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Selections from the Carnets

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

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Working translations by Shawn P. Wilbur

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The necessity for man to balance his functions, on pain of suicide, brings him back to modesty and mediocrity, makes labor precious to him, tempers his ambition, and, at the same time, excites and develops his benevolent passions. It requires so little to be happy, and the love of one's fellows adds so much to one's happiness that the spiteful are more than criminal; they are mad. —

Translator's Note: Interesting tidbits from Proudhon's notebooks: Before the coup d'état, he had planned a work called "The Revolution Demonstrated by Politics." It would demonstrate that "the politics of centralization and nationalities was no longer anything but a chimera," thanks to changed conditions, ushered in by universal suffrage. It would, apparently, have made suggestions about the kinds of leaders necessary for the political opposition. After the coup d'état, it appears that he simply adapted the work to the new situation. There is also the partial plan for a work, "France, Pioneer, or, The End of States and Nationalities in Europe." It takes off from Proudhon's familiar, if probably not understood, sense that France was the leader and teacher among nations. From there it gets interesting: "France, first author of the movement, initiator of the transformation, will perish first. All the states and nationalities of Europe will perish with it. "From now on, no government of any sort is possible in France. The new conditions not only demand a complete change of system, but eliminate the principle. "I play the role of Cassandra, but it is necessary that these predictions be brought to light."

CARNETS, VOLUME 1

Carnets, Vol. 1 (Carnet No. 1, 17): 27.

Serial law. Everything in nature is simple and complex. What we call a simple idea or element is nothing but the term with which we ended our analysis. Each day I experience the truth of that observation, [...]

Carnets, Vol. 1 (Carnet 2, 38): 133.

In order to organize society, to reestablish order, we must not wish to escape antinomic principles; we must seek one that coordinates with them. This principle exists, simpler and more common than anything the laws have ever prescribed: return it to its rank.

Let us not seek a *way out* of the contradictions that's press us; there is no *way out*. Let us manage ourselves [*or come to an agreement*] with them and by them.

When the constitutive oscillation of value becomes a rapid and insensible vibration, and when its amplitude has been reduced, as it were, to 0°, then that will be life, equality, security.

***Carnets*, Vol. 1 (Carnet 2, 41–42): 136–7.**

An unfortunate thing is the preoccupation with *simplicity* in matters of government that grips minds. We only want to consider the simple, and we reject the *complicated*, as if complication was not a necessity of nature and of the human body as well; and as if everything is not simple, when everything is unified and harmonious.

Thus, we call simple, and we prefer for this reason, Community, Royalty, the absolute, Democracy, theocracy, etc., etc. — Property as well.

However, we are not slow to perceive that these so-called simple systems are not simple at all. So property has given rise to the constitutional regime and all its complications: but what is more simple than the proprietary regime? — So, again, the mine and thine based on the domanical right of man has given rise to the Roman right, the English right, the French right, the canonical right, the customary right, etc.; all excessively complicated rights: and yet, what is more simple than the mine and thine?

I notice in the discussions in the [legislative] chambers that the plans that prevail are those that demand the least effort to be understood: a bit like the form of the professions of faith destined for the people. This is hardly honorable for the national representatives. But when men are gathered in a mass, learned or ignorant, they lose sagacity, penetration and broadness of mind.

What is more simple than the profession of faith of Jesus Christ? What is more complicated than St. Thomas, more profound than Bossuet, more subtle than St. Augustine?

Socialists should break completely with democratic ideas.

Substance, conceived to separately from life, is the *caput mortuum* of being.

The absolute, or indistinction, is equivalent of nothingness. [115]

Every dissolution of the group, return[s] the elements that constituted it, under [the influence of] other attractions, other links, *ipso facto*, to other groups; in which an opposition suffices to determine a spontaneous movement, [a] life.

It is thus that life and movement are indestructible in the universe, although every group must break up, every life be extinguished, every existence returned to its elements, the suns like the woodworms and toadstools, Man and humanity.

Perpetuity consists of this: and it is thus that death commences for all beings, reconciling [themselves] with the indestructibility of the universe.

The notion of an end of the world, which brings time to a close and returns all of creation into the bosom of the creator, is neither more nor less than that of the absolute itself: it is its corollary.

Death, arriving regularly, is a good for man, like life. It is made desirable by the weariness of existence and the difficulty of being. When man no longer has the strength to eat, to go, to reason, to love, or even to desire, when universal ennui overwhelms him, when he seeks sleep, why should he dread death? It is only to the young, to those living well, the vigorous, that it is bitter.

To [know] pleasure is to feel life. But by exalting this feeling, we exhaust its principle, and pleasure turns to sadness; rest is required from the action of the senses, from work and enjoyment. Well-being is equilibrium in the faculties, in labor, pleasure, love, etc., etc.

Well-being for the individual is inseparable from the well-being of the species: it finds its principle, its guarantee and its sanction there.

Or there is no absolute. In this case what can God be? The absolute is the summit of being. Whatever is not the summit is a degree: it is no longer God. [114]

Is God a group, a *Trinity*, Decade, etc., like a crystal, a plant, a man or a society? In this case, he must appear to the senses, manifesting himself somewhere, speaking acting, showing himself, etc. Where is he?

But, what! If God is a group, that fact alone establishes that he is only a particular being in the immense series of beings. He is not God.

