man by man a crime and an offense.—Let the one who would have a house, if he does not inhabit it alone, be required to give mortgaged shares on it in exchange for the quarterly payment. Let the one who would have lands, if he does not cultivate them alone, be required to associate with those who cultivate with him. Let the one who would have a workshop, some tools, if he does not occupy it, if he does not use them alone, be required to associate with those who would work with him. Let every parasitic intermediary between the producer and consumer be destroyed. Let bazaars,—communal property, gratuitous exchange,—replace the shop, mercantile personality, usurious commerce. In the new code, let theft by the golden key, theft by exploitation be likened to theft with false keys, to theft with force. Let the usurer,—under the name of proprietor, banker, manufacturer, or trader, be likened to the common criminal, and blackened and punished like him. Finally, let us preserve or remake another law of expropriation for reasons of public utility, and let all those who would leave their houses empty, their lands uncultivated, their tools unoccupied be expropriated, as is the practice today for a road or a railway, and the instrument of labor or habitation put in the hands of laborers who have asked for them.

Here is the manner in which we could proceed to the expropriation, for reasons of public utility, moveable or real property. In each commune, some arbitrators named by the people would be committed to the appraisal of properties. The appraisal made, the ex-proprietor would receive the total in mortgage notes on the property itself, and which would be nothing other than bills of exchange being legal tender throughout the republic. As for the individuals, men or women, without means of existence and without manual trade or employment in the various administrative associations, they will receive the minimum for the workday, like laborers in the apprentices' workshops.

No more government, and then no more army to oppress the people by the people. No more University to level the young intelligences under the yoke of cretinism, manipulating their brains and hearts, and knead and mold them in the image of an obsolete society. No more magistrate-inquisitors to torture on the rack of examination and to condemn to the stifling of prison or exile the voice of the press and the clubs, the manifestations of conscience and thought. No more executioners, no more jailers, no more gendarmes, no more city constables, no more snitches to track, seize, detain and put to death all who are not devoted to the authorities. No more directing centralization, no more prefects, no ordinary or extraordinary envoys to spread the state of siege through all the departments. No more budgets to recruit, arm, equip, to fatten with potatoes or truffles, to intoxicate with *schnick* or champagne that uniformed domestic staff from the soldier to the general, from the prefect to the policeman and from the executioner to the judge.

No more government, and then a million men, two million healthy arms returned to labor, to production.

Toothless duenna, virago with crooked fingers, medusa with a brow crowned in vipers, Authority! Back and make way for liberty!

Make way for the people in direct possession of their sovereignty, for the organized commune.

## Of Direct Legislation

**as a transition in order to arrive at anarchy.**

Direct legislation, with its majority and minority, is certainly not the last word of social science, because it is still government and, as I said, I am one of those who tend towards individual sovereignty. But since individual sovereignty does not yet have a real formula, that I know of, that it is still in the state of intuition in the minds, it must be resolved with what is applicable, that is to say the most democratic form of government, pending its absolute abolition. Moreover, with direct legislation, the majority is and remains moving. Like a tide, it moves every day under incessant action, under the propaganda of progressive ideas. Finally, today it is the only means of force to be used, the most straight line to follow in order to achieve all the social reforms.

To those who dispute the ability of the people to legislate their own intelligence, to govern themselves, I will answer with their votes since 48. Show that they have not always been intelligent, always revolutionary, I say not in result, but in principle. In this four-year period, did the schemers who asked for his votes not do so with reform programs? In February did the royalists not say the most Republican things! Wasn't the December 10 election even a protest against the bourgeoisie, our red hands still steaming from the days of June? And is it his fault if all the promises were nothing but lies? And will the day come when he is called to vote on the law, instead of voting on men, will the result not be any different?

And again, I will add, in what condition did the people vote? Was he free? No. But under the control of the master who in-

me a regarding this word: Liberty! Which has been misused so much against community and of which it is true to say that the communists of certain schools have undervalued.—It is this: in a society of equals, where the sovereign will be called the people, and not the king or pope, emperor or father, president or servant, dictatorship or delegation,—would men, whole all have the instinctive sentiment of liberty, and who all desire the integral development of their multiple nature, not place it in the first rank of needs to be satisfied?— And, to take up once again my interrupted phrase – the community, I say, where, all belonging to all, everyone would be rid of the daily concern with supplying individual provisions; delivered from the necessity of hardening their heart, of numbing their intelligence, of exhausting all their energy in imaging and employers some means of production for themselves and of destruction for their fellows, and cold then open their mind, as well as their soul, to thoughts as fecund for all as for each, where the organization of attractive labor by series would have replaced Malthusian competition and repulsive work; the community, splendid ideal, luminous sphere, still blinds, alas! by dazzling them, the masses hunkered in the rut of the past in the darkness of ignorance. They see and feel more closely the exploitation qui, cigar in mouth, whip in hand, keeps them bent beneath the weight of labor in the heartbreak of humiliation and need, while the master promenades through satisfactions and pleasures his arrogance and his idleness.

