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The Social Debate in the French Constituent Assembly, 1848

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LIFE

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The writer is the author of the article "Max Beerbohm" in the American People's Encyclopedia, 1961 edition.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolution of February 1848—Organization of the Provisional Government—Election of the Constituent Assembly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE NATIONAL WORKSHOPS</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louis Blanc's social workshops—The National Workshops organized by Marie—Dismissal of Emile Thomas—Opposition of Falloux to Workshops—Cavaignac abolishes the Workshops.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE MINISTRY OF PROGRESS</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The place of the Ministry of Progress in Louis Blanc's social program—Arguments of Peupin against the program—Freslon defends Louis Blanc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE RIGHT TO WORK</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning of the Right to Work—Proudhon defends the Right to Work after the June Days—The debate on the proposed constitution.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. THE ORGANIZATION OF LABOR</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louis Blanc's plans as outlined in Organisation du travail—Pierre Leroux attacks the &quot;red republic&quot;—Goudchaux defends the cause of the workers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. THE HOURS OF WORK</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original decree on hours of work—Pierre Leroux defends the decree—Michel Alcan's proposal and its rejection.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VII. CONCLUSION

The failure of the social debate.

BIBLIOGRAPHY
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The advent of the Second Republic in France was hailed by democratic forces throughout Europe as the first indication of the dawn of a great new age, an age in which the ideals of human freedom and social justice could be realized. And yet, within the space of six months, the social debate which had begun with such promise was stifled. In three years' time the Republic itself was dead.

The defeat of the social program in the first six months of the Republic and the subsequent overthrow of the Republic itself by its own laws of universal suffrage have had far-reaching consequences. One of the most important of these was the dichotomy which was produced between the ideal of social democracy on one hand and that of representative democracy on the other. The breach between these two great human ideals has never been healed and is largely responsible for the world-wide struggle which now threatens to bring civilization itself to an apocalyptic end.

The Second Republic was proclaimed on February 24, 1848.¹ It brought an end to the so-called "bourgeois monarchy" of Louis-Philippe who had been brought into power in July 1830 by a revolution which overthrew the Bourbon

¹Le Moniteur Universel (Paris), February 25, 1848.
king Charles X. A Provisional Government was proclaimed to handle the functions of administration until elections could be arranged.² This Provisional Government was in power until the Constituent Assembly, elected on April 27, took its place on May 4. During its brief period in power, the Provisional Government began two significant social programs, the Luxembourg Commission and the National Workshops.³ The Luxembourg Commission existed to provide a meeting place where representatives of labor and capital could discuss their mutual problems under the auspices of the government. It had no authority to publish decrees and no budget. The workshops were designed to provide temporary employment for the workers of both Paris and the provinces.

As a result of the elections of April a new Executive Commission was appointed to replace the Provisional Government as the administrative branch of the government.⁴ The composition of this commission showed the increasingly conservative tone that the Revolution of February had taken.⁵ The two-fold mission of the Constituent Assembly was, first and foremost, to appoint a

²Ibid. The members of the Provisional Government were: François Arago, Alexandre Marie, Louis-Antoine Garnier-Pagès, Alphonse de Lamartine, Armand Marrast, Dupont de l'Eure, Isaac Crémieux, Louis Blanc, Flocon, Albert, and Claude Corbon (sec.).

³The proclamation of the National Workshops appeared in Le Moniteur February 28, 1848, that of the Luxembourg Commission May 1.

⁴The members of the Commission were Arago with 725 votes of 794 present, Garnier-Pagès (715), Marie (702), Lamartine (613), and Ledru-Rollin (458). Moniteur, May 11, 1848.

⁵Albert Crémaux, La Révolution de février 1848 (Paris, 1912), pp. 467-471. J. F. Corkran, History of the National Constituent Assembly (New York, 1849), pp. 69-70. Corkran was an English gentleman who was present for most of the debates of the Constituent Assembly as an impartial and often witty observer. To the knowledge of the present author, his work has not been previously consulted.
commission to draft a new republican constitution and, secondly, to legislate for France until such a constitution could be drawn up.

In its debates it was hindered by the chaotic conditions prevailing in Paris. Two important disturbances occurred, the first on May 15 when the newly convened assembly was invaded by a horde of workers, who milled about for some time until driven away by the sounding of the drumbeat summoning the National Guard. An even more serious affair began June 23. On that date barricades were erected throughout Paris and actual fighting developed, lasting until June 27. The workers of Paris who had erected the barricades were decisively beaten by the regular army and the National Guard.

After the events of June 1848 and the defeat of the workers, the National Workshops were suppressed. The changing attitude of the Assembly to social questions was reflected in the disappearance from the scene of the foremost instigator of social reform, Louis Blanc. He had, in his work entitled Organisation du travail, set forth all the topics around which the social debate revolved prior to the June Days. As a member of the Provisional Government he

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6Moniteur, May 16, 1848.

7Ibid., June 24, 1848 for the debate, July 1, 1848 for the decree of suppression.

8Louis Blanc (b. 1811) was the son of a Bonapartist official in Spain. A journalist by profession, Louis Blanc wrote for the National, Bon Sens and other republican journals. His chief work was Organisation du travail (1840) which went through five editions before 1848. In February 1848 the Paris workers forced the newly formed Provisional Government to accept him as a member, though he was given no ministry. He represented La Seine in the Constituent Assembly until August 25, 1848. To avoid prosecution he fled to England and there continued to deliver propaganda attacks against the new empire of Napoleon III. Leo Loubère, Louis Blanc, His Life and His Contribution to the Rise of French Jacobin-Socialism (Evanston, Ill., 1961).
had been appointed to take part in the Luxembourg Commission. The very phrase, "National Workshops," was taken from his Organisation du travail.

It was Blanc's misfortune to have no solid party supporting him. His support came not from disciplined party members but from the workers of Paris themselves. Their defeat was his. He was investigated by a committee of the Assembly for his alleged part in the affair of June 23, and his parliamentary immunity was lifted. Fearing prosecution and imprisonment, he fled France on August 27, 1848.

Blanc's principal rival in the Provisional Government was Alphonse de Lamartine. Lamartine opposed the Luxembourg Commission, which Blanc headed, and characterized its debates as useless and sterile. He advocated reforms, but, as Louis Blanc scornfully put it, they were all reforms of the "English type," minor changes rather than reforms of the entire social outlook.

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9Loubere, Louis Blanc, p. 12.

10Blanc was investigated by a committee headed by Odilon Barrot, former leader of the non-republican opposition in the chamber under Louis-philippe. On August 26 Blanc's parliamentary immunity was lifted by a vote of 504 to 252. Blanc fled the same night. Moniteur, August 27, 1848. Loubere, Louis Blanc, pp. 130-112. Loubere devotes only three chapters to Blanc during the period covered by this thesis. He does not enter into the debates in the Assembly.

11Alphonse de Lamartine (1790-1869) was the son of an old, aristocratic family. Like Louis Blanc, Lamartine was primarily a journalist, though he is chiefly remembered today for his romantic poetry. He edited the republican newspaper National at the outbreak of the February 1848 revolution. His popularity was so great that he was immediately acclaimed a member of the Provisional Government, of which he became the actual head. He was elected to the Constituent Assembly and the executive committee. After his defeat in the presidential elections of December he took little further active part in politics.


Lamartine's popularity began to slip with the advent of the Constituent Assembly. He was fourth among those named to the executive committee (see note 4 above), and in the elections of December for the presidency of the Republic he received only 17,910 votes.¹¹

A more formidable opponent of Blanc's theories arose in the Constituent Assembly almost from its first session. This was Comte Alfred de Falloux.¹⁵ Falloux was the consummate politician who managed his policies "discretely and cleverly, as he did everything."¹⁶

Falloux strenuously opposed the National Workshops at every opportunity. He declared himself the unswerving opponent of every scheme which would make employer and employee into enemies,¹⁷ and it is his voice which is most frequently raised in protest against any of the social schemes which were proposed from May until the end of the Constituent Assembly.

In discussing the debates of the Constituent Assembly, it is necessary to keep in mind the events which were occurring beyond its confines. There was not merely the sporadic violence which culminated on May 15 and June 23; there was constant agitation carried on by a number of professional revolutionaries.

¹¹Moniteur, December 21, 1848.

¹⁵Frederic Alfred Pierre, Vicomte de Falloux (1811-1885) first entered politics as a deputy to the Chamber of Louis-Philippe (1846). He was elected to the Constituent Assembly to represent Maine-et-Loire on a platform of "social Catholicism." He was minister of education from December 1848 to October 1849. He sponsored the "Law Falloux" passed on March 15, 1850 which broke the educational monopoly of the University of Paris. See Eugène Veuillot, Le Comte de Falloux et ses mémoires (Paris, 1888).


¹⁷Alfred de Falloux, Mémoires d'un Royaliste (Paris, 1883), I, 297.
aries, the most prominent of which was Louis-Auguste Blanqui.\textsuperscript{18} Blanqui was not anxious to actually overthrow the new republic, but rather he sought to drive it further and further to the left by the pressure of his speeches and mass meetings.\textsuperscript{19} It was against the pressure of this propaganda that the members of the Provisional Government and the Constituent Assembly which followed continually struggled in their debates.

The purpose of this paper is to follow the social debate as it took place from the opening of the Assembly on May 4 to the beginnings of the debate on the proposed constitution on September 15. During this period were the dramatic events of the June Days fighting, the dissolution of the National Workshops and the indictment of Louis Blanc. The debates will be covered chronologically by subject matter, in order to arrive at the range of debates and the attitude of the principal debaters towards the various programs suggested at this time.

\textsuperscript{18}Louis-Auguste Blanqui (1805-1881), the son of a Napoleonic official, was educated in Paris and became a member of the Carbonari as a young student. He was a leader of student agitation during the last years of the Restoration and took part in the 1830 revolution. He was soon, however, an outspoken critic of the regime of Louis-Philippe. He was imprisoned for his republican activities in 1832 and again from 1836 to 1837 and from 1839 to 1848 for an attempted revolution. Immediately upon returning to Paris in 1848 he founded a club of extreme radical elements. He led the May 15 march on the Constituent Assembly and was again imprisoned. Alan B. Spitzer, The Revolutionary Theories of Louis-Auguste Blanqui (New York, 1957).

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., p. 16. Also see Suzanne Wassermann, Les Clubs de Barbès et de Blanqui (Paris, 1913).
CHAPTER II

THE NATIONAL WORKSHOPS

The most far-reaching experiment of the Provisional Government was the National Workshops, headed by Marie. The original idea and the name for this experiment came from the writings of Louis Blanc.