So what we must substitute for the notion of God is that of the social and humanitarian group, **a group that we can admit, in Sirius, the Sun, Jupiter**, just as to the metaphysical notion of substance-causes we have substituted that of *law*; to the notion of the absolute, that of the group; to the notion of Eternity, that of *progress*.

Death, in man, animals, etc. is the rupture of the group and the cessation of conflict: social revolutions make this phenomenon perfectly intelligible to us.

In 1814, a political movement, a governmental life was created: it endured until 1830, when it was shattered for a moment by the lack of equilibrium. The group was dissolved; and after a few days, repaired. The political movement was preserved until 1848, when it perished all at once, to give place to a more profound, more intimate movement, the economic movement.

Now that movement, which has existed for several centuries in England, lacking equilibrium, without opposition, has only lead to the *status quo*, to death. Labor is subordinated; the social forces are in anarchy. There is no group. The English people have hardly anything but a negative liberty, seasoned with all the condiments of selfishness.

Thus, the Being is the group.

Life is movement, the result of an opposition in the group.

Death is the dissolution of the group.

Carnets, Vol. 1 (Carnet 3, 6–7:) 226.

Epilogue.—From whence comes this passion for justice, which torments, irritates and angers me? I cannot account for it. It is my God, my religion, my all; and if I attempt to justify it through philosophical reason, I cannot do it.

Why aren't the poets, orators and mystics valued like the scholars?

It is my star that sets me against them.

Do I have a reason to blame them?—No.

I can be neither spiritualist, nor materialist, nor atheist, nor humanist; and when I have chased away all the mysticisms, I find myself grappling with an even greater mysticism; property is the mystery of mysteries; the mystification.....

If I find 12 weavers I am sure of conquering the world: what rage to hunt down property.

Let one make love without leave, let one marry in the 14th arrondissement.—What does it matter? [7]

- I am carried along: it is the path of progress.
- The dead say to Christ, “You have misled us.” — No, since without the hope that I have given you, you would have despaired.
- I am told [by Feuerbachian friends] not to concern myself with the profundity of the heavens. — Now, that question concerns me, and it is much worse when I discover that within that question lies that of knowing if there is a God or not.

France must soon have enough novels, poetry and speeches, [and] it is inevitable that the taste for logic will return.

When the Fourierists threaten the [*illegible word*] of the proletariat, they threaten us with a peril that they have created.

Population. — Equilibrium being lacking between Labor and Love, the discord manifests itself through *wicked* [mortelle] *debauchery*.

The present middle ground has its justification in the necessity of the opposites. — Just so the system of mutuality will be all-powerful against communism, republicanism, atheism, etc. — All these *isms* are not worth a pair of boots.

So work, if you really want to be socialists, friends of the people.

But no, no, work is painful; we want wealth without labor, love without labor. Under the pretext of emancipating woman we make her a slave, by assigning her a salary.

The husband earns the living for the family; nothing is finer than that. — The wife helps him; that is all. Apart from that, she is *en famille*, under the paternal power, or else in community, with a wage. [8]

Conclusion. — We must exit the circle.

Dear reader, be a dynastic, a democrat, etc. — but know what you are, and do not be prey to your opinion.

Association. — Mutuality is all-powerful to defeat its enemies and immune to attack by them. — It can never cost the workers an hour of their time, a penny of their savings, a drop of their blood.

It can only be attacked by [mutuality] itself. But to attack it in this way is to serve it: it is to embrace it.

Question? — Is defamation addressed to the *public life* or the private life? — Example: G. Sand has publicly fornicated with J.S., A.M., L., G.P., D., and who knows how many others, in the face of [public] opinion. What do we say to a man who says: I have attacked the public life of G. Sand, not her private life? — When G. Sand lives together with a man, smokes cigarettes, runs around Europe with her lovers, separates from her husband.

seed] is a group and, at the same time, a center or focus [*foyer*], capable of evolution. — In this system, fall the hypotheses of Spinoza and Malebranche.

The most elementary group is a *polarity* [between the] *self* and *non-self*, [which is] irreducible. That polarity is the very principle of life, since it establishes the movement of the idea and of the elements. Destroy that polarity through thought, and there is no more movement, no more life and no more existence. Then substance, if it could still be conceived, would be nothing more than the *caput mortuum* of Being, the cadaver of nature; and what is more, it cannot lead to the absolute, [it cannot] give itself.

That argument is decisive against the theory of the absolute and, consequently, against all pantheism.

In this regard as well, everywhere that you create group, life and movement, you have yourself created the absolute from scratch, which is, in the sense of the pantheists, the negation of the absolute, the ruin of their system.

So, [say that] some men are gathered. Create among them a sovereign authority that you then divide into two powers: immediately, political movement would appear, and if one did not take care, the struggle could perhaps lead to an absorption. *Sic* 1814–1838 and 1848. — Under the emperor, no life.

So, again, [say that] some men work, divide their functions, exchange their products and place themselves in competition: immediately, an industrial movement is established that will lead to the progressive absorption of Humanity in the central capitalism. Labor subordinated in France, etc., and Anglo-America on the way to devouring the globe. An equilibrium is necessary.

The absolute thus refuted, destroyed, what remains of the theological notion? — Nothing, absolutely nothing.

Either God is the absolute itself, in which case we have just demonstrated the contradiction.

Preface my book with some *cosmogonic notions*.

The earth, like all the spheres [*astres*], formed from the condensation of vapors, atoms, expands in space.