The right to labor, that is what, among the slogans of 48, has most deeply impressed the proletarians. That is the wedge that, for lack of [protection], will penetrate into the entrails of property and finish by getting the better of it.

But it is not a question, as in February, of proclaiming it in principle; it is necessary to decree it materially, to solidify it, to give it a body, which means to abolish usury in all its forms, in the form of interest on capital, at any rate; in the form of wages, for whatever labor; in the form of rent [location] for

## Of Property.

What would governmental authority be, even with the support of religion, that seducer of souls, if it did not have the *jaunet* [coin] of property to reel in the arms, capital to credit the force. It would be an armless despotism, very much in danger, at the moment when it wanted to appear bold, of reaping, instead of servile obedience, many blows from the popular John Bull; a peddler of whims on the verge of closing up shop, being at the end of its lease and lacking consumers who want to gulp down its drugs.

Unfortunately, the idea of individual property is not only in the minds of the bourgeois, it is also in the brains of the proletarians, and it is so prominent there that the sickly poor,—who do not have a shirt to cover their body, nor a bit of bread to chew on,—cross themselves, crying out against the *partageux!* As if,—supposing that communism was division, which is not true since it is quite the contrary,—there would not be enough for them to divide for them in a society where they have nothing, and where others have everything...

However, if the idea of collective property is still repugnant to populations atrophied by misery, there is one thing that repels them at least as much, which is the exploitation of man by man.

The community that, by concentrating the forces and efforts of each [individual], the forces and efforts of each thing, makes them all converge on the same aim, on social economy, and, through the unity of property, through human solidarity, would assure to the individual an equal sum of enjoyments, an immense distribution of well-being and liberty;—and permit

sinuated to him: "Vote for a man whom you suspect might not be in your interest, but vote for him, and not for another whose candidacy would satisfy you better, for I hold you by the belly ... and, for reforms which would have their effect only in six months, - supposing that they obtained a majority in the House, - tomorrow you would die of misery and hunger: your vote and your job, or your independence and jobhunting..." While at face value this is the vote of the law by the people itself, overnight it will be able to appropriate the instrument of work, by ensuring our subsistence the threat in the hands of the master becomes vain and falls like a broken sword.

Moreover, I believe the people - and especially the people of Paris - are ready or nearly ready for this idea of direct legislation. December 2 proved it. The people remained deaf to the voices of those who claimed to be their chiefs, and who, decked out in their scarves, with the title of representatives, invited them to defend their prerogatives. They remained neutral in the face of the two champions, bourgeois and prince, who were fighting for power. And indeed, what does the master's colors matter to them, if they still have to undergo a master?

They let Bonaparte pass. But patience: there is only one step from a negation to the affirmation of its opposite. And the day is not far when everyone, from bored spectator to the tournament of political coteries, will become an actor and intervene by throwing their democratic gloves into the arena; and in front of all the old parties and the cadavre of legitimacy that is this rotten-limbed vampire-emperor, and before the Past, and before the Present, and before the Future, Revolutionaries mummified in the granite of 93 will assert themselves, the great All, in their own sovereignty.

I therefore believe that at the next takeover of social democracy, direct legislation can and will be decreed by the people of Paris on its barricades and cheered on by the people of the departments.

Here it is formulated by articles, as I understood it.

ARTICLE 1: Sovereignty lies in the universality of the people, regardless of age or sex.

It is direct, imprescriptible, inalienable.

ARTICLE 2: The territory of the Republic is divided into circumscriptions of 50 000 souls.

These constituencies form the commune.

The people, in their universality, are sovereign to decide what is of their general interest.

ARTICLE 3: The municipality is divided into as many sections as is necessary for the ease of meetings and deliberations.

The people, in their collective community, are sovereign to decide what is of local interest.