The system as he outlined it in his *Organisation du travail* is this: a number of workmen will combine into a productive unit or workshop without the necessity of any capitalist supervision. The profits from the venture will be distributed among the workers themselves who shall be at once employer and employee. Since the workers could not possibly be expected to supply the needed capital for large scale production out of their own pocket, the state must take a hand in setting up and administering the workshops. "For the first year following the establishment of the workshops, the government regulates the hierarchy of functions. After one year it will not be so. The workers will have had time to get to know one another, and all will have equal in-

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1 Alexandre-Thomas Marie (1795-1857), a prominent lawyer, was first chosen a deputy in 1812. During the political banquets which preceded the Revolution of 1848 he declared himself to favor "betterment of the lot of the working classes . . . of the forgotten men." He was made minister of public works in the Provisional Government of February 1848. Hence, the National Workshops came under his jurisdiction. In the election of April for the Constituent Assembly he was returned by L'Yonne and La Seine; he became a member of the executive commission and was minister of justice from July 15 to December 20, 1848. He was a moderate Republican and was associated with Lamartine on the National. *Dictionnaire Général de Biographie* (Paris, 1878).
terest, thus, as we shall see, upon success of the venture the hierarchy will be selected by election.\textsuperscript{2}

Moreover, the workshops as Blanc conceived them were "far more than a unit of production, a mere assembly of men to share in a common labor." They were, as well, social and political units where men could live with their fellows while learning to be effective producers.\textsuperscript{3}

These social workshops, often referred to as \textit{Ateliers Nationaux} or National Workshops, formed the main ingredient in Blanc's formula for healing society. That the same name would be given to the far different experiment conducted by the Provisional Government of which Louis Blanc was a member was more than a coincidence.\textsuperscript{4} "National \textit{Ateliers}—that was the name of the people's workshops, which Louis Blanc preached in the Luxembourg," Karl Marx pointed out and added, "The \textit{Ateliers} of Marie, devised in direct antagonism to the Luxembourg, thanks to the common name, offered occasion for a plot of errors worthy of the Spanish comedy of servants."\textsuperscript{5}

Lamartine, who proposed the workshops, envisioned them as a great army of public service. He imagined "A great campaign in the interior of France . . . like the campaigns undertaken by the Romans or the Egyptians for digging canals or draining the pontine marshes. . . . This was to be the course marked out


\textsuperscript{3}Loubere, \textit{Louis Blanc}, p. 36.

\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., p. 85. Loubere sees it as a deliberate plot on the part of Lamartine to discredit Louis Blanc. Donald McKay, \textit{The National Workshops} (Cambridge, Mass., 1933), pp. 31-40, agrees. McKay, in his extensive account, does not make full use of the debates in the Assembly.

\textsuperscript{5}Karl Marx, \textit{The Class Struggles in France} (New York, 1934), p. 51.
for a Republic desirous of continuing at peace, and of saving property, by protecting and raising up the proletarian class." For this end he desired, "The appointment of a ministerial department for the administration of public works on a vast scale." This, he considered, "the policy appropriate to the state of affairs." 

This was his attitude in February, but he soon came to bemoan the actuality of the National Workshops. "One of the great errors of the government was postponing too long the realization of these ideas. During this postponement, the National Workshops, crowded by misery and idleness; became day by day more burdensome, more unproductive, and more menacing to public order." 

Louis Blanc, who had nothing to do with the administration of the National Workshops, agreed with Lamartine concerning the conditions in them. "The social workshops which I proposed consisted of families of workers, united among themselves in strong solidarity. . . . The National Workshops which were founded by M. Marie were nothing but a tumultuous assembly of proletarians, where each was content to be fed . . . and where life could be endured. Without other bonds between their members they were a military organization, with the chiefs called by a name, which, if harsh, was a least characteristic, Brigadiers!"

With Blanc's judgment as to the military nature of the workshops, Lamartine enthusiastically agrees. "Far from being a force at the mercy of the

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6 Lamartine, History of 1848, p. 335.

7 Ibid.

8 Blanc, Révolution de 1848, I, 222.
socialists and insurgents, M. Marie transformed them, in the space of a few months, into a praetorian force. They were, it is true, an idle body of men, but they were commanded and directed by chiefs, who secretly shared the anti-socialist opinions of the government. . . . So, far from being in the pay of Louis Blanc, as was alleged, the workmen were inspired by the spirit of his adversaries. 9

Marie hoped to remedy two evils at once. He could get the dangerous Paris workers off the street and into employment where they might be useful, and at the same time create an army which could be used against Louis Blanc and, if necessary, against whatever violence Blanqui might stir up. 10

To head this experiment he selected one of the "bright young men" of the day, Émile Thomas. 11 Thomas was no socialist and was under no illusions as to how the business of organizing and caring for the workshops was to be carried out. "M. Marie," he stated, "told me that the formal intention of the government . . . was to show how inapplicable were the theories of Louis Blanc." 12 Thomas describes how he used the influence he undoubtedly had over the workers to persuade them not to take part in the demonstration of May 15. In this, he

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10Émile Thomas (b. 1822) was a young graduate of the Central School of Arts and Manufactures. Although he had no administrative experience, the memorial for organizing the workshops along military lines which he presented on February 28, 1848 was immediately adopted. He was made director with broad powers for reorganization. He held this position until May 26 when he was arrested illegally and packed out of Paris. He was a candidate for the Constituent Assembly subsequently, but was not elected.


admits, he was not wholly successful. But the amount of success which he did have justified the confidence of Marie and Lamartine.

Thomas himself was dismissed on May 26, and at once kidnapped by Dr. Trélat who had replaced Marie as minister of public works. He then thought better of the way in which Louis Blanc had been treated by the government. "Ah!" he exclaimed, "this would not have happened if I had accepted the proposals of Louis Blanc. ... I don't know if I was right. ... I had an army of a hundred thousand men. If I had acted, things would have perhaps turned out differently on May 15."

The idea of making the workshops into what Lamartine referred to as a praetorian guard did not, as his history suggests, come all at once, nor was it a product exclusively of his own brain. Largely it was due to the pressure of events themselves. One of the most important of these events was the demonstrations which took place on March 17.

Ulysse Trélat (b. 1795) studied at the college of Mâcon and served on the faculty of medicine at Paris. He took part in the military campaign of 1813 as an army surgeon. He was thus, an "old republican" and his membership in secret republican societies landed him in prison (1835-1836). He was named commissaire général of three departments upon the success of the February 1848 revolution. He was elected to the Constituent Assembly which met May 4, representing Puy-de-Dôme. On May 12, 1848 he replaced Marie as minister of public works. Not re-elected in September of that year, he retired to private practice. Dictionnaire Général de Biographie.


On that date about 150,000 workers assembled in front of the Luxembourg and marched on the city hall. They threatened to become violent and Louis Blanc was barely able to persuade them to disperse after the reading of a few petitions. Louis Blanc, Révolution de 1848, I, 311-313. Moniteur, March 18, 1848. The incident had a profound effect on Lamartine and Marie who watched it from concealment.
Until this moment, Var. te had viewed the workshops as a largely economic experiment. But after this demonstration he realized how desirable it might be to develop a counterweight to the growing influences of radicalism. He saw that the workshops could be turned into a political instrument of great power.\(^{17}\)

By May 4, when the Constituent Assembly replaced the Provisional Government, the idea of the praetorian guard was fairly well developed. Unfortunately, the new head of the ministry of public works was the conservative and somewhat fuddled Dr. Trélat, "a thin, sallow man, with a melancholy voice, and [who] began his speeches as if he were about to cry; and doleful truly was the burden of his lachrymose lament."\(^{18}\) The burden consisted, as one might suspect, of his problems with the workshops. He was charged with the financial responsibility, and the moral responsibility as well, for Thomas' army.

His theme, when he arose before the Constituent Assembly on May 17, was the financial burden which was presented by the workshops.\(^{19}\) They might be a praetorian guard to Lamartine, but to Trélat they were an expense and a nuisance. "They do not exist for serious work," he told his audience, "The labor they perform is completely sterile. . . . Citizens, the National Workshops are only a temporary organization. It is necessary that they be dissolved soon, but in the meantime, it is indispensible that funds be allocated to maintain them."\(^{20}\)

\(^{17}\) McKay, National Workshops, p. 39.

\(^{18}\) Corkran, History of the Constituent Assembly, p. 78.

\(^{19}\) Moniteur, May 18, 1848. The occasion was the "Report to the Assembly on the Workshops." There was no debate following the report.

\(^{20}\) Ibid.
No one could, and no one did, argue with this. The question was, how long must this continue, and, further, if this was an army, on whose side would the director, Emile Thomas, choose to use it? Thus, there was pressure in two directions. On one hand, Thomas held the workshops to be an indispensable army of conservativism, on the other, his superior, Trélat, held them to be a useless expense. There was no question as to which view would ultimately prevail, for these workshops existed at the suffrance of the Republicans of the moderate school, interested only in political reform. These men dominated the Constit-Assembly, along with the monarchists who, however they might differ on politics, held the same laissez-faire views and were equally defenders of private property and opposed to state doles.21

The government was like the owner of a large and vicious dog. On one hand the brute was the undoubted terror of thieves and rascals, on the other, it might at any time turn on its master, and it was a constant source of expense.

Trélat, a week after his report to the Assembly, gave orders to Emile Thomas for the dissolution of the Workshops. "The instructions to Thomas," comments McKay, "are characteristic of the government's fitful policy, now energetic, now vacillating." He further suggests that this might have been Trélat's way of preparing for Thomas' dismissal, which occurred two days later on May 26.

But the weakness of the government was so great, and the director himself so feared by his superiors, that Thomas was kidnapped to prevent him from making

21 Paul Bastid, Doctrines et institutions politiques de la Seconde Républi(SParis, 1945), I, 80-83.

22 McKay, National Workshops, p. 91.
any possible attempt to rally his workers to his defense, and perhaps to seize power through them. Though the government certainly had a right to dismiss the too-powerful director, it is equally true that, "his arbitrary and illegal removal from Paris was a sad commentary on the weakness and inconsequence of the government's policy."24

In the series of debates which followed the dismissal of Émile Thomas, the principal advocate of the dissolution of the workshops was Comte Alfred de Falloux, the leader of the conservative Catholics in the Constituent Assembly. The Catholics were by this time firmly opposed to the workshops, and their newspapers, both conservative and liberal, carried on a ceaseless campaign for their suppression.25

Falloux put himself in a vital position by assuming the control and direction of the committee on labor.26 This was an important body set up by the Constituent Assembly for the purpose of inquiring into the entire problem of employment and state aid, and it was hoped that it would propose some solution to the problem of the National Workshops. Falloux records in his Mémoires that

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23Thomas, Ateliers Nationaux, p. 293.
24McKay, National Workshops, p. 96.
25Ibid., p. 126.
26The committee on labor (committee of inquiry into the conditions of labor) was set up on May 13. It was composed of thirty-six members, the most prominent among them being Louis Blanc, Falloux, Considérant, Peupin, and Pascal Duprat. Moniteur, May 14, 1848.
Montalembert, the other great leader of the Catholic party, reproached him for choosing the labor committee instead of the committee on public instruction, where he felt that Falloux' talents would be better employed. "Allow me to take my place on the committee on labor," responded the latter, "... so as not to abandon it to the monopoly of Louis Blanc. My regret is that M. de Melun is not with us. Let me profit from the modest experience I shall gain there. Let me manifest a sincere concern for the working classes and to combat that charlatanism which would exploit the troubles of society to the point even of bloodshed or actual war."  

Once Falloux gained access to the committee he lost no time in proving himself the friend of labor. His first project in that regard was to destroy the main hope of the workers, the National Workshops. "A sub-commission of

27 Charles-Forbes-René, Comte de Montalembert (1810-1870), son of a monarchist who fled to England in 1792, Montalembert was among the chief champions of French Catholicism. He was associated with Lammennais and Lacordaire in L'Avenir (1830-1836), wrote for L'Univers (1838-1850). He was associated with Melun prior to the Revolution of 1848, but broke with him and became more conservative. He opposed the workshops and the introduction of the right to work clause in the constitution of 1848. A. De Meaux, Montalembert (Paris, 1900).

28 Viscount Armand de Melun (1807-1877) was a member of the old aristocracy and a legitimist who gave up his diplomatic career on the ascent of Louis-Philippe. He subsequently devoted his life to charity. He founded the Charity Organizations Committee (1842), edited Annales de la Charité (1844), and organized the Association for Charitable Economy (1847). In March 1848 he organized the Fraternal Association for the poor with Mme. Lamartine (wife of Alphonse). As a member of the Assembly on June 23, 1849, he asked the Assembly to appoint a committee of thirty members to study the question of public assistance for the poor. H. Baunard, Le Viscomte de Melun (Paris, 1880).