Passage from the gaseous state to the liquid state, solid and by cooling of the mass. *Precipitations*.

Successive formation of the mosses, plants, mollusks, fish. — The animals give birth to one another.

Genesis, summary of the Chaldean views on the oriental and Hindu *circulus*. The lower species necessary to the formation of the higher.

Eternity = spontaneity of germs. These two theses are only one. *Eternity* is only a word, like *space*, *substance*, etc.

And if, in his defense, he asked to establish, by way of attenuating circumstances, that he had been malicious, not slanderous?

***Carnets*, Vol. 4 (Carnet no. 9, 112–115): 287–290**

All the religions, all the old metaphysics, are based on the notion of the absolute, on the concepts of Substance-Cause, indivisibly united.

Now, that conception is nothing other than a datum or hypothesis of the understanding, according to the first experience. It is soon contradicted by a more attentive observation of phenomena and their laws. Enlightened by the sequence and series of natural and human facts, the mind soon abandons this inexact, chimerical point of view, full of obscurities and contradictions, and substitutes for it the facts of *laws* and *Progress*.

That leads it to a complete renewal of natural and social philosophy.

Ontologically, instead of thinking of substances, [or] a single substance, and then seeking its transmutations, etc., it only thinks of *groups*, at all degrees of Being. For it, a germ [in a

CARNETS, VOLUME 2

Carnets, Vol. 2 (Carnet No. 4,): 25–26.

Association.—Penalty, *death penalty*. Its legitimacy. Identity of justice and vengeance (*talion*, expiation, penitence, excommunication, etc.); Hatred, natural passion, legitimate and *holy!* *Zelus domus tuæ comedit me!* said Elijah. It is the hatred of the miscreant. To hate is to desire the death of someone, their retrenchment, they're a long month.

To hate is to wish the death of someone, their removal in some way.

Man naturally, legally and honestly hates everything that harms him or does him ill: injustice, rudeness, ingratitude, discord, guile, perfidy, coarseness, dirtiness, cruelty, despotism, folly, mockery and vice in general (whether of the body, the heart or the mind.)

Hatred is not just a negative passion: it is a very positive passion, existing by itself, having its specific objects, its varieties, etc.—like love.

Love and hatred, then, [are the] trunk of all the passions.

We can no more say that ugliness, evil and vice are the negation of the beautiful, the good and the virtuous, than we could say that the latter are the negation of the former.

Beauty, goodness and virtue are ideas concerning relations, just like vice, evil and ugliness. One [group] expresses realities as well as the other. Satan is as true as God: sin is a fact as real as virtue. There is no less materiality in a murder than in childbirth. The penal code says *body* of crime, just as the code of [criminal] procedure says *fact* in opposition to *right*.

only exact and admissible word, precisely because of its correlatives, *Mon-archy* and *Olig-archy*, or *demo-cracy*, *autocracy*, and *aristo-cracy*.

No, not even the *Direct Government* of the People, for it is always the *government of someone*.

Pamphlet to write: Showing *that the direct government of the People is always the government of the few*.

Carnets, Vol. 4 (Carnet no. 9, 27–28; March 1851): 215.

Revolutionary practice. — Book I, chapter I. — If I start with cannibalism, it is not as a vain show of horrors. It is necessary to show that great truth that is everything in man, *Progress*. The state of nature is the bestial state, from which we have first drawn fetishist, polytheist religion; the path that we have made, we have made with reason and liberty.

Crude, savage reason at first, ferocious and jealous, which sanctified and purged itself every day. [28]

It is a new religion that we will establish, a social, human religion, which we must draw out more and more.

Rousseau gave its prelude in the *Emile*, attempting in turn to make it metaphysics, dogma and morals: a task beyond his powers.

We begin anew, with more powerful materials and a new insight.

We have achieved a methodical critique, *destruam*; we begin the edifice of the new faith: *aedificabo*.

Revolutionary practice should be nothing but that. — Do not forget it.

August 4 [1851]. — Revolutionary practice.

The People, like the State can in certain cases be taken for a moral person; thus the word Republic, *res publica*, is more exact. It is not in that sense that I consider it in the Revolutionary Practice: it is as a Being *sui generis*, organized, living, thinking and feeling.

Carnet No. 9 (March 12, 1851; —

***Carnets*, vol. 4, p. 208)**

Likewise, *property is theft*.

Likewise, *God is the Devil*.

Likewise, *Association, salariat*, etc. etc.

No authority either of government over man; it is the law of direction! — Thus, simplification, repeal of laws and of authority, greater and greater liberty.

But we have a party, wretches, conspirators, charlatans, poor ignorant folk, thus protection and guarantee, support of government.

— Girardin speaks the phrase *abolition of the State*. There is L. Blanc completely discredited.

No more State, that is my cry! No more Government, it is synonymous! It is difficult not to recognize that all these formulas,

No more President,
No more representatives,
No more delegates,
No more Authority
No more State,
No more Government} = Anarchy

are perfectly synonymous, and are the exact translation of that Greek word An-Archia

No more Government.

That word An-archy, so often slandered by the rulers and cast at the people as a symbol of terror, is the proper word, the

To make men beautiful, good, industrious and agreeable is to diminish the hatred among them.

Those persons who hate weakly, love coldly.

But the hatred of the man is subject to a discipline, like his loves: it is the law, or penal convention.

Man, by law, abdicates the care of his vengeance into the hands of society: from this, the Courts.