ARTICLE 4: There are as many special committees as necessary for the reviewing, reporting, and if necessary the drafting of proposals.

They are named by the universality of the citizens composing the commune.

ARTICLE 5: Any proposal of general interest that gathers 500 000 members is brought to the knowledge of all sections of each municipality.

ARTICLE 6: Any proposal of local interest which gathers 1 000 members is brought to the knowledge of all the sections of the commune.

ARTICLE 7: After reading, the proposal is either rejected or taken into consideration. If it is taken into consideration, it is referred to the special commission to return to the agenda of the sections.

On the contrary if urgency has been declared, the discussion may open immediately.

The vote is exercised on any proposal, absolutely as for the election of either a president, if the proposal is of general interest, or a representative if it is of local interest. And, as in parliamentary assemblies, the people, who are their own representatives, amend, reject or adopt all that is submitted to their deliberations.

convert the old Christian world to the new Gospel, to the humanitarian trinity: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!

And all the oppressed quiver at his approach; and he really comes to redeem them from slavery, for *his* REPUBLIC is of this world!



let us burn from, the bottom to the top, divinity and worship,—altar and holy books, temples and vicarages. There is only one hour when the light can shine out from this chaos of lies and injustice, from this jumble of old castoffs called religion. It is the hour when—soaking the aspergillum in the resin,—we will make a torch to ignite the rest!

Today, the religious question is resolved. Religion is no longer maintained except with the aid of authority, as authority depends on the aid of religion. This one is the grindstone that sharpens the other, that one the cutting edge that protects this one. On the day of a popular victory, it will be the last judgment for religion, as well as for authority.

Who is the man who,—free,—would be so gangrened with pious morality to still want to deliver his sister or his companion, his daughter, his children, to the salacious teachings of the confessional, to the systematic corruption of their physical and moral nature? Who is the man who—for himself, for the ruin of his body and his soul,—would still want to pay the tithe for the breeding and fertilizing of *calotins* of all sects and all stages? Are there many of them?

So, no more religious budgets: religious liberty. Let those who want a priest pay them. but let priests and cults withdraw to the compartment of their superstition, and let them never reappear in the public light, as an attack on the modesty of reason.

Religion! ruined virgin, immodest vestal, thick with human stupefaction; you who, in the debauchery of the temporal, have let faith, that sacred fire of your altars, be extinguished; prostitute for Caesar, you must die!... The gulf is wide open, but, before falling in, look!... and recognize, by his brow, shining with a triple halo, no longer the son of God, but the son of humanity, the son of nature. It is the Messiah of socialism who,—prophesied for generations by the philosophers,—has finally been born on the rude pallet of the proletarian; and who,—like his elder brother, rising again after having been crucified,—will

ARTICLE 8: For a proposal to become law, it must be adopted by the majority plus one of the voters.

If a first ballot was unsuccessful, the proposal, with the five amendments that would have received the most votes, would be submitted to the sections for a ballot.

If this second ballot was also not successful, there would be a third vote, another ballot between the two amendments which would have received the greatest number of votes.

Finally, if one of the two amendments did not yet meet the majority and the proposal was adopted in principle, it could be referred back to the committee to be recast in the sense indicated by the generality of the votes, and put back to order of the day of the sections.

ARTICLE 9: *Public Functions.* - The appointment to public functions is made by popular election. The official is always and at every moment revocable and responsible.

To the function is attached a remuneration.

The remuneration, for any function, is uniform and based on the average price of a working day.

ART. 10: *For the communal ministry.* - Each commune appoints two clerks to the ministry.

One, minister of labor or production, and in charge of the interior.

The other, Minister of Exchange or Traffic, and responsible for the outside.

Each of them, with regard to his administration, executes and watches over the execution of the decisions taken by the people.

ARTICLE 11: *For the General Ministry* - The ministry of the commune temporarily designated by lot, as administrative center, fulfills the office of general ministry with all municipalities of the republic and foreign nationalities.

ARTICLE 12: *External Relations* - The universality of the people nominates in election their ambassadors to other nations with imperative mandate.

ARTICLE 13: *Justice*. - Justice is free. It is made by a jury drawn in each commune.

For there to be a verdict of guilty, the jury must be unanimous.

An egalitarian magistracy is appointed by the people of each commune.

It is responsible for hearing the case, and, after the verdict of the jury, to pronounce the acquittal or the sentence according to the text of the law.

No prosecution may be carried out except at the request of a plaintiff and after authorization of the section to which the accused belongs.