29 Falloux, Mémoires, I, 316.
three members, MM. Beslay... Victor Considerant30 and myself was to investigate the powers of the committee to proceed to an inquiry and obtain the consent of the government..." for a dissolution of the workshops, which was "the desire of all factions of the assembly without exception."31

This made Falloux the key man on the committee, but by no means represented the complete solution of his difficulties. The procrastinating, ambiguous outlook of Trelat and the other republican leaders hindered him no end in his self-appointed task of abolition. Marie, now a member of the executive commission of the new assembly, asked for time. The executive committee, he protested, "hopes to restore a condition of confidence in which credit and industry can revive. And that cannot be done in a day."32

But the brilliant and incisive mind of Falloux cut through the administrative tangle to the heart of the problem, and he responded correctly, "We are asked for time, but time is not for us, it is against us. Every day lost spells discredit for the Republic, for the National Assembly, for all public authority... It is evident... that there exists in... the different ministries a kind of systematic opposition to the solution of the question of the National Workshops." And then, he added significantly: "The question of

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30 Victor Considerant (b. 1806) was a follower of Fourier, who believed in the organization of society into small, rural units. Considerant was a member of the Constituent Assembly and the committee appointed to draft the new constitution. He was forced to flee France after taking part in Ledru-Rollin's demonstration against the government on June 13, 1849. Paul Collard, Victor Considerant, sa vie, ses idées (Dijon, 1910).

31 Falloux, Mémoires, I, 328.

32 Minutes sténographiques of the Labor Committee of the National Assembly, quoted in McKay, National Workshops, pp. 112-113.
the National Workshops is a political question."

Thus, when Falloux mounted the rostrum on May 28, 1848, it was as the key figure in an important committee and one determined to make an end of the experiment in socialism. He first launched into a résumé of the workshops: "Designed to give work to those who were forced to be idle, the National Workshops have done no more than make the workers into idlers. Instead of assuring the existence of work to combat the general distress and need, the workshops tend to perpetuate this idleness in all phases of industry. . . . Designed to reveal the high morale and noble susceptibilities of the workers who refuse to beg, they have, on the contrary, degenerated them into beggars without dignity, which is hardly surprising since the state has usurped the courage and determination of the workers." 35

Concluding his criticism of the workshops, Falloux brought forth the proposed decree of the sub-committee on the workshops:

Proposed Decree

Considering that the work of the National Workshops in the department of the Seine has proved unproductive, and that to maintain them in their present condition is a contradiction of the public good and of proper administration, with the return of public order and the resumption of industry and commerce; and that they constitute a form of disguised charity, and that the greater number of workers enrolled in the Workshops would be better able to earn a living elsewhere, and refusing to presume any longer on public funds which belong to orphans, widows

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33Tbid.

34The subject was the "report of the sub-committee on the National Workshops." Moniteur, May 27, 1848. There was no debate for reasons mentioned below.

35Moniteur, May 29, 1848.
and the aged;
It is decreed that:
Art. 1. That job Payments be substituted for daily payments as soon as possible in the National Workshops.
Art. 2. That special credits be given to the ministry of public works for . . . resumption of departmental projects.
Art. 3. That the workers who have resided for less than three months in the department . . . be sent home with an indemnity for their displacement.
Art. 4. That the present decree shall be applicable in the towns and communes of other departments on demand of the municipal councils.36

The remarks of Falloux were greeted with silence. The president looked about in surprise that no one had risen to object. "Is there no opposition?" he asked. "No, no!" came cries from the delegates. An end might have come to the workshops then and there, but at that moment Citizen Taschereau brought up the matter of the kidnaping of Emile Thomas and the remainder of the chaotic session was devoted to that scandal. Whether it was Taschereau's motive or not, bringing up this matter brought an effective end to the discussion of the workshops for the day. The matter was left there to be taken up again at a later date.37

It was two weeks before the matter arose again. On June 1538 Michel Goudchaux, the banking wizard and minister of finance for the young republic,

36Ibid.
37Moniteur, May 29, 1848.
39Michel Goudchaux (b. 1801) had been an ardent supporter of the July Monarchy of Louis-Philippe. He was counsel general of La Seine (1831-1834) and subsequently a leader of the National. Increasingly republican in sentiment, he was interested in the reduction of rents and debts of the poorer workers. He was finance minister in the Provisional Government and in the Constituent Assembly from July to October 1848. Hence, he held no ministry at this moment. Nouvelle Biographie Générale (Paris, 1857).
rose in the assembly and demanded that "The National Workshops must disappear
... in their entirety, in the provinces as well as in Paris, they must go.
It is not a question of their diminution. They must be made to disappear." \(^{40}\) The next day the executive committee adopted a plan calling for forced enlistments in the army in an effort to put an end to the workshops by starving them of manpower. \(^{41}\)

From the tone of the speeches of Trélat and Goudchaux it is evident that the executive committee was anxious to make an end of the workshops. Why then did it not do so? Perhaps the principal reason was that there were still many in the government who saw in the workshops a stopgap, if not a bulwark, against socialism. Marie had confided to Thomas that his policy after the revolution called for a government subsidy to industry, in order to hasten its revival and thus to create jobs for the unemployed workers. However, out of fear of what the workers might do if no immediate action appeared to be forthcoming, the National Workshops had been founded to subsidize labor by means of a relief program till industry was on its feet. \(^{42}\) In this attitude, says Loubère, Louis Blanc's biographer, Marie was "one with Falloux." \(^{43}\)

Falloux's speech before the assembly on June 18, 1848 must be seen in this

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\(^{40}\) Moniteur, June 16, 1848.

\(^{41}\) The terms of the decree were that all unmarried members of the workshops would either be dismissed or recruited into the service. Moniteur, June 22, 1848.

\(^{42}\) Thomas, Ateliers Nationaux, pp. 141-142.

\(^{43}\) Loubère, Louis Blanc, p. 134.
Falloux was the avowed opponent of socialism, but he felt it necessary to support Trélät's plea for funds. He asked for (1) the appropriation of three million francs for the workshops, (2) that future appropriations should not exceed a million francs at a time, and (3) that "the powers of the special committee should be continued until the assembly should decide otherwise." 45

McKay comments on Falloux's speech as follows: "These measures were anything but reassuring to the workers. For if they were adopted, the future of the workshops would be in the hands of a group known to be hostile to the institution, and favorable to the thesis of immediate dissolution." 46 If this was indeed the case, then it is difficult to see why Falloux supported the further outlay of funds to the workshops. It would have been a simple matter to allow them to perish through financial starvation. There is no doubt that the special committee on labor, of which Falloux was the guiding genius, was the heart of the opposition to socialism. 47 If it recommended further outlays of funds it only shows that the government had not as yet decided how long it would have to continue its experiment in socialism.

That this hesitation was not satisfactory to all is seen by the flurry of debate which took place on June 20, three days before the fighting of the

44 Second "report of the sub-committee on the workshops." Moniteur, June 17, 1848.

45 Moniteur, June 19, 1848.

46 McKay, National Workshops, pp. 129-130.

47 Ibid., p. 106.
famous June Days broke out. On this day, "the protracted session of the assembly was devoted in almost its entirety to the discussion of the National Workshops." Victor Hugo, the novelist, spoke first. He had been a member of the monarchist opposition to Louis-Philippe, and sat at the extreme right of the assembly, and yet, he often displayed opinions that were not at all conservative. On this occasion, it must have been puzzling to his listeners to discover exactly which side he was on. He warned the socialists against excesses, but struck directly at the heart of the issue in his warning to the government which he accused of trying, "to convert the Parisian worker into a condottière," and believing that, "in the most civilized city in the world, with all the admirable elements which comprise its working population," that they could form, "a praetorian guard, ready to rise up in the service of a dictator."

"Take care," he warned them, "there are two flaws in your plan; two monsters which wait to crush you, from before and from behind, civil war and servile war; they are the lion and the tiger." In short, his plea was that

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13 The subject was "project to direct three million francs to the workshops," Moniteur, June 20, 1848. Speakers were: Victor Hugo, Leon Faucher, Duclerc, Ternaux, Boulay, and, each very briefly, Falloux, Stroum, Payer, Armand Marrast, Considérant, Perrée Alcan, Trélat, La Rochejacquelein, Caussidière, Waldeck Rousseau, Goudchaux, Charbonnel. The project was adopted by a voice vote. Moniteur, June 21, 1848.

19 McKay, National Workshops, pp. 130-131.

50 Corkran, Constituent Assembly, pp. 172-174.

51 Moniteur, June 21, 1848.

52 Ibid.
the workshops ought to be turned into something useful. Although it is true that the above statements were characterized more "by warmth than clarity," despite his colorful language he seems to have seen into the heart of the issues involved more clearly than his prosaic colleagues.

"M. Leon Faucher, succeeding M. Victor Hugo, used the language of cold reason and of experience in affairs," wrote Falloux, and added, "He was the author of the proposition for extension of the railways, in the hope of turning from the National Workshops a great number of workers." Faucher based his arguments solidly on statistics. They were aware, he told the assembly, that the number in the workshops had swelled to 120,000, and that even then there were some fifty to sixty thousand more demanding admission. By some method of inquiry he had arrived at the figure of ten thousand as the maximum number for whom real work could be found. The workshops were, therefore, "Charity under another name," and ought, he contended, to be abolished. Hence, to Victor Hugo's words of warning on the corrupting influence of the workshops and the sinister apparitions which he had conjured up, Faucher added the hard-headed argument that the business of the state was not to give dis-

53McKay, National Workshops, p. 131.

54Leon Faucher (b. 1803) was an economist and editor of the Journal des économistes, a publication devoted to the promotion of the doctrine of Laissez-faire. He had travelled extensively in England and was greatly influenced by the liberal economists. As a member of the Assembly, from April 1848, he represented the republican right wing. He was minister of the interior in the first government of Louis Napoleon, December 1848.

55Moniteur, June 21, 1848.

56Ibid.
guised charity.

The ultra-conservative La Rochejacquelein then rose with a proposed solution. The workers are in the ateliers because they have no jobs. Very well, provide the jobs in private industry and the menace will go away. He proposed, in short, a substantial credit assistance to be given to building contractors, which would allow some fifty thousand of the workers to be employed in the building trades.

Citizen Stroum added to this a note of caution. "It is evident that if you want to dissolve the National Workshops, you must make sure that you have some means of giving a new occupation to those workers thrown out of the workshops." What then, he asked, did they have to offer as a solution to the problem? "Industry cannot absorb them. . . . One speaks of colonization. Without doubt colonization is an excellent solution, but you cannot apply it immediately. To colonize Algeria, for example, will require a long preparation. . . . Some speak of exports to build up industry yes, exports are very useful, but only if you export finished products." The immediate and effective solution,

57Henri-Auguste George du Verger, Marquis de La Rochejacquelein (b. 1805) was educated at Saint-Cyr and commissioned in 1823, taking part in the Spanish campaign the same year. He fought as a soldier of fortune for Russia against Turkey in 1828. Elected to the chamber of deputies in 1842, he sat at the extreme right. Although he was a Bourbon monarchist in sentiment he supported Napoleon III and was made a senator by the emperor. *Nouvelle Biographie Générale.*

58*Moniteur*, June 21, 1848.

59Stroum was a member of the extreme left, associated with Pierre Leroux and Louis Blanc. He opposed the condemnation of the latter in August, and voted for the inclusion of the Right to Work in the Constitution.