All the declamations against hatred, vengeance and the death penalty are absurd.—A world where charity and fraternity alone reign, impossible.

There will always be hatreds. And as I have said elsewhere that the torments of the mind, moral misery, grasp us after physical misery, as the torments of reason are keener than those of matter, that consequently suffering always increases among men, thus hatred and war will always increase.

But hatred and war that will not end in excessive duels, in blows: war, organized, is fraternity itself.

Crimes will doubtless decrease: it is the sole means of making punishments disappear.—But as long as there is crime, there must be chastisement.

It is also a question of knowing if the punishment must not increase in proportion to the intelligence of the delinquent, instead of diminishing in proportion to the progress of civilization.

“— Laissez faire, laissez passer! — Very well. But what is it that must be done, and how must it come to pass? That is the question asked today by everyone with a glimmer of good sense.” — Proudhon, Carnet No. 4 (1846)

***Carnets*, Vol. 2 (Carnet No. 5, 66): 141.**

Duel.—Today an honest man is allowed to refuse a duel without fear of ridicule...

First, I do not have the time!

Then, I owe you nothing... Prove that I have wronged you, that I have an obligation to you...

Third, I would oblige you, but I do not wish to. A duel, little man, would increase you by a hundred cubits. I prefer to leave you as you are, the pygmy of the Democracy.

Fourth, you say: Either you fight or you are a coward. A false dilemma, discredited by the duel of Dujarier and Beauvallon. Through this dilemma, by the way, the insult is one no longer: it ceases to touch the man who refuses to suffer this sophistical violence.

***Carnets*, Vol. 2 (Carnet No. 5, 110): 165.**

— In the organization of society, what is my *point of departure*?

It is neither divine right, nor force, nor passion, nor physiology, nor tradition, nor politics, nor authority, nor the *triad*, nor sacrifice, nor charity, nor devotion, nor even equality. Of all these things, some are aims and the others means.

It is *liberty*;

Liberty limited by liberty!

Mutuality and reciprocity, liberty equal to itself; liberty posited in two terms and reaching the equilibrium.

Thus, circulation is the great economic fact to be addressed, liberty is the principle motor of that circulation and equality would soon appear as its law.

5. There is a tendency of the mind to give the ideal an ontological value apart from its basis; to affirm as reality what had at first been conceived as ideal.
 6. God, freed from speculative theories, is the affirmation of a higher ideal and an existence superior to man and nature.
 7. That affirmation is without foundation.
 8. That affirmation is illogical and contradictory.
 9. However, Humanity has need of a supreme ideal, which serves it as rudder and motor, and which is at the same time a reality; — there is something in God. —
 10. That ideal cannot be found outside of it; — (God is worn out, ridiculous, absurd); it must be found within it.
 11. So it changes its nature: it is the infinite, or rather the indefinite, in the life of Humanity, in its size, its composition, etc.
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***Carnets*, Vol. 4 (Carnet 8, 327): 168–9.**

Confusion of the *Collective Being* with the *State*. — The State is what we call a moral person, like the realm like the tax authorities, like the Canal from the Rhone to the Rhine, in short like every real interest that is represented in an account and, as a result, personified.

It is in this way that, for the trader, the Caisse and merchandises generales are moral, fictive persons, for whom one opens an account, etc. etc.

After having denied *God*, affirm HUMANITY.

That Humanity is not perfect, but it becomes so; its ideal consists in that [becoming]: — of constantly modifying itself and varying.

The brigand and the assassin affirm the beautiful and the sublime.

It is the sanction of right and of duty.

Thus to substitute the *indefinite* for the *infinite*, the *perfectible* for the PERFECT, *becoming* for BEING, the *faciebat* for the *facit* [fecit?], *time* for ETERNITY, *movement* for SUBSTANCE, *progress* for *stability*.

Everything is revolutionary, in Heaven and on the Earth.

So we are atheists as the first Christians were. — The divine, [...], does not die in Humanity. The Christian God becomes as ugly as he is unintelligible, and every divinity conceived according to the ancient principles and method is inadmissible.

— Every worn-out idea become *rococo*, a ridiculous joke: the comic is the antidote for every chauvinism!

Carnet 8, 322 : 164–165.

REVOLUTIONARY PRACTICE.—Propositions:

1. Every revolution is caused by the displacement of interests;

the oscillation of ideas;

the exhaustion of an ideal.

1. These three causes do not form a triad: the first two are correlatives of one another; — the 3rd is an addition of the mind: (the first two are objective; the 3rd *subjective*).
2. The Ideal is the infinite in thought.
3. It demands a real and intelligible basis.
4. It strays from it endlessly.

***Carnets*, Vol. 2 (Carnet No. 5, 111–114): 166–167.**

— All the reformers preach charity: me, I preach hatred. Hatred is nothing other than the zeal for justice, for vengeance.

Hatred has contributed as much to the progress of the good as love...

Hatred, in the conditions of existence of man, is as necessary, as legitimate, as devotion. — It is the admission of our imperfection, the sentiment of our ugliness, the consciousness of our *innate* iniquity... the reaction of our soul against its perverse inclinations and aberrations.

Hatred has its excesses, its materialism, its blindness and its outbursts, like love, like all the passions. It varies in its expressions and its¹ forms, in man and in the brutes, in the savage, the barbarian and the civilized; among the devout and the impious; in the man of the people and the rich man, etc., etc. etc.