ARTICLE 14: *Police and Army* - Police, like the army, are not a function and can not delegate. It is a right and a duty to make the law, a personal and physical debt that everyone is obliged to pay in turn by lottery, as for the jury. -

ARTICLE 15: The juror, the policeman, the militiaman, the day they will be on duty, will each receive the pay of a working day.

ARTICLE 16: *Of Education*. - Education is free.

Each commune appoints its teachers by popular election.

ADDITIONAL ARTICLE: All codes, laws, decrees, prior to the present proclamation are declared null and void, as not having been deliberated and voted by the people, the only legitimate legislator.

ARTICLE 1: Sovereignty lies in the universality of the people, regardless of age or sex.

It is direct, imprescriptible, inalienable.

Let's think, let's reason a little:

Will you set the age of majority at twenty-one? But can not a twenty-year-old man have the same advanced faculties as another twenty-one? Is not he equal, humanly speaking? Will you fix him at twenty? Is it not the same for the nineteen and

That is to say that, to recall a certain axiom, "we see the straw in our neighbor's eye, but do not see the beam in our own."

The clergy, it can be said, is the poisoner of the human conscience. It is the clergy that, in the form of preaching, pour on us in daily doses the nicotine of the renunciation of the joys of this world, of the right of man and citizen. It is the auxiliary of despotism that is most to be dreaded, or rather it is despotism itself. The kings and emperors have only the mantle of sovereign power. The clergy has its scepter.

An allegory: See in the service of some old bachelor one of those girls endowed with a problematic age and an undeniable stoutness. In appearance, they are the servants, but in reality, the mistresses. At once flexible and violent, hypocritical and shameless at times, they are there, never losing from view the aim of their covetousness, the article of the will. Nothing is done in the house without their consent. They have the keys to everything, the direction of everything and the use of everything. It is these girls who can accurately say that they rule and govern. This is because they have the secret of the master's weaknesses. By day, they know how to tickle his little passions through some incense from the kitchen, by some obscenity of language; by night, through some intimate indulgence, some *courtisanerie* of the flesh. Such is the clergy in the service of the prince, religion in the pay of authority.

What good is divinity and worship, if it is not to habituate us to sacrificing to the gods of the earth? Of what use is it, again, to prostrate ourselves before fetishes. Let us study instead of praying. Let us instruct ourselves in the natural sciences. Ignorance, that is what makes our globe a vale of tears, a hell. Science, that is what will make it a sojourn of delights, an Eden. Yes, it is science that,—men tearing each other apart today like damned souls,—will make angels communing together in abundance and fraternity.

Go on! The axe in the confessionals! The hammer to the churches! Fire to all the cassocks! Let us demolish, let us break,

## Of Religion.

The religions have this in common that all preach to the oppressed submission to the yoke of the oppressor. If the sword of the soldier makes the multitude physical slaves, the catechism of the priest,—a weapon far more dangerous,—makes them moral slaves.

The idea of a god, the worship of divinity: that is the first cause whose effect is the decline of man, the first page of the book where was written in substance the martyrology of humanity.

Also, whoever denies divine right on the earth, must equally deny the royalty of a supernatural being in the heavens.

We laugh today at the ancient peoples who worshipped the sun. And, relatively as ignorant, if not more ignorant than them, we worship, in another form, a being that our imagination endows with extreme power. And,—much more stupid than these idolaters of a star that only does us good and that we can at least feel with the touch of sight,—we got to see our idol above and outside of nature. And the more harm it does us, the more we bless it, for, we are told by the fortunate of this world, the more we have had to suffer here below, the more happiness we will have in the other, there on high, doubtless in a very distant paradise, since, like God, it is beyond the infinite. And not only the body,—carnal creature, that this God would have given us,—must be killed each day by fasting; but the soul,—spiritual creature,—must be subject to all sorts of mortifications. And that for the greater glory of a God who is infinitely good, infinitely just, infinitely kind, infinitely merciful...

so for the others? To be consistent, we should also fix the age when the old man, losing his faculties and falling back into childhood, will no longer have to vote; establish categories of capabilities; to expel from the legislative councils those who can not read, or those who, knowing how to read, do not know, or know little how to discuss. By chance will the kids at the under claim a ballot? And - in this society, old with civilization, where we still meet, standing and galvanized by the electric battery of capital, the fossil institution of the family, - well, if, for children of another age, the father exerts a disastrous influence, on other children, w another father be able to exercise a contrary influence? Won't there be a kind of compensation?