60*Moniteur*, June 21, 1848.
he continued, was to give industry the means to increase production, and this could be accomplished by freer credit. Therefore, he proposed, the government must make loans to industry.61

A more impassioned speaker was Marc Caussidière.62 "M. Caussidière, celebrated for his theory of order from disorder, took his turn at the rostrum and made a great success by his originality and his eloquence, and apparent good will."63 Even more than Victor Hugo he seemed bent on creating more heat than light. "Will it not come to pass that thousands of men will flood into Paris to fill your workshops?" he inquired. "They will form a club of despair on the street. . . . There you will have a permanent danger, one which is truly immortal, and the true democrats, the sincere patriots, will be the workers' victims."64 This was language designed to stir the assembly into action, and it is curious to note that it came from a man who was regarded with suspicion at the outset of the revolution of February as an extreme radical socialist, at least as far left as Louis Blanc.

Charbonnel,65 the last speaker of the day, summed up the accomplishments

61Ibid.

62Marc Caussidière (b. 1802) was a jacobin-socialist associated with Louis Blanc and Ledru-Rollin and the Réforme. He was made head of the Paris police in February 1848 and successfully restored order. Elected to the Constituent Assembly from La Seine, he opposed the policies of Louis Blanc and was partly responsible for the proceedings against him in August.

63Falloux, Mémoires, I, 335.

64Moniteur, June 21, 1848.

65Charbonnel was a member of the republican right, along with Marie and Lamartine.
of the session when he declared, "Citizens, to vote three millions for the workers of Paris is good, but it is not the answer to the problem."\textsuperscript{66} It was indeed, simply a device to postpone the end to the problem.

The range of the debaters on the twentieth and their almost universal demand for at least a change in the workshops shows the fear and distrust with which this institution had come to be regarded. And yet, even now, nothing was done.

It was going to take a genuine explosion to blast the workshops out of existence. The explosion was not long in coming. The twenty-third was the beginning of the June Days. On that fateful day the assembly conjoined its debates on the workshops with that on the nationalization of the railways. "It is a curious coincidence, that the assembly should be engaged in two measures, the one so hateful to the bourgeois, the other giving the last blow to the illusions of the working people."\textsuperscript{67} At the very moment that the proletariat was about to rise against the republic, the able politicians of the assembly were setting themselves to the task of alienating their most staunch supporters, the bourgeoisie, represented by Faucher. However, there was a possible reason for this conjunction.

The executive committee, aware that precipitate action would cause violence, hoped that by nationalizing and expanding the railroads they could painlessly drain the workers out of the National Workshops into the state-owned railways.\textsuperscript{68} Nationalization of the railways was the first step in their plan

\textsuperscript{66}\textit{Moniteur}, June 21, 1848.

\textsuperscript{67}\textit{Corkran}, \textit{Constituent Assembly}, p. 188.

\textsuperscript{68}\textit{Loubère}, \textit{Louis Blanc}, p. 188.
for slow dispersal of the workers. However, it was not a scheme that could have worked, for too many members of the assembly opposed the transfer of the railroads to the state.69

When Falloux mounted the rostrum on June 23, it was with the avowed intention of bringing the whole business of the workshops to an end.70 He began by outlining the legitimate goals of the Republic. "The advancement of the Republic should be by the legitimate admission of the need to defend the just rights of universal suffrage and the emancipation of the intellect by the right of association, that of association of worker with worker, without violence, without coercion exercised by one association against its rivals, or against a fellow worker not in the same organization, acting in a common association, as well as associations of worker with employer to establish those relationships which one never seeks to disturb without threatening the prosperity of both."71

This was obviously a blow aimed at the socialist agitators, who had interposed themselves between the workers and their employers. Freedom of association must be protected. Workers should not combine to exclude others from working, to establish "closed shops," or enforce association. It was, in short ironically, a plea for what is termed in our own day, "the right to work."

In spite of his remark that the question of the workshops was a political one, Falloux stressed the economic and social motives for abandoning the workshops. "We had hoped to see a return of abundance of private work before we

69Ibid.
70Subject was, "proposal of the committee on the workshops for their dissolution." Falloux, Corbon, Benouard spoke. Moniteur, June 23-24, 1848.
71Moniteur, June 24, 1848.
proposed this measure, but the more that we have studied the needs and interests of the workers themselves, the more we have become convinced that, that which has appeared to constitute their refuge is itself one of the causes of their distress, and the first condition necessary for the return of prosperity is the radical dispersion of the active forces concentrated in sterile agitation.\textsuperscript{72}

Nevertheless, there was still some opposition to such a sweeping condemnation of the workshops. Claude Corbon\textsuperscript{73} rose in his turn and attempted to soften the blow. He "presented a decree that he deemed calculated to take the sting out of that proposed by Falloux."\textsuperscript{74} His plan was, first of all, "that associations of labor among workmen should be encouraged by the state." Secondly, he demanded that "there be given to the minister of agriculture and commerce a credit of three million francs to be given to the associations..." which he had proposed.\textsuperscript{75}

\textsuperscript{72}Moniteur, June 24, 1848. The text of Falloux' proposed decree is as follows:

Art. 1. The National Workshops are dissolved three days after the promulgation of this decree.
Art. 2. We do not include in this measure the workshops for women.
Art. 3. A credit of three million is given to the minister of the interior as an indemnity and aid to resettle workers momentarily without employ.
Art. 4. The brigadiers and employees of all grades in the workshops who have no other employment shall receive for three months their allotted salary.
Art. 5. All brigadiers or other employees of the National Workshops who attempt to subvert this law in their departments will cease to receive the aid for resettlement.
Art. 6. The minister of finance is authorized to present to the comptroller general, a guarantee of up to five million.

\textsuperscript{73}Claude Anthime Corbon (b. 1808), son of working class parents, became a compositor, and founder of L'Atelier (1840). He followed Buchez and Catholic liberalism. Secretary to the Provisional Government, he was a vice president of the Assembly. His political career was ended by the coup of Louis Napoleon. Dictionnaire Général de Biographie.

\textsuperscript{74}Corkran, Constituent Assembly, p. 188.

\textsuperscript{75}Moniteur, June 24, 1848.
Falloux arose again to damn this project. "I declare," he protested, "that the project which has been proposed ... simply follows within the limits of the National Workshops as if they continued to exist. It is nothing but a new allocation. It is only a different workplan and a less useful one at that."  

All this time that they were speaking, fighting was going on in the streets, and the stormy speeches were punctuated by shooting in the distance. While Falloux was still protesting, the president of the assembly read to the members a report on the heretofore ignored fighting. The discussion was then postponed. It was never resumed. General Cavaignac, using the wide powers he had received to suppress the revolt, abolished the workshops by executive decree on July 3. The force of military authority had proved stronger than all the subtle logic of Falloux.  

And so an end came to the question of the National Workshops. The question of who was to get the credit for their destruction was all that remained. Falloux put in his bid for the honor, claiming the credit was as much his as the General's.

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76 Ibid.  
77 Corkran, Constituent Assembly, p. 189.  
78 Though it appears on the agenda for June 29. Moniteur, June 29, 1848.  
79 Louis Eugène Cavaignac (b. 1802) had passed his adult life in Algerian wars. He was made minister of war in May 1848. In that capacity he suppressed the June insurrection. The Constituent Assembly voted him temporary president. He ran for the office of President of the Republic in December 1848, but was defeated by Louis Napoleon.  
80 Moniteur, July 3, 1848.  
81 McKay, National Workshops, p. 107.
But later, Falloux sang a different tune. "When you single me out on the question of the National Workshops you seem to forget that I was never more than a spokesman of a committee of the assembly, and all the proposals I made were sanctioned by it. . . . Not for a moment did I have my own way, not once did I act on my own."\(^{62}\)

He vigorously denied that he had welcomed the June Days as spelling the end of the workshops. "I said to my colleagues, the civil war has begun; the responsibility is not yours, nor that of any member of the assembly. . . . If the misguided workers who attack us are defeated tomorrow, I will never consent to sponsor a measure which they regard as disastrous to them. . . . I will not allow them to think that I awaited their defeat to proclaim here what you have for a long time believed desirable and necessary."\(^{63}\)

Despite the comic-opera quality of the entire workshop question, despite the pettiness and insincerity of the politicians, the workshops have made a lasting impression on social thought. Considering the manner in which the experiment was conducted, its end was foreseeable. But it laid open the possibility that someday a more useful experiment of the same sort might be conducted. For the first time, working men were gathered together and educated for social cooperation; for the first time the strength of unity was presented to them.

Perhaps the most just epitaph for the workshops is that voiced by

\(^{62}\)Moniteur, May 23, 1849.

\(^{63}\)Ibid.
Proudhon before the National Constituent Assembly a little more than a month after the end of the June Days. "The National Workshops were a caricature of socialism, but while they were not what they should have been they were not dishonorable." 85

84 Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865) began work as a compositor. In 1840 he published the results of his inquiries into the nature of economic and social problems, What is Property? His answer was: property is theft. He followed this work with the Philosophy of Misery (1846) in which he advocated the end of private property and government. He was a member of the Constituent Assembly. Under Napoleon III he was imprisoned for three years as a result of his outspoken criticisms, and he was subsequently exiled to Brussels. Desjardins, P. J. Proudhon (Paris, 1896).

85 Moniteur, August 1, 1848. Proudhon spoke on the right to work.
CHAPTER III

THE MINISTRY OF PROGRESS

If the National Workshops represented a caricature of socialism, the proposals which came from Louis Blanc and the Luxembourg came closer to the real thing. These proposals can be summed up under three main headings: the Ministry of Progress, the Organization of Labor, and the Right to Work.

The cornerstone of Louis Blanc's system was the Ministry of Progress. The name, which in our cynical age seems calculated to bring a smile, was actually a euphemism for Ministry of Labor. That the ideas of Labor and Progress were so linked in the minds of those aspiring to force legal socialism on France is itself indicative of the way they regarded their mission. Labor was the key to the future, a future which would be either one of social and material progress, or one of exploitation and misery. The lines of the struggle were clearly drawn.

However visionary Louis Blanc's schemes might be, he understood one thing clearly. "Without political reform no social reform is possible; for if the second is the end, the first is the means."¹ The Ministry of Progress was to supply this means.

¹Blanc, Organisation du travail, p. 96.
On the sixth of May, Louis Blanc turned in his portfolio as a member of the now disbanded Provisional Government. He began his formal address by referring to the demands of the people for a ministry of labor, made on the occasion of the February Revolt when they had waved the banner inscribed "Organization of Labor" and demanded the creation of a ministry of progress.²

On May 10, 1848³ he renewed his arguments for the erection of such a ministry, "which had been his dream from the moment that he formed one of the Provisional Government."⁴ Blanc stated "You have a ministry of war, you ought to have a ministry of peace, and the ministry of peace is the ministry of progress and labor... Citizens, a commission of government for the workers has been instituted, but that commission the Luxembourg has not been sufficient. Of that commission one hears it said, "the ideas which it proposes to society only serve to agitate and trouble it; they are dreams, they are Utopias..." But, he insisted, "...the creation of a ministry of labor and progress is an absolute necessity, a pressing need, because the situation is grave."⁵

The reaction of the deputies was that of mild puzzlement and perhaps amusement as well. Not long afterward they would begin to call him "Louis

²Moniteur, May 7, 1848.

³Subject for discussion was, "proposal of Louis Blanc for a ministry of progress." Blanc, Peupin, Falloux, Wolowski, Flocon, Vignère, Barbès, Freslon spoke. The assembly voted unanimously to appoint a committee to inquire into the situation of workers in industry and agriculture.

⁴Corkran, Constituent Assembly, p. 73.