It is still with hatred, from the point of view of opinion and conventional morality, as with love.

Everything that is said, written or taught, for or against hatred, is of no use: the same amount of hatred persists among men. So we declaim in turn against, for or about love: love remains what it is and our railing does not change its measure. To reason about love is to extinguish it, to make it insipid; to rail against it is to make it interesting. That is particularly apparent with regard to marriage, the most complete form of love. What weakens the tendency to marriage is less libertinage than avarice or poverty: we content ourselves with less love in order to have more well-being, or more variety in our amorous relationships. That is all. In Rome, marriage perished from the poverty of the proletarians, much more than from the luxury of the great: it is property that killed the family, not anything else. Everything that religion and philosophy have done to uproot

¹ July 26. — *On the Absolute*. —

the hatred of the neighbor from the heart of man has remained perfectly useless: hatred has only been denied, slandered even: negation, powerless slander. Hatred is eternal...²

Hatred is just or unjust, clear-sighted or blind, fortunate or unfortunate, like love. Far from thinking of destroying it, we must only dream of justifying it, limiting ourselves to sweeping it aside when it appears without motives.

We know the hatreds of a man when we know his interests, his ambitions, his rivalries, his prejudice, his mind.

We hate, involuntarily and inevitably, that which seems false, vicious and ugly to us, and consequently all that does not seem like us, that does not resemble use. — If we suppose a man so revisited with every privilege, a man skilled at seeing ugliness, vice and falseness everywhere, that man would be capable of the greatest and most universal hatred: misanthropy is the daughter of *saphirisme* [?].

So every man has his enemies, some people that he hates or who hate him, or whom he hates and is hated by at the same time. It is enough that all are made different from one another, that some are what we call *virtuous* and others *vicious*.

Even in the Christian, hate exists: whatever care he takes to disguise it, it is no less real. The dogma of eternal salvation, for a single mortal sin, says enough on the matter.

The omission, already noted by me, of this passion in the catalog of Fourier would alone be enough to overturn his theory.

² What would a non-living absolute be? Ashes. Now, if life is opposition, if it is the play of two contrary forces, inseparable and irreducible, as in electricity, if it necessarily *results* from the conflict of two terms, it is clear that the Absolute, which must encompass *Life* and *Reason*, at the same time as Substance, is at least not an indivisible, identical absolute, the *One*, eternal and indistinct, [but] is a *group*.

We create it in ourselves, and with our own hands;
Art is the reproduction of that ideal.

The absurd is all that is settled on as the ideal, but the ideal is not absurd.

The ideal always has an object or an idea as basis. But it is obviously something other than that object or that idea.

The ideal disappears and oscillates in Humanity like the ideas and interests.

1. There is no more ideal in society: neither God, nor Cult, nor Kings, nor Government.

God has lost all ontological and aesthetic value.

Utopia offers nothing.

Atheism is the negation of God, the ontological and aesthetic ideal; — without ulterior affirmation.

It is necessary to realize that great, extra-natural, extra-sensible existence, which the understanding conceives, but the Reason does not comprehend.

We must make the *collective man*, first give him being and then beauty. In short, [it is necessary] to create the Supreme Being.

We have the clay with which to mold it, and a model according to which to give it shape.

The Collective Man is truly the *supernatural* in nature: it is the New God, which results from the unlimited liberty of its members.

On this subject, show that the Communities, coalitions, hierarchies and corporate bodies are negations of the Collective Man, and of the sovereign People (chapter on *Unity*.)

After having denied all *government*, and proclaimed *anarchy*, affirm the *People*, the reality and personality of the collective man.

After having denied Political Economy, and the Economics of the State, affirm Social Economy.

**Carnets, Vol. 4 (Carnet No. 8, 311–312):
154–155.**

— The *Marvelous* [or the *Supernatural*] in Humanity, third cause of revolution. — Subordinate to the common sense, but distinct from it. — It is not a malady, a pathological state or transition, like teething or puberty in individuals: it is a faculty, a real function of the soul, [but one that is] little known, like the spleen or tonsils in animals. Everything provided by that faculty constantly vanishes before analysis, but it still exerts the greatest influence on the acts of the Species. Already we have seen that God is the great revolutionary agent, as privileged inheritor of the old abuses. — The old communist sects did not fail to make God sole proprietor. — *Domini est terra, et plenitudo ejus.*

**Carnets, Vol. 4 (Carnet No. 8, 317–318):
159–161.**

REVOLUTIONARY PRACTICE. — *Of the Ideal, and of Supernaturalism in Nature.* —

1. A third revolutionary agent is indispensable:
2. It is the Ideal, the Infinite, in Thought.

It acts more energetically on us than all the rest: example.
— A man wants a woman, but *beautiful*, which is more than a woman...

A king, but handsome, glorious, victorious.

And so on.

We affirm that ideal objectively in God and Heaven;

**Carnets, Vol. 2 (Carnet 6, 104–109):
285–289.**

Chapter 1 of the Manifesto.

For 10 years I have given myself up to an incessant critique of social institutions, of practice and theory, utopia and routine. If I had only consulted my instincts, I would have continued that critique for another 10 years.

The impatience of my benevolent readers, and even more the speed of events, has convinced me to perhaps forestall the time I might have wished to change my systematic negation into a systematic affirmation, to make a *firm proposition* to the public and publish my plan of reform.