Will you deny the right of the woman? But the woman is a human being like the man. Ah! if the bourgeois of 89 made the Revolution for their own benefit and to the exclusion of the proletarians, - proletarians, would you make the same mistake, commit the same crime by making the revolution for the benefit of men and the exclusion of women? ? No, no doubt, for then you would be, in blindness and infamy, the equal of your masters.

And the thief and the murderer, and the madman, will they rob you of the right to vote? But in the name of what principle? Is it in the name of liberty, in the name of equality, in the name of fraternity, say? To eliminate from legislative lists the galley-slave, the man most entitled to complain of society, isn't it to call soon for the turn of the proletarian, this other convict of labor? Eliminate the madman, isn't it soon to call also for the turn of the free thinker on the pretext of subversive opinions? Hey! What, after all, is a few more ballots in the ballot box? What do a few drops of water do, a river even at the level of the ocean? To set a limit on age or any condition from the exercise of sovereignty, is to restore the arbitrary on its carriages, it is to open the breach of all restrictions: it is the six months of the Constituent Assembly's residence which inevitably led to the law of 31 May.

There is no middle-ground: The principle of the sovereignty of the people is good or it is bad; if it is bad, why take the mask of it, when we would have only to trample it under foot, to take the divine right out of its well and to draw ourselves into its legitimacy? If, on the contrary, it is good, it must be affirmed in its entirety, not to cripple it, to take it with all its members, to accept its logical consequences under pain of denying the whole by denying a part. To amputate him is to kill him.

And now, will we speak of impossibility? Impossibility ... in 1847 didn't we also say the same of universal suffrage: 1848 came, and universal suffrage worked; the same will be true of direct legislation.

ARTICLE 2: The territory of the Republic is divided into circumscriptions of 50000 souls.

These constituencies form the commune.

The people, in their universality, are sovereign to decide what is of general interest.

I want the community of 50,000 souls, because I believe that this number is necessary for everyone to find the satisfaction of their needs. I want her so that she can have her schools and her invalids, her theaters and her amphitheatres; its libraries, arsenals of thought, and its machines, industrial and agricultural weapons; its crystal palace, basket of all productions, and its public gardens, boxes of all the flowers; its parks, its capped walks of greenery and its lounges of leisure, its popular salons shaded with silk and velvet; its fountains, its monuments, its baths, its museums, what do I know yet! ... the useful and the pleasant at last: the working instrument and the instrument of pleasure.

ARTICLE 3: The municipality is divided into as many sections as is necessary for the ease of meetings and deliberations.

these merchants of prayers and amulets, under pretext of education; all these merchants of soup or paper, under pretext of instruction, driven out, by neglect, of the temple of science. The teacher is created for the student and no longer is the student created for the teacher.

ADDITIONAL ARTICLE: All codes, laws, decrees, prior to the present proclamation are declared null and void, as not having been deliberated and voted by the people, the only legitimate legislator.

"All codes, laws-decrees prior to the present proclamation are declared null and void, as not having been deliberated and voted by the people, the only legitimate legislator."

Because no one can be compelled to submit to the laws he has not made, and against such laws "insurrection is the most sacred of rights and the most indispensable of duties".

It is up to the people, if they want laws, and once in possession of the mechanism of direct legislation, to boil all their intellects and to make all their machinery work.

Oh! As the plan of the engineer's hands in the building-shop, that direct legislation has passed from law into fact; moving in the service of the sovereignty of the people!

Oh! It is possible to imagine a revolutionary organization of the force of impulse of 36 million souls!

More special bodies with a permanent organization is a danger to public liberty. Arm all of the people, have no army outside the people; not even for genius, not even for the navy. Civil engineers, civilian navigators doing their service on warships, when their turn requires it, serve in the engineering companies. And this without ceasing to remain workers of industry, workers of the maritime exchange.

To recall to memory of all the vexatious and bloody scenes of the police and the army, is it not to call upon them civic excommunication, eternal dissolution?

The police and the army! ... Eh! Who, then, even today, would not be weary of stretching out the lace and the yatagan of these two mutes of capital, that sultan with Argentinian fibers, the metallic lubricity, the ruthless jealousy?

ARTICLE 16: Of Education. - Education is free.

Each commune appoints its teachers to the popular election.