⁵Moniteur, May 11, 1848.
Blanc's proposal was "brushed aside by Peupin, disciple of Buchez, who light-heartedly assured the deputies that a ministry of progress would become a 'ministry of routine.'"

Peupin went on to say, "I ask . . . that a commission of inquiry be constituted on the proposal which has been made. . . I ask that a ministry of progress not be set up as yet, because I do not know what would be the job of such a minister." In all fairness it must be admitted that the point was well taken. Louis Blanc did not outline the job of the ministry, in any more than the most general terms, in any of his speeches. His attitude seemed to be that the minister himself would have to create the precedents under which the office would function.

In place of the proposed ministry, Peupin called for a parliamentary committee to undertake a large-scale study of the social conditions in France. This proposal was received with shouts of Joy from the right. Peupin went on to voice the demand of the right for order as the condition under which full employment could be secured. "The demand of the workers is for work, because only with work will there be bread. But we know, I tell you because I am a worker, that work will not be restored without order and confidence. (Bravo!"

6Loubere, Louis Blanc, p. 103.
7Peupin, "the Worker," was a social Catholic, associated with Buchez in L'Atelier. He was a delegate to the Luxembourg and was a member of the Committee on Labor and Agriculture appointed by the Constituent Assembly.
8Loubere, Louis Blanc, p. 120.
9Moniteur, May 11, 1848.
10Ibid. He is vague on what the object of this committee should be.
Bravo! was the cry which greeted this statement along with a loud outburst of applause. Order should be maintained, that I realize, and I give thanks for that condition which can alone restore work."

Elaborating on this theme, he declared, "Confidence! That depends on you, that depends on you! For if the Assembly functions, then confidence will be restored." Reduced to its simplest terms, the argument was that (aside from the quibble that no well defined job existed for such a minister) the creation of such an organization would be detrimental to the restoration of the confidence of the bourgeoisie in the republic. They had to be reassured that the government was looking after their interests—that this was, as Marx put it, "a bourgeois republic." If this confidence was maintained, property would rise in value, investment capital would flow, order would be maintained, and the worker, as a consequence, would find employment without the harmful intervention of the state.

That this was the general consensus of opinion among the delegates soon became clear. Following Peupin, Falloux rose to speak briefly. Referring to the great burst of applause which accompanied Peupin from the rostrum, he said, "I believe that it is the universal sentiment of the assembly which salutes the orator descending from the rostrum. If I were to say the very words which I wish to say, I would speak as the preceding speaker has." This endorsement

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11Ibid.
12Moniteur, May 11, 1848.
13Marx, Class Struggles, p. 41.
14Moniteur, May 11, 1848.
was also greeted with the approval of the Assembly. None the less, Blanqui's old co-conspirator Armand Barbès¹⁵ rose up before the assembly and delivered a speech praising the Luxembourg and the work which had so far been accomplished.

"It is said," he stated, "that the Luxembourg Commission has done nothing. Well enough, I will say that it has established as a principle that the state has the right to intervene in the affairs of labor. . . . There are two schools of social thinkers. The one is for Laissez-faire and Laissez-passé, and the other says that in questions of labor the state has the right to intervene, proscribing the evil, causing the good to triumph. Louis Blanc is a member of the latter."¹⁶ And, of course, so was Barbès.

Immediately thereafter, another voice from the left mounted the tribune. Freslon¹⁷ delivered his own panegyric of Louis Blanc. "Who are the soldiers who have served with merit in the struggles of the day and won the field? They shall be named, and among them history will assuredly give a place to Louis Blanc."¹⁸

¹⁵Armand Barbès (b. 1809) joined Blanqui in the abortive revolution of 1839 and was subsequently imprisoned for his actions. He then denounced Blanqui as an informer, and when he was released by the revolution of February 1848, his club, or political party, opposed Blanqui. He was Governor of the Palace of the Luxembourg and colonel of the National Guard for the twelfth Arrondissement of Paris, positions which he held until the outbreak of the June fighting.

¹⁶Moniteur, May 11, 1848.

¹⁷Alexander Freslon (b. 1800) became a lawyer in 1829. He filled various administrative posts after the revolution of 1830 and in 1839 founded Le Pré-cursateur de l'Ouest as an organ of the radical republican party. He was tried for his political activities in 1846, but escaped jail. After the 1848 Revolution he was named prosecutor general of the court of appeals of Angers and represented Maine-et-Loire in the Constituent Assembly. He was made minister of public instruction in October 1848. Nouvelle Biographie Générale.

¹⁸Moniteur, May 11, 1848.
But in reality, judging from the tone of the speeches, no one was interested in taking up the question of the ministry of progress. The kind words of Barbes and Freslon could not disguise the fact that the assembly had come to bury the "little Caesar" of the second republic, not to praise him. The flowers were tossed on his grave. Both Barbes and Freslon knew that the name of Louis Blanc did not carry its old magic. He was already, in spirit, what he was actually to become on May 15, a helpless puppet carried along by the crowd.19

Freslon, the last speaker of the day, stated in his conclusion, "But, although the social question is in all the minds of Europe and of France, it is personified at present by one man and by one system. . . . I say that the question should not be personified in a single name, a single system. . . . It ought to fill the consciousness of all, and be imprinted there, not in the name of any man, but in the name of humanity."20

Socialism, the speaker meant, should extricate itself from Blanc's theories. But this, as subsequent debates will show, it was unable to do. Long after Louis Blanc was exiled the debate was still carried on in the language of the Organisation du travail, with all its vagueness and ambiguity.

19Loubère, Louis Blanc, p. 108.
20Moniteur, May 11, 1848.
CHAPTER IV

THE RIGHT TO WORK

The curious phrase droit du travail, or "right to work," has meant many things in the course of the last hundred years. It has completely reversed its meaning in our own day. The phrase originated, like most of the other social schemes of the day, in the fertile, if somewhat muddled, brain of Louis Blanc, and it quickly became a cherished project to most of the socialist leaders, even some of the social Catholics.¹

Although the idea captured the imagination of many, the words "right to work" convey very little of themselves. Basically there were two possible meanings. In the most literal sense, it meant that all men had the right to a job. We are inclined to think of work, not as a right, either God-given or civil, but rather as a burden. But in the France of Louis Blanc the specter of unemployment hung over all.² There was no guarantee that the worker, with the best will in the world, might not be suddenly thrown out of his employment. The need for such guarantees, given the social conditions of the day, was considerable. And such assurances of labor could only come from the state.


For the state to make good such a right to work it had to have, in addition to sufficient natural resources, control over the means of production, power to make the laborer go where his skill was most required, and power to force the employer to accept him. These conditions were manifestly lacking in the Second Republic, nor was anyone likely to be willing to give the state such sweeping powers.

There was another possible meaning of the right to work; that it meant no more than a basic recognition of the right of every man to a job, and that the state would be cognizant of this right in forming its legislation. But, on the other hand, the state would not be responsible for finding a job for every citizen, because this was obviously beyond its powers.

Louis Blanc held a view similar to the first one mentioned above. Not only was the state to assure work to all its citizens, but the work must be that which was appropriate to the temperament and aptitudes of the worker. Men will work happily together if they are convinced that each of them is doing that for which he is best fitted. Work is drudgery in a capitalistic society because skills are subordinated to the fortunes of the laborer, and the worker, in practice, lacks any choice in his profession.3

Louis Blanc was advocating, as Marx was later to do, the end of the alienation between man and his social environment. Man would become whole again, if only he could be put to doing that which suited him best. The hold of this proposal over the mind of the workers is illustrated by the way in which it was thrust upon the Provisional Government. "When Marche ordered the

3Blanc, Organisation du travail, pp. 96-103.
Provisional Government at gunpoint to institute a right to work law within an hour, "like a clap of thunder, the social revolution burst upon the government." 4

Even Blanc had been surprised by this sudden turn of events. The revolution had already begun to slip from his feeble grasp. None the less, he set himself at once to the task of drafting the decree, despite the disapproval of some of his colleagues. 5

Due to the conflicting opinions within the government, and the need for making a pretense of satisfying all factions, the decree which emerged was a masterpiece of equivocation. It read as follows: "The Provisional Government of the French Republic pledges itself to guarantee work to all its citizens; it recognizes that the workers should associate among themselves to enjoy the legitimate profits of their labor; the Provisional Government returns to the workers to whom it belongs, the million which is going to fall due from the civil list." 6

The above statement could be taken as an expression of either the first or second meaning of the right to work. It was designed so that it could be taken by the workers in the first sense, the sense meant by Louis Blanc, while the Provisional Government could, if it chose, interpret it as the second.

Among those opposed to the proclamation were Marie and Lamartine. Of the latter, Louis Blanc could say, "The proposal encountered in M. de Lamartine an

4McKay, National Workshops, p. 10.
6Moniteur, February 26, 1848.
opponent full of venom. He declared that we were not able to commit in matters of this importance the opinions of a future assembly." ⁷ All this was perfectly true, but it was not a very good argument against the guns of the Paris workers. ⁸ The decree, like all others of the Provisional Government, was destined to be handed down as a legacy to the Constituent Assembly.

Louis Blanc was himself not in any great hurry to effect the radical transformation of society. It was enough for him that the principle was proclaimed and recognized. "The official recognition of the right to work was not understood by the workers in the sense of an agreement made by the Provisional Government to realize that right on the day after tomorrow. The crowd full of legitimate impatience and courageous resignation expressed their true sentiments in the vigorous formula; 'we give three months of misery to the service of the Republic.'" ⁹

It was fortunate that the workers were so ready to sacrifice themselves for patriotic ideals, for nothing was done on their behalf. While the Luxembourg continued to air its views daily upon the organization of society, the cause of the workers steadily lost ground. ¹⁰ Even Louis Blanc soon realized that he had made a grievous error in taking on, "a school organization, where I can take a course in hunger while the people starve." ¹¹

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⁷ Blanc, Revolution de 1848, I, 134.
⁸ For an account of Marché's invasion see Blanc, Révolution de 1848, I, 127-128.
⁹ Ibid., 127.
¹⁰ McKay, National Workshops, p. 15.
¹¹ Moniteur, February 29, 1848.
None the less, the expression was there, printed for all to see, of the government's solemn, if ambiguous promise, of the right to work. It could not be disavowed without courting disaster in the form of an armed uprising of the workers; it could not be implemented without courting disaster in the form of a bourgeois reaction, or even a coup.

Upon turning over the government to the new Constituent Assembly on May 6, all except Carnier-Pagès found it wise to follow Louis Blanc's example and give a rousing speech for socialism and the right to work. Lamartine declaimed, speaking of the workers and their employers, "we must elevate and enrich the one without lowering the other, we must conserve property and increase it, and divide it among the greatest number." 12:

Isaac Crémieux13 the minister of justice bid likewise for the favor of the oppressed, declaring that the jails had been opened in amnesty in token of the founding of the Republic, allowing those who were freed to breathe the pure air of liberty, and in the most elevated of sentiments, to applaud the National Assembly and remember it in their blessings. 14

12Moniteur, May 7, 1848.

13Isaac Adolphe Crémieux (b. 1796) became a barrister in 1817, distinguishing himself as a prosecutor. He attempted to secure a regency for the Duchess of Orleans in February 1848 and, this failing, joined the Provisional Government as minister of justice. He was elected to the Constituent Assembly in April for l'Indre-et-Loire. He was among those arrested by Napoleon III in his coup of December 1852. Dictionnaire Général de Biographie.

14Moniteur, May 7, 1848.
Ledru-Rollin, Blanc's fellow socialist, exclaimed, "It is to realize in the social order the dogma of equality and fraternity that we must devote our efforts.... Rendering to man his natural dignity, we will be assured of glory and the good will of our common land, and contribute to the emancipation of the world." It was the last time that Ledru-Rollin was to voice approval of Blanc's social schemes.