The review that I have made of my previous publications is not an act of vanity; or rather it is the most solid title I can present for the philosophy and science, [.] Yes, I do not hide it: if what I offer now has some value, I owe it all to that deep, methodical critique, without which society, poorly understood, appeared to me only as the image of mythological chaos. And, I do not hesitate to say it, the utopians are as far from knowledge of reforms and of progress as the conservatives so well represented by Lamartine. The only difference that there is between them is that the latter want to remain in place, while the others, thanks to a peculiar mirage, think they advance, while always retreating...

...For me, what road, you ask, will you take? There are several: to the right, the monarchy and legitimacy; to the left, democracy and the sovereignty of the people; before me, the middle ground, the progressive conservatives; up ahead, the utopians; behind, the routine and narrow-minded; at the back, the mass of the indifferent.

Do not urge me to decide; I will not choose. I will only work to widen my road, so that instead of these 36 tracks there is just one royal road, wide as the horizon and extending like Eternity.

***Carnets, Vol. 2 (Carnet 6, 160–161):
325–326.***

Today, I leave Besançon with 200 francs for all my fortune, and my ideas.

I leave at Besançon, the place of my birth, neither parents, nor business, nor interests, nor patrimony, nor property.—I leave there some rare friends, grown cold through age, and having other affections: Plus Fr.9000 of debt. By this last title above all, Besançon cannot leave my memory.—

I have passed these 20 days without seeing anyone: I am dead to my Country...

I am 39 years old; and after this sort of liquidation that leaves me with Fr.10,000 of debt, it is necessary that I begin again entirely anew. Have courage, peer Joseph!

– Opinion—truth.

My opinion is that the word of God is not authentic; but for the moment I do not work to make that opinion triumph.

– My opinion is that property is dead; but I do not demand that anyone adopts that opinion; on which I accept all the reservations that one likes.

– My opinion is that the monarchy, even constitutional, no longer sympathizes with us, and that it is close to the end; but I do not push to the realization of that opinion.

– My opinion is that every religious form, every cult of the divinity, Will perish [] and that the true face of the human race is anti-theism, that the principle of all morals is the struggle against God: I give that opinion to my readers for free. Ask for forgiveness

Thus, to cultivate love and devotion, tend to education, and cast off absolutist and intolerant doctrines.

Conclude with these laws and these facts:

- the necessity for the respect of transactions,
- the necessity for patience,
- scorn for ignorant agitators,
- the sovereignty of CONSCIENCE, superior to Reason.—

Carnets, Vol. 4 (Carnet No. 8, 311): 154

Revolutionary Practice. — Repression, [can] perhaps [be] employed with success against the whimsies of the sects, contagious mental illnesses. — Against a revolution, it can only transmit them, i.e. by making the explosion more terrible.

– Anthropophagy was the first phase of progress, necessary to all the progress that followed. So it has been a relative good. It was necessary that man eat man before he could eat God. If anthropophagy had only existed in the case of famine, it would have ceased with famine. That was not the case. It has a place in our ideas, in our rights and duties, in our religion. — Without it, the conditions that followed are inexplicable. — Neither more or less odious, after all, than capitalism and Malthusian property. — First stage of the right of people, first attribute of the aristocracy. Who knows if the object of the first Charter granted to the people was not to guarantee that the king and the nobles would no longer eat their tenants!

In any case, I will begin by describing what is best known in the movement of humanity.

The human species being given, with its essential necessities of tyranny, theft and mental alienation, – the necessity of eternal struggle against its own essence [is also given];–

Describe the laws of that struggle.–

Thus, the stable point in humanity is the laws of *movement*, the laws that preside over instability itself.

It is starting from this stable point that we arrive at some conceptions of *practical fraternity*, of *mutual amnesty* [178], that we conceive the dogma of *pardon* and *expiation*. Thus we have the last word of Society, a word that is also the first: Love, fraternity and charity, consequently devotion. The cult of humanity!

Reason cannot give *exact* results.

As numbers cannot resolve certain problems, logic, rational instrumentation, cannot give complete satisfaction to Justice.

So *justice* becomes *charity*? – If we cannot love one another, let us be slaves of one another.

Political economy, science of *approximation*.

Jurisprudence, idealism more than realism.

Morals is the worship of ourselves and of those close to us, consequently charity rather than rule; counsel more than precept; still an ideal.–

Everything carries man to the ideal. – He is more than a *reasoning animal*; – Reason is only good for making us devour one another.

On all these points, it is necessary to take communion with the Communists: Community, ideal of humanity, is hell, as soon as it is reduced to *theory* and *precepts*.

Thus, do not await the science of *absolute* and *integral* solutions: there is none.

Limit ourselves to determining each day the practical thing, make up for the rest with love and devotion.

– My opinion is that philosophy will be renewed from top to bottom by the economic science: for the present, too demanding act of that opinion!

– My opinion is that the aim of civilization is to establish perfect equality between men without community, or solidarity; that even the normal constitution of society, that where men are the happiest, the most united, the most brotherly, is not an association in the received cents of the word: I ask that one forgive me, for some time, for that opinion.

I only want to advance and maintain some clear simple things, True for everyone, outside of all opinions, those of others as well as my own, some things free from all controversy, on which everyone will necessarily be unanimous.

“The more we analyze the [figure of the] proprietor, the more loathsome we find him. Nothing but a dispossession, and a sudden dispossession, an isolation that will smite, humiliate and crush him, would be capable of avenging us against him.” – Proudhon, “Carnets” (1846) Proudhon the “reformist” had a fiery side that is much easier to see in the notebooks.