Free education; an allowance for the proletarians and parents of young pupils, or the child who is fed, clothed and slept in a special, airy, spacious house open to outdoor life, who will attend classes instead of learning at a price of gold and the cloister of the colleges.

Free education. Everyone can profess. That is, the growth given to progress. New methods and new study plans emerging from the limbo of theory and coming asking and receiving in the light of advertising the baptism of experience. The teaching of modern languages, for example, substitutes for the largest number to the teaching of the dead languages. Professional and social instruction substituted for bourgeois and avocétière instruction. Attractive study replacing stultifying study. - Ignorants of Catholicism and the University, the murderers and shopkeepers of education, buried by the stiff competition of free education, liberty and truth. All

The people, in their communal community, are sovereign to decide what is of local interest.

I want the sovereign commune, because I am for freedom against authority; because I want to leave the free field to progress; because if a commune is ahead of the others for any organizational matter, it is not right, it is anti-social that it is hindered in the application of its ideas. I want it sovereign at last, because I want unity and not agglomeration ... agglomeration is the result of constraint; unity, the result of freedom. It is the law of attraction which causes the stars to gravitate in their circle; it is the law of attraction that will link the communes to national unity and, later, the nationalities to universal unity.

ARTICLE 9: Public Functions. - The appointment to public functions is made by popular election. The official is always and at every moment revocable and responsible.

To the function is attached a remuneration.

The remuneration, for any function, is uniform and based on the average price of a working day.

The people, being sovereign, must necessarily appoint themselves to functions. It is up to the one who makes the law to execute it.

The functions, moreover, are considerably simplified. Two ministers, teachers, magistrates, and the latter in very small numbers: that is for each commune. Now, for all the communes united, there are also the agents of the other nations. And that's all. As for administrative work of all kinds, they should be awarded to associations. And each of these associations, - one for the handling of the pen, the staff of the offices; one for the handling of the pickaxe, the maintenance of the roads; such others for the service of the railroads, posts, bazaars, retirement

homes and health, etc. etc. ; and each of these associations, I say, will nominate for election those of the associates judged the most apt to occupy such or such a post. In this way, the leprosy of functionalism is destroyed, by this impertinent, lazy and routine functionalism. There are only workers who are all interested in the accomplishment of their task and all specially employed according to their faculties.

ARTICLE 10 and 11: From the Ministry. - Each commune appoints two clerks to the ministry.

One, minister of labor or production, and in charge of the interior.

The other, Minister of Exchange or Traffic, and responsible for the outside.

Each of them, with regard to their administration, executes and watches over the execution of the decisions taken by the people.

- The ministry of the commune temporarily designated by lot, as administrative center, fulfills the office of general ministry with all the municipalities of the republic and foreign nationalities.

The role of each of the ministers is very simple. They are the intermediary between the poll that orders and the administration that executes. It is the foreman of the administrative workshop who distributes the work to the workers of various specialties and supervises them at work.

ARTICLE 12: External Relations - The universality of the people nominates in election their clerks to other nations with imperative mandate.

More politics, therefore more diplomacy. No more intrigues of cabinet or alcove, these treacherous and gloomy tricks woven by deceit and opprobrium to deceive the least roguish or

the weakest, like the web of the spider to take the flies. But instead agents, draped in the loyal word of the people, and acting openly and uncovered.

ARTICLE 13: Justice. - Justice is free. It is made by a jury drawn in each commune.

For there to be a verdict of guilty, the jury must be unanimous.

An egalitarian magistracy is appointed by the people of each commune.

It is responsible for hearing the case, and, after the verdict of the jury, pronouncing the acquittal or the sentence according to the text of the law.

No prosecution may be carried out except at the request of a plaintiff and after authorization of the section to which the accused belongs.

There also are the people - the section, the jury - the conscience that pronounces; and the magistrate, a tool to instruct the cause, a machine to read the law, who executes.

And I speak neither of the jailer, nor of the executioner, nor of the preventive and repressive detention, nor of the prison, nor of the scaffold. These government monstrosities have had their day. I want for all penalties only moral or material reparation, or material and moral, as the case may be; and if there is no place for compensation, banishment.

ARTICLE 14: Police and Army - Police, like the army, are not a function and can not delegate. It is a right and a duty to make the law, a personal and physical debt that everyone is obliged to pay in turn by lottery, as for the jury.

Here again are the people, direct agents, sharing the attributions by means of election. All the people doing their policing, no police outside the people.