There the matter stood until after the June Days. In Blanc's speech on May 10 he had again reminded the assembly of its duty to implement the promised right to work, but there was no hurrying that august body. The majority of the members shared with Lamartine a complete loathing of any such proposition, and shared as well, his complete ignorance of what it might be that the proposition intended. Louis Blanc's own vagueness in the matter did not aid his cause.

Curiously enough, it was only after the events of the June Days had already discredited Louis Blanc that the matter had a full airing. It was the dean of utopian socialists himself, Proudhon, who decided that it was time to proceed with the matter. On July 26 Proudhon made a proposal for the cancellation of debts owed by small farmers and renters. According to this proposal, farmers and renters of houses would pay only two-thirds of their rents. Debtors would

15Alexandre Auguste Ledru-Rollin (1807-1874) was famous as a lawyer for his defense of republicans under Louis-Philippe. He was deputy for Le Mans in 1841, but was soon fined and imprisoned for his republican views (1842). He was a founder of La Réforme for which Louis Blanc wrote. Minister of the Interior of the Provisional Government, he opposed Blanc, and in the Executive Commission he was an opponent of the demonstration of May 15 and the workers in the June Days. He ran for president in December but finished behind Louis Napoleon and Cavaignac. He fled France after heading a demonstration in June 1849. Alvin Calman, Ledru-Rollin and the Second French Republic (New York, 1922).

16Moniteur, May 7, 1848.
discharge their obligations by a tender of two-thirds of their debts, and the same principle would be applied to contracts of every sort.¹⁷

To this proposal he received a strong reply from Thiers¹⁸ which "possessed in a high degree the peculiar excellencies of its author: clear statements of his adversaries arguments, so clear indeed as to render refutation almost superfluous."¹⁹

"It is a negation of the right of property . . . " he stated, "to accomplish the ruin of the social order. . . .

"The great principles of the family, of property, on which rests the social order, are not merely old privileges which by the passage of time or silence are lost; they are sacred principles, indestructible ones, which no human logic, however audacious, can reverse. . . .

"It requires effort to render the thoughts of Proudhon understandable, and to make them even momentarily acceptable for purposes of discussion."²⁰

Proudhon rose angrily and answered, "Citizen representatives, that which you have heard is not a report, it is an accusation. . . . My proposition is

¹⁷Moniteur, July 27, 1848.

¹⁸Adolphe Thiers (1797-1877) was a minister in the July Monarchy after having led the opposition to Charles X. Succeeded in 1840 by Guizot as the first minister, he henceforth led the "dynastic" opposition to the government. Like Guizot he was a historian of note, his famous work being the Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire (1845-1862). Despite his associations with Louis-Philippe he was elected to the Constituent Assembly. He played a large part in the Commission of Thirty to investigate the conditions of labor and agriculture, sponsored by Armand de Melun from July 1849. Here he strenuously opposed social reform. Nouvelle Biographie Générale.

¹⁹Corkran, Constituent Assembly, p. 266.

²⁰Moniteur, July 27, 1848.
not exposed, it is disfigured."21

The debate, however, was not continued. Instead it was put back to July 31, 1848. Proudhon remained unshaken in his determination. On that date22 he rose again to put forth very similar ideas, but this time precisely under the banner of the right to work. The problem, he said, which he sought to solve was the right to work. He then pointed out that labor might be guaranteed to all men only if an unlimited consumption could be likewise guaranteed.23 In other words, if, from the extent of consumption, labor should be in the greatest possible demand, then the state might safely assure it to all. Proudhon then went into the question of how this might be done.

"How can we begin to have for ourselves this increased demand? The force of consumption in society as in the individual is infinite, and if the greatest good fortune never fully allows the individual to satisfy all his desires, what then must be the consumption of a nation where the love of well-being, the taste for luxury, refinement of taste, are all possessed to the degree which they are among us, if the ability of consumption were given to the whole nation in proportion to its needs?"24 Proudhon's plea then is for the increase of consumer goods, made possible by a general increase in wages, and one other very modern idea, "freedom of credit, in the language of economics, the

21 Ibid.

22 Subject was: "project of Citizen Proudhon, relative to reorganization of imposts and credit." Moniteur, July 31, 1848. Speakers were: Proudhon, Senard, Dupin, Rochejacquelein, Duclerc, Thiers. Moniteur, August 1, 1848.

23 Moniteur, August 1, 1848.

24 Ibid.
placing of these few words into the projected constitution, guarantee of labor." 25

Proudhon denied that his proposals on this occasion were, strictly speaking, socialistic, for he denied altogether a partition of property. He realized that if the wealth of the entire nation at present were divided among its inhabitants there would be very little for each. His goal, rather, was, "... to raise the wealth of the country to ten times its present amount, so that there would be for each man's daily expenditure ten times as much as he had now." 26 He stated that the use of gold, the accumulation of capital in machinery and reserves, all impeded the free flow of exchange, so that men were producing for the sake of saving and hoarding up vast amounts of money (rather than for the sake of spending their money) in order to exempt themselves from labor in the future. 27

The answer to this problem would be in some form of public credit; "... by a national organization of public credit, by means of which we would be able to maintain neither privilege nor misery. It is clear that with this bank a government bank to ease credit we could cut the cost of administration and the national monetary reserves, we would have discount for nothing, credit for nothing, and finally the use of houses and of land for nothing." 28

Basically, his thesis was very simple. If the state wished to guarantee labor to all, it could only do so by creating work. It could only create work

25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
by creating the need for work. It could only create the need for work by increasing the ability of others to pay for the work. The only way to increase this ability to pay is by making credit easier to obtain. This was sound enough economic reasoning, but it was couched in so much socialistic jargon and rhetoric as to make the solution unpalatable to the assembly. Proudhon spoke of "Guarantees of the placement of products," of "reciprocity of credit," of "taxes on rent and interest." He claimed that it would be possible to "... order your production, circulation and consumption with the precision of mathematics." This was such a manifest absurdity that it is not surprising that he could not convince his opponents.

Proudhon went on to propose a far-reaching program that would include, (1) an authoritative announcement to property and the bourgeois class of the sense and object of the Revolution of February and (2) an alternative suggestion addressed to property for a general liquidation and a contribution to the revolutionary work.

One can hardly blame the scandalized M. Dupin who cried out, "It is clear enough, your money or your life!" Actually, the speech of Proudhon

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29 Moniteur, August 1, 1848.

30 Ibid.

31 Baron Charles Dupin (b. 1784) was a celebrated mathematician and military engineer. Engaged in the Napoleonic wars as a marine engineer, he was the author of several outstanding studies on military science. He was minister of the marine (1834). He was interested in reform of child labor, and his report to the Chamber (1846) exposed many abuses. Representing La Seine-Intérieure in the Constituent Assembly, he voted consistently with the conservative majority. Nouvelle Biographie Générale.

32 Moniteur, August 1, 1848.
served merely as an irritation to the assembly. Neither he nor the other members seriously thought that anything could come of such proposals. The hard-money, tight credit attitude of the majority of the members coupled with the legitimate fears of Jacobin revolution stifled any chance that even a moderate and well thought out program of financial reform might have had. When it came to a vote only one person sided with Proudhon.33

The next time that the question of the right to work arose was in the debates on the proposed constitution. The preamble to this document did not specifically indicate the commitment of the Republic to the right to work. Citizen Mathieu (de la Drome)34 proposed that an amendment be made to section eight of the preamble as follows: "The Republic must protect the citizen in his person, in his family, in his religion, and his property. It recognizes the right of all citizens of instruction, of labor, and of aid."35 This seemingly innocuous statement of human rights stirred up a storm of debate the next day, September 12, 1848.36

As the long debate began, a stinging attack on the proposed amendment was

33 Vote took place the same day. Proudhon and Greppo (his follower) for, 691 against. All important members except Montalembert present. Moniteur, August 1, 1848.

34 Claude Ferdinand Mathieu (b. 1819), inventor and political figure, was graduated from the Central School of Arts and Manufactures (1838). He published a technical journal, d'Atlas. At the left of the Assembly in both the second and third Republics, he worked for social reform. Dictionnaire Général de Biographie.

35 Moniteur, September 12, 1848.

"Citizen representatives," he began, "if I thought, as it was said yesterday, in the amendment which I am opposing, that to inscribe in the front of the Constitution the words 'right to work' would be declaring the suppression of all the miseries of the time, that by so doing we would be ending all the inequalities which nature has established, I would not hesitate for a moment to adopt it. But that is not my opinion; I see grave dangers, on the contrary, in adopting this amendment, which I am obliged to combat." 38

He then questioned the validity of the concept itself. "But is not," he asked, "the right to work, which he wishes to establish a word without meaning, a thing without reality? If it is a vulgar maxim without meaning or consequence, shouldn't he also say that work is an obligation as well as a right? An inflexible logician Proudhon has said to you, 'give me the right to work, and I will have your property,' there is the danger." 39

Citizen Pelletier 40 rose from the left to take up this challenge. He denied, however, the socialist character of the proposal. "There are three things necessary for human society . . . " he said, "the family, property and the state. If, gentlemen, we respect property, what is the property of the poor? It is labor. . . . Citizens, you know as well as I, that it isn't land,

37 Louis Madeleine Clair Hippolyte Gaulthier de Rumilly (b. 1792) first became a deputy to the Chamber in 1831, where he sat in the dynastic left. In the Constituent Assembly he was a member of the committee on finance and a counselor of state (1849). Dictionnaire Général de Biographie.

38 Moniteur, September 13, 1848.

39 Ibid.

40 No biographical material available on Citizen Pelletier.
nor the size of the country of France which gives everyone with property sufficient revenue. But it is labor, which is the property of the people, and which should be guaranteed by our Constitution.  

The right to work then received its most formidable challenge from one of the men who had been on the committee to draft the Constitution. Alexis de Tocqueville\(^2\) rose to defend the committee. "A word," he began, "on the work of the committee. . . . In essence, the committee determined to impose upon society the right to give aid to labor, to do everything proper and in the measure of its resources. . . . The amendment, on the other hand . . . which gives to every man the general right, absolutely and irresistibly, that amendment must have one of these consequences: either the state contrives to give work to all the workers as they demand it, and then, must restrain, little by little, all industry. . . . which is Communism." The very mention of this word caused what the Moniteur describes as a "sensation."\(^3\) "If on the other hand," he went on, "the State by its own resources . . . gives work to all the workers who present themselves before it . . . it will be obliged to forcibly distribute the workers without regard to their wishes, to regulate salaries, to control production, in a word, it must institute a great and unique organization of labor."\(^4\)

Thus, he envisioned either expropriation or a new, more

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\(^1\)Moniteur, September 13, 1848.

\(^2\)Alexis Charles Henri Clérel de Tocqueville (1805-1859), a lawyer by profession, was famous for his Democracy in America. He sat in the Chamber prior to 1848. Elected to the Constituent Assembly, he was a member of the Constitution committee. He was minister of foreign affairs June to December 1849. J. P. Mayer, Alexis de Tocqueville (New York, 1940).

\(^3\)Moniteur, September 13, 1848.

\(^4\)Ibid.
extensive National Workshop if the state carried the right to work into execution.