Proudhon’s “Carnets” are full of little notes to himself, often without much clue as to context. My current favorite: “Threaten everyone, without exception.”

CARNETS, VOLUME 3

***Carnets*, Vol. 3 (Carnet 6, 300–301): 66–67.**

June 25.–Terror reigns in the capital, not a Terror like that of '93, but the terror of civil and *social* war.

What is appalling is to see the bourgeois of the National Assembly concern themselves with only one thing, to finish it! As if it could be *finished!*...

I have surveyed the ranks of the national guard; they are generally honest, humane and good. They do not know that they themselves are the cause of the rebels!... But what we always see has happened here: each new idea has its baptism; the first who spread it, misunderstood and impatient, find themselves killed by too much philosophical intemperance. What happened to the rebels is nothing but what we have seen happen to Galileo, to Giordano Bruno, etc., etc. The ideas of these philosophers were those of reason, those of all the world: we have burned and tortured them for that.

***Carnets*, Vol. 3 (Carnet 7, 138): 200.**

–Governments, whatever their form, are the source of every evil.

Men have said: *Let's create an authority in our midst.* They should have said: *Let's organize.*

***Carnets*, Vol. 4 (Carnet No. 8, 176–178): 43–45.**

The history of the human race has only been one long effort of the working classes to free themselves from tyranny and theft.–

All government is tyrannical.

All property is theft.

All religion is mystification. [177]

It seems that tyranny, theft and illusion are eternal in the human race. As for me I would dare to affirm otherwise!

In any case, this is what takes place.

That effort of emancipation is the *very life* of our species.

– The economic order is *beneath* all that; and itself, steeped in arbitrariness, theft and mystification, to the point of that it is impossible not to recognize in the theft, the tyranny and the philosophical lie, a sin against the Holy Spirit, superstition or religion, as one wishes, a necessity that is imminent, eternal and providential.

As for the hypothesis of a complete negation of all theft, of all tyranny, of every illusion of the Catholic and religious mind, it is the highest utopia, it is a nonbeing!...

Community, Materialism, is chaos, the nothingness of thought, death.

Justice is only a lie, an impossibility; what is necessary is a mutual tolerance, a charity,–a reciprocal pardon of injuries, which constantly washes the governmental, tyrannical and religious guilt.

A perpetual transaction, without which society is impossible. No constitution with which one cannot batter the people or the government. No religion that does not lead to a hideous quietism, to an infernal simony. No commerce that does not contain a fraud.–

I will demonstrate all of that.

Carnets, Vol. 4 (Carnet No. 8, 149): 19.

“Revolution in perpetuity!—That is our answer to the demand for the Definitive.”

Carnets, Vol. 4 (Carnet No. 8, 155–156): 24.

— Two revolutionary ideas:

the one political, the negation of the representative principle, or principle of delegation; — the affirmation of *self-government*.

the second the negation of the capitalist principle, or principle of loan, the affirmation of reciprocity; the substitution of *mutuum* for *commodatum*.

— To raise the Revolution to the height of a science, not of a trade.

Carnets, Vol. 4 (Carnet No. 8, 159): 27.

The collective being has no *memory!*

[41]

Practice. — The absolute right, prior and superior, immutable, invariable and eternal, principle of all the others, is the right to live, to act, to advance.

This right has its internal rules, its formulary, its procedure, revealed in revolutions.

Carnets, Vol. 3 (Carnet 7, 180–181): 230.

Me. — Memoir to the Academy. — The Academy smiles at this young fanatic; *il se fera*, it says. — Alas! Wisdom has not come swiftly to me. It was not so long ago that I thought myself admirable for having kept my word so well.

- *Sunday.* — I was still full of faith; I charged headlong into reason. What have I gained there? We will see.
 - *Property.* — I had begun to see that order in society did not depend on God alone, that it required the intervention of man: without being atheist, I had stopped worshipping God. [.]
 - *Letter to Blanqui.* — While we see things in one way, they happen in another; it is necessary to turn the telescope around. We take alpha for omega. I rooted myself in my socialism.
 - *Warning to the Proprietors.* — Fanaticism of a new sort. (I have earned the prosecutions for that.) That sobered me up a bit. However, I always advance. [181]
 - *Creation of Order.* — An *infernal* machine, joining all the others, battering rams, [illegible], catapults; all the didactic forms; — as the organ gathers together all the musical instruments. I am enslaved to logic, but not completely: there remains a core of higher liberty.
 - *System of Contradictions.* — The most reasonable thing I have done, a true picture of society.
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***Carnets*, Vol. 3 (Carnet 7, 180–181): 230.**

Moi. — The categories are, no doubt, the forms of reason, but it appears very difficult to me not to admit, following Kant himself, that these forms are given to the reason by nature.

Special forms, *sui generis*, that suppose, in order to exist, a proper *subject* and *object*, the first to receive them and the second to give them.

Reason is the *Conscience* of nature.

***Carnets*, Vol. 3 (Carnet No. 8, 1; April, 1850): 283.**

— Today, 10 months have passed while I have been in prison. The time has seemed short to me, despite the impatience, the fever and the boredom. The men that I have seen in captivity with me, (all condemned by Versailles), from June 13 to September 29, at the Conciergerie;—the stay that I made at St.-Pelagie, from September 29, 1849 to February 13, 1850; the works that I've completed (*Confessions*, *Voice of the People*); the incessant curiosity regarding political events; some studies made; and finally the accidents of my public life (a second accusation before the court of assizes): all of that has filled my days, and left me only a faint feeling of the punishment to which I have been subject.