Striking at the heart of the matter, he declared, "Behind the issue which is under consideration, to me as clear as day though perhaps not to its author, is the question of socialism. [This provoked a new "sensation."] Gentlemen, the question which everyone fears to treat of must be brought out and be decided by this Assembly." He then appealed to the past to buttress his attack. "Is socialism, gentlemen, as we have been told, the legitimate continuation and consumation of the French Revolution? Is it, as is contended, the natural outcome of democracy? No, it is not either. Remember the Revolution!" 45

Harking back to his famous speech which predicted the February Revolution, he said, "I saw these two classes [bourgeoisie and workers] the one little the other numerous, becoming more separated from each other. . . . It was because I saw those two classes marching in opposite directions that I said . . . the wind of revolution is rising and the revolution is quickly coming." 46 The danger, he declared, was still present, unless both sides showed moderation, unless the revolution of February was viewed as political, not as social. "The February Revolution ought to be Christian and Democratic, but it should not be socialistic." 47

Ledru-Rollin, who followed Tocqueville, denied emphatically his views on the original French Revolution. "Citizens, the orator who descends from the tribune invoked the grand principles of the glorious French Revolution. . . .

45Ibid.
46Ibid.
47Ibid.
The right to work! It is inscribed in the works of the most eminent members, in the reports of Robespierre. . . . You have declared that to demand the right to work in the Constitution is utopian socialism. No, in demanding the introduction of the right to work, we are continuing the great principle of the Revolution!"48

So much for theory. The next speaker questioned the practical application of such a right to work. Duvergier de Hauranne49 asked bluntly: "If, when the crisis arrives, a million and a half workers descend upon you with an article of the Constitution in their hands, and demand work and a salary, when the coffers of the state are empty, what imposts will you enact, when credit is dead, what will you do?"50

It was a good question, and, embarrassingly enough, there was no good answer. Like Tocqueville, the present speaker saw in the right to work the beginning of socialism. "You understand," he told the Assembly, "why it is that all socialists, from M. Proudhon to M. Considerant, desire the adoption of the right to work. . . . It is a common idea among them, a common sentiment, an ardent desire, profoundly affecting society itself; it is a desire to destroy it in order to found a new order in its place. They believe the right to work an excellent machine for war, and they all favor it, however else they may

48Ibid.
49Prosper Duvergier de Hauranne (b. 1798) was associated with Thiers in the dynastic opposition under Louis-Philippe. A student of political history he greatly admired the British system of government. He was imprisoned and banished under Louis Napoleon (1852).
50Moniteur, September 13, 1848.
This called up an angry reply from Victor Considérant on the floor. "We will explain our thoughts at the tribune," he called. "I hope you will do that," replied the speaker. "I know that property runs few risks and that among all of these groups, not only its partisans, it is adored. [a laugh] But, gentlemen, one does not always respect what one adores. [a gale of laughter from the floor]"52 This last became one of the most quoted remarks of the day and made the fortune of Duvergier de Hauranne as a parliamentary wit.53

Isaac Cremieux then rose and attempted to combat the strongest point yet made. "The honorable orator who has just descended from the tribune," he began in the parliamentary formula, "must permit me to answer at once one of his arguments... He has said: suppose a million and a half workers without labor, dying of hunger, come to you and demand assistance in the name of the right to work. How will you pay them? What will you do?

"In truth, the argument is not entirely just. Put nothing in your Constitution... nothing at all, and suppose a million and a half workers, dying of hunger say to you, 'feed us, give us work,' what will you answer?"54 But, of course, this avoided the real issue, which was what would be done if they could demand labor as an explicit Constitutional right. "What we demand," he went on, "is a right to work within the power of society."55

51Ibid.
52Ibid.
53Corkran, Constituent Assembly, p. 311.
54Moniteur, September 13, 1848.
55Ibid.
The argument then became a semantic one. Crémieux pointed out that in reality what was wanted was simply a right of labor (droit du travail), not a positive right to work (droit au travail). It was, he declared essentially the same right for which the original French Revolution had been fought.\(^5\)

Marcel Barthe\(^5\) countered this. "Gentlemen, the honorable M. Crémieux who descends from the tribune, found a perfect analogy between the expression of M. Mathieu, 'right to work,' and that of Turgot, 'right of work.' This is a great error. There is between the two expressions the difference between the civilized society which we know and the other society of which happily we have only heard in the dreams of utopias."\(^5\)

The clamor from both sides for a chance to speak was so great that the debate was carried over to the next day.\(^5\) On the thirteenth Citizen Gaslonde\(^6\) declared, "I am convinced that socialism is the great error of modern times... But I know... that this doctrine responds to a certain point to the needs of human nature.

"I believe it is a serious error, I don't say on the part of the social-

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\(^5\)Ibid

\(^5\)Marcel Barthe (b. 1813) studied at Pau and became a lawyer in Paris (1844). He collaborated on the journals Temps and l'Artiste. He was a follower of Cavaignac, but after the election of December 1848 he sided with the left. *Dictionaire Général de Biographie*.

\(^5\)*Moniteur*, September 13, 1848.

\(^5\)Only Gaslonde and Arnaud de l'Ariège spoke, debate postponed to September 14.

\(^6\)Charles Pierre Gaslonde (b. 1812) was professor of civil law at Dijon from 1841. Conservative in politics he voted with the right in the Constituent Assembly. He was a Counselor of State under Napoleon III (1852-1861). *Dictionaire Général de Biographie*. 
ists, but at least on the part of those who wish to write right to work into the Constitution . . . to confound moral obligations with positive rights." 61

In other words, the question of labor should have been left to the consciences of the just.

Arnaud de l'Ariège 62 denied this, demanding, "When the society contains so many victims of egoism, of bad faith, of ill-will, or at least, of neglect and indifference, ought the state to fold its arms?" 63

The fourteenth of September brought the debate to a close. 64 Dufaure, 65 speaking for the right, cautioned the Assembly against allowing the worker to place his total reliance on the state. "When the worker has, more or less, the habit of depending on the state for work, infallibly when he gets this habit, the taste for work, little by little, is lost; he falls into indolence, laziness and all sorts of vices as a consequence." 66

Lamartine, perhaps hoping to revive his popularity, came out favoring the right to work. "Gentlemen," he began, "whether you inscribe that right or not, it exists, but consider one thing, if you do not inscribe it, it will be evident

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61 Moniteur, September 14, 1848.

62 Frédéric Arnaud de l'Ariège (b. 1819), lawyer and writer, achieved fame for his frankly republican views prior to 1848. He was a member of M外援's Social Catholic group, but voted with the left on issues not touching the Church. Dictionnaire Général de Biographie.

63 Moniteur, September 14, 1848.

64 Speakers: Bouvier de l'Ecluse, Martin-Bernard, Billault, Dufaure, Lamartine, Clais-Mizoin, Goudchaux, LaGrange, Jules Favre.

65 Jules Armand Stanislas Dufaure (b. 1798), a member of center-left in the Chamber. In the Constituent Assembly he was responsible for the Cautionment law against the press. He was Minister of Interior, October-December 1848.

66 Moniteur, September 15, 1848.
that you are restoring a condition which has not secured property, and which has never added a bit to the treasury. The forces which agitate society are so grave that they do not depend on words, or formulas. It does not depend on the silence of the committee [on the Constitution].”

A move was now made to tone down the amendment of Mathieu. Glais-Bizoin offered one which was essentially similar, reading: "The Republic must protect all its citizens in their person, religion, property and labor. It recognizes the right of all citizens to instruction, to assistance in their labor, and aid in all the forms and conditions regulated by law." Thus, the duty of the state was toned down from recognizing the right to work to offering assistance in work, within legally allowed forms. It was hoped, of course, that this would have a wider appeal, but the hopes appear to have been in vain.

Goudchaux rose up and approved the proposed amendment. "Yes," he said, "work is a divine right, and it is also by divine will as well that work is a penalty from which no one escapes. But if you give the government the obligation of securing labor... you will have a rise in salaries without intending it, in exchange given for labor. You will demand of the state that which it cannot do... Progress, as I see it, rests on work. Impose on the state the obligation to assist the laborer if you wish, but if you proclaim it as a right you stop all progress, imperil the worker and society itself."
The motion was then put to a vote, but Clais-Bizoin's amendment was heavily defeated.\textsuperscript{71} Citizen Mathieu's was withdrawn.

Excluded from the Constitution, the right to work quickly became a dead issue, except as a banner and a rallying point for whatever socialist opposition was allowed to remain. Though the phrase struck a responsive cord in the hearts of the workers, it was too nebulous to ever form a real platform for action. The only person who could have formulated it into a concrete system was Louis Blanc himself, and this is precisely what he was not prepared to do.

\textsuperscript{71}For: 187, against: 596. Lamennais, Ledru-Rollin, Proudhon, Considérant were among the "for." Against were Corbon, Falloux, Faucher, Marrast, Tocqueville, Peupin, Thiers, Lamartine (evidently displeased by the amendment), and Caussidière.
CHAPTER V

THE ORGANIZATION OF LABOR

If the right to work was an ambiguous term which could serve either to designate a complete program of state socialism or a moderate welfare state, the title Organisation du travail admitted of only one interpretation. It was the essence of socialism. This was the title of Louis Blanc's most famous book. This was the banner for the workers in the February Revolution.

There was no doubt in the minds of any of the members of the Assembly who had read Louis Blanc's book as to what the term meant. He had said exactly what it meant: "The government must be considered as the supreme regulator of production and invested for the accomplishment of this with a great power."¹ In this scheme all production, all manufacture would be controlled by the government and directed into whatever channels the government thought best. One means of accomplishing this goal would be a system of social workshops. These would be quite different from the National Workshops of Marie, and, in fact, would be more in line with the experiment in the garment industry conducted by Louis Blanc in the former Clichy prison during the first months of

¹ Blanc, Organisation du travail, p. 102.
"The government . . . should produce this effect [of regulating production] by the creation of social workshops in the important branches of the national industry. . . . The number of workshops will be rigorously circumscribed, but by virtue of their organization, as we shall see, they will become a force for immense expansion."  

"The sources of economic power are . . . capital and credit. Unless, labor can command these resources it can never really be emancipated; the politicians may prate of "liberty" but the masses can never achieve it. At present it is only the rich who can borrow capital, the government, therefore, must become the bankers of the poor."  

But his object was not to create, as later revolutionaries wanted to do, a closed system, in which all industry down to the workbench level would come under the control of the state. He saw capitalism and socialism existing side by side for a long period. Only after some time would the latter entirely displace the former. The initial impetus from the government would take the form, not of expropriation of existing concerns, but of the foundation of new ones. The government, "must begin by raising a huge loan and with the proceeds of the loan it must establish social workshops." Competition between these government industries and those of the capitalists would result in a survival

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2 The Clichy shop was set up as an enterprise of the Luxembourg Commission. It lasted from March to June 1848, manufacturing uniforms for the National Guard regiments. For a complete account see Blanc, Révolution de 1848, I, 189-216.

3 Blanc, Organisation du travail, p. 103.


5 Ibid.
of the fittest, which would mean the triumph of socialism.

Lamartine's hostile comment to the program sums up the feeling of many of the bourgeois class. "This system," he wrote, "which was moderate and disguised in form, founded on a real principle of justice and equality, and of pity for the oppressions of competition, and the frequent iniquities to which capital may give rise, and expounded by its founder with a persuasive sophistry that attracted the ignorant, and a talent and style and words which dazzled the young and penetrated the masses, was of all systems the most abundant in earnest followers." 6 Despite its clever disguise, the astute Lamartine recognized in the Organisation du travail one of the wickedest of the socialist plots. "Now the organization of labor," he announced, "being thus conceived, is nothing but the enslavement of capital, and the arbitrary fixation of wages by the state, suppressing the free action of the proprietor, and the interest in his own labor on the part of the workman; and, in consequence, suppressing capital, wages and labor at a single blow. . . . In making the state God and the laborer slave, it is the death-blow to all free dealing between man and man, under the pretense of destroying the abuses of competition." 7

None the less, the organization of labor was a handy catchword; that is to say, one which could be used to catch votes for all parties. In the chaotic state of French politics at the time, it was not surprising to hear the Comte de Cuatrebarbes, 8 an associate of Falloux, saying, "Yes, France has peacefully

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6 Lamartine, History of 1848, p. 191.
7 Ibid., p. 252.
8 He was, like Falloux, a member of the Catholic and Bourbon Legitimist right. The occasion was the election of April 27, 1848. Falloux, Mémoires, I, 268-269.
accomplished her destined glory and proclaimed from the first the Rights of Man, the liberty of the Church, of the family and of conscience, a wise organization of labor which equitably regulates the dealings of worker with master, which protects agriculture, property and industry." 9 Obviously, the "organization of labor" was a long way from that of Louis Blanc. It was a "wise" organization, therefore, no real organization at all in Blanc's sense. For the socialists, any organization of labor which left control in the hands of property and the capitalist class was no organization but rather a disorganization of labor.