I must add here, and mention as well, among the causes that have sweetened my existence as a condemned man, my marriage with Euphrasie Piégard, the simplest, sweetest, most docile of creatures—and, until her marriage, the most innocent.

In five days I await a new condemnation. Those of my sort are never pardoned: I am in the right today, equally against

CARNETS, VOLUME 4

***Carnets*, Vol. 4 (Carnet No. 8, 148): 18.**

Necessity of renouncing every utopia, every system, and of following the revolution. If not, nothing.

There are Communists who still say every day: I am a communist first, a revolutionary after.

— I have not, after February, proposed the abolition of property, although I have posited and confirmed on several occasions that proposition: *Property is theft*.

Neither have I proposed to the equality of wages, of consumption, and of all goods: although I have constantly repeated that absolute equality is the law of society, because it is its tendency.

That is because we do not make revolution with dialectics. It is because the Philosophy of history and the transcendent speculations of economics science do not make revolutionary practice.

Philosophy and economic science see beyond every revolution; but precisely because of this the superior conclusions of philosophy and science are inapplicable to any individual revolution.

***Carnets*, Vol. 3 (Carnet No. 8, 131; July 1850): 389.**

— *Social science*. I am not the first who has spoken of it. There are treatises and systems everywhere. What distinguishes me, I believe, is that instead of beginning from *faith* with the church, from *passion* with Fourier, from *love* or *fraternity* with the Community, from *authority*, or from abstraction with the philosophers, I begin with elementary, palpable, unquestionable facts, economic facts. I move from the *known* to the *unknown*: a very simple thing in the sciences, but one that still seems new in the economic sciences, even after the works of Adam Smith and Say.

What encourages me is that I have little need of erudition, [since] it is a matter of *putting things in order*.

everyone. The jurors imagine, by condemning me as I work for their salvation, that they do a work agreeable to God!...

***Carnets*, Vol. 3 (Carnet No. 8, 7; April, 1850): 288–289.**

The *Socialist Romance*. All the socialist sects are people who attempt a voyage to the moon. Some raise ladders, while others inflate balloons; these stretch rigging; those adapt the wings of bats or butterflies. Let these good people journey; there is no other remedy for their mania but the tumble. As they will never go very high, there is no danger.

***Carnets*, Vol. 3 (Carnet No. 8, 8–9; April, 1850): 289**

— Red flag. It is the federal standard of the human race, the symbol of universal fraternity. As soon as possible democracy will be in power, the red flag must be adopted as the flag of war, and consequently substituted to the tricolor flag, for all the regiments on campaign, To the minister of foreign affairs, and At the door of all the ambassadors and French charged a fair of nations that has still not adopted the principles of the revolution. The red flag is neither a threat nor an ultimatum made to these nations. It is a question posed, an invitation made. It's notes a difference. As soon up[Is] pacified and unified in socialist democracy, the red flag is reserved as a flag. Thus the red flag signifies:

“Abolition of the proletariat and of servitude;

“Equality of political rights; universal suffrage;

“Absolute freedom of commerce and exchange; (abolition of all customs and excise): Abolition of the temporal and spiritual power of the Popes; suppression of state religions; worship reduced to the state of simple opinion; Free credit, simplification of taxation, communal liberty, Complete subordination of the state.

[p. 293—abolition of the state]

[297—pol. Econ as true science]

— *Economic principles*: it is thus that I will title the work but must follow the contradictions, in imitation of the mathematical principles of Newton.

After so many controversies, I have a fine summary to make.

The so-called economists of our century are all incurably routine, collectors of figures, makers of inventories, blank. Do not know the first word of political economy.

Political economy is the true philosophy.

What we have sought under the name of philosophy is social science.

Political economy is the reality, the content of philosophy.

***Carnets*, Vol. 3 (Carnet No. 8, 34–35; April 26, 1850): 309–310**

[April 26?]

— I have received today, from the direction, an anonymous letter from a friend of Louis Blanc, or Cabernet, which reproaches me for hindering the movement and attacking all the systems, not having one myself.

A system! A system of organization, just to say of the social enslavement exclamation point

It is finally time that I explain myself clearly.—

My system is *perpetual simplification*; it is the perpetual elimination of the ruts, which means perpetual evolution.

Each institution is at a given moment the instrument of liberation, but soon becomes servitude.

Thus absolute monarchy, theocratic and nobiliary, spiritual and temporal at the same time.

Then the separation of powers, pope and emperor.

Then constitutional monarchy.

Then universal suffrage.

Then centralization in several aspects.

Just so again, feudal property, inalienable, undivided, with serfs.

Later, divided property, in equal shares, circulating.

Decrease of interest and of leases,

Customs duties.

Abolition. [35]

Then again taxation, first on land, then tolls, then universalized, then simplified, then reduced, and finally abolished.

Thus justice (see the judicial institutions in the authors.)

Now, we say that the state can be simplified in such a way as to cost only two or 300 millions, instead of two billions;

That interest can be reduced to zero;

That tax can be equally simplified;

That these three simplifications will immediately result in an economy, or at least an elimination in the amount of the debit of five or six billions;

That a new production at least equal will be its consequence; is that nothing?

That is our system!