If anyone had doubted this, the speech of Louis Blanc on May 6, 1848, as the Provisional Government stepped down, would have been sufficient to clarify the issue. On this occasion, however, he took pains to stress that it was not merely the good of the laboring classes, but rather that of all which he had in mind. "And when I demand," he cried, "that the state intervene between the strong and the weak, between rich and poor, do not believe, Citizens, that I am a party to the idea that this protection should be exclusive, that it should be protection only for demagoguery. No, no! Among our most religiously held convictions is that the most noble, most just duty is to act in the interests of all."10

When the issue arose on the tenth,11 Freslon took pains to sweep it under the table, saying, "The National Assembly will, of necessity, pose the problem of the organization of labor, in all its facets; and if it did not do so it

9Ibid., 269.
10Moniteur, May 11, 1848.
11For subject and speakers, see Chapter III, note 3.
would be cursed by posterity, and despised by France. At least one observer felt that this was only so much rhetoric, and that, "There can be no doubt that the Assembly was tried for the acts of the day in the Clubs of Paris, and condemned."

The social questions had a way of turning up in the midst of other debates and at times when they proved a distinct embarrassment to the government, which considered that it had better things to do than to debate endlessly on the schemes of a Louis Blanc or a Proudhon. On June 15 the topic of the day was Algeria. Then as now, the Algerian question was a thorn in the side of the French government, but then the problem was not how to withdraw from it with dignity, but rather how to colonize it most successfully. Pierre Leroux advocated an immense program of colonization. "We have in Algeria," he said, "an immense territory; there we can find precisely what we hunt ceaselessly in France; it is a grand idea." But what was it, he asked, that they all sought ceaselessly in France? It was the right of all to employment. This made him think of the socialists of the school of Louis Blanc, and he thundered out, "What is the necessity of conflict, why is there always discord and bickering?"

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12 Moniteur, May 11, 1848.

13 Corkran, Constituent Assembly, p. 74.

14 See Chapter II, note 38.

15 Pierre Leroux (1798-1871) was a disciple of Saint-Simon, he was associated with George Sand in Revue indépendante (1841). He established Revue sociale (1843), an extreme left journal. He was a member of the Constituent Assembly and, from December 1848, of the Legislative Assembly. He fled to Jersey after Napoleon III's coup. P. Raillard, Pierre Leroux et ses oeuvres (Paris, 1899).

16 Moniteur, June 16, 1848.
I believe that humanity can accomplish this transformation without spilling a single drop of human blood. And so I find the calamities of socialism, or the 'red republic,' by which I take it they mean a bloody republic or one ready to stain itself with blood, unnecessary. It is an error, it is a disgrace, it is the mark of insolent ignorance. 17

The social republic found at this point a most unusual champion. Goudchaux, the foxy minister of finance, rose and delivered a reply, with evident sincerity. "No! Citizen representative, humanity has not heard the last word on this subject. The Revolution of February did not say more than the first word... The workers who are the life of the state, who are the greatest part of the nation, are in general in a situation which is unjust, unhappy and no longer bearable. They do not have equality." 18 There was no use, he stated, packing them off to Algeria, for the same situation would again develop. "The remedy rather than immigration... is the organization of labor. I wish," he continued, "to say a few words about the organization of labor.

"We have promised it to them, we ought to give it to them," he told the delegates, "But we must make sure that we do so entirely; we wish to give them Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, nothing more, nothing less. Not one of those words should be held back from them. I wish to preserve liberty in giving equality and honoring fraternity. Equality for the workers does not exist at present." 19 He then went on to make the same observation which Louis Blanc

17Ibid.
18Ibid.
19Ibid.
had made, and which Karl Marx would eventually carry to its conclusion. "The workers make the essential goods with which to rescue society from the state in which it is. . . . the workers are not given the credit which is due to them."\textsuperscript{20}

Why Goudchaux took it upon himself to deliver such a fiery speech on this subject, which was so unpopular at the time, is hard to determine. Essentially he too was a capitalist, destined to be one of the great capitalists of France. The conclusion of his speech gives some hint, however, of the forces which impelled him to defend the cause of the workers. In that conclusion, he seems to have experienced a prophetic moment similar to that which Alexis de Tocqueville had on the eve of the February Revolution.

"It is impossible," said Goudchaux, "to pretend that it is the government which gives life to the workers, on the contrary, it is the workers who give life to the government."\textsuperscript{21}

At this moment Goudchaux saw clearly what his colleagues failed to see, that you cannot have a republic without republicans. The workers were the foremost republican element in France, and yet, the republic itself was at that very moment driving them into open revolt. The peasants were essentially conservative as were the country landlords. The bourgeoisie would favor any form of government which guaranteed them stability. Only the workers had a vested interest in the continuation of the Second Republic, only they could be relied upon to support it in the eventual showdown which must come between those who favored the republic and those who wished to return once more to a monarchical

\textsuperscript{20}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{21}\textit{Ibid.}
experiment. Without them the republic was lost, and they would be lost to the defense of the republic unless their just demands were met—the demands signifyed by the organization of labor. At that very moment forces were building the conflict of the June Days which came in a week's time, breaking the spirit of the workers, and eventually breaking the republic itself.
CHAPTER VI

THE HOURS OF WORK

Although not so basic to the social debate, the question of reducing the hours of labor brought forth a discussion which gives a good indication of the sentiments of the Assembly on issues of social importance.

In the first exciting and hopeful moments of the Republic, the workers had greeted Louis Blanc on his way to the first meeting of the Luxembourg Commission on March 1 with a demand for a reduction of hours. "A worker then rose up and, in the name of his comrades, made two demands, which he declared, demanded an immediate response: reduction of the hours of labor, and the abolition of marchandage [labor brokerage]." ¹

The Luxembourg was not long in answering this demand. "The questions . . . were calmly discussed, and, the majority of patrons having recognized the justice of the demands made by the workers, their sincere conviction, and knowing the inconveniences attached to refusing, a decree ² was prepared which

¹Blanc, Révolution de 1848, I, 168.

²The decree read, in part: "The Provisional Government of the Republic decrees: 1st. That the work day is diminished by an hour. In consequence, in Paris where it was eleven it is reduced to ten, and in the provinces, where it was exactly a dozen it is reduced to eleven." Moniteur, March 3, 1848.
abolished marchandage and reduced the hours of labor."

But the show of unity and good-feeling was not destined to outlive the June Days. On August 30, 1848 debate began on the proposal of the labor committee to abrogate this decree, which was known as the "decree of March 2" from the date of its adoption.

Pierre Leroux was the first to challenge the proposal. "The state," he declared, "ought to intervene to protect what is called freedom of contract, freedom of transaction, but it ought also to intervene to stop despotism and license, which in the name of freedom of contract, destroys all liberty and society entirely." He insisted that he had no wish to create a socialist experiment, but simply to achieve justice. "Citizens, in examining that decree," he stated, "I have come to believe that there is not a measure more founded on right and necessity than that which it is proposed to destroy. . . . "You have the right to order your own lives as you please . . . but the law does not give you the right of murder over your employees." The workers were enslaved, the decree had set them free, he argued.

Louis Buffet, however, defended the proposal. "The honorable speaker

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3Blanc, Révolution de 1848, I, 170.

4"Project to decree the abrogation of the decree of March 2, 1848," only Leroux and Buffet spoke, debate was postponed. Moniteur, August 31, 1848.

5Ibid.

6Ibid.

7Louis Joseph Buffet (b. 1818), a lawyer, represented Vosage and sat at the right in the Constituent Assembly. Known as an opponent of socialism, he was minister of agriculture and commerce (December 1848-December 1849). He had a long career in the second empire and later was a prominent parliamentarian of the Third Republic. Dictionnaire Général de Biographie.
... has told you that you ought to set free the worker who is a slave, I contend for myself, that on the contrary, the partisans of this decree [of March 2, not the proposal to abrogate it] which seems to regulate everything are not making the workers free, but rather making them slaves." Only when there was complete freedom of contract, he meant, could the worker hold his head up as a man. The debate was heated with many interruptions from the floor, and it was evident that the matter could not be settled at once. It was decided to continue the matter to the following day.9

Charles Dupin opened with an observation on the absence of Louis Blanc who, he said, should really be here, but was forced to leave rather hurriedly a week ago. This brought a sly laugh from the right. However, he said, Louis Blanc was ably represented by his friend Pierre Leroux, "... yesterday, M. Pierre Leroux, in a complete fashion, reproduced, amplified, and multiplied his arguments. ... He accused the manufacturers of being murderers." This Dupin denied. It was, he thought, an insult to France. Dupin continued, "As far as these accusations against the worth of our nation go, I cannot accept that there is great misery among the French people. I affirm the contrary."10

He then lashed out at the decree of March 2. "What," he asked, "has been the effect of this decree which has been divinized by the title immortal? That decree consecrated one hour less to work, as a gift, as a present, as a benefice, to the departments and two hours to Paris for joyful relief and recom-

8Moniteur, August 31, 1848.

9Speakers were: Charles Dupin, Gambon, Wolowski, Senard, Leon Faucher, Brunet, Pascal Duprat. Moniteur, September 1, 1848.

10Ibid.
pense for victory! . . . It is a crown on the brows, I do not say of the true worker, but of the bad worker, who desires to keep work at a minimum.\textsuperscript{11} It is hard to believe in the sincerity of this incredibly callous outburst, and yet, the same sentiments were echoed a few minutes later by Leon Faucher.

Leon Faucher asked, "Then you attempt to determine the duration of labor, do you know what you do? You place in the necessity of being determined exactly a certain point of sufficient salary. One must arrive infallibly and exactly at the salary which is sufficient for the worker to retain his faculties and then you say to him, 'you may work so many hours and no more,' you contract an obligation to sustain him and his family. I wish to find out whether the worker goes home after work, or to another little job to prolong the day whose term you have assigned. \textsuperscript{12} [Voices; it is so, there is no question of that.]

Pascal Duprat,\textsuperscript{13} toward the end of this session, summed up the views of those favoring the abrogation. "It is evident," he declared, "that the debate is on two different and essentially distinct questions: a question of fact and a question of theory or doctrine. The question of fact is this; is the decree of March 2 and its influence on our industrial world good or bad, the question

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{12}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{13}Pierre Pascal Duprat (b. 1815) became professor of history at Paris (1840). He worked on La Réforme and Revue indépendante, leading republican journals, prior to 1848, and also on Lamennais' Le Peuple constituent. He was a member of the Labor and Constitutional committees of the Constituent Assembly and supported giving total power to Cavaignac on June 23. He was arrested by Louis Napoleon in his coup and subsequently fled to Belgium. \textit{Dictionnaire Général de Biographie}. 
of theory is what is the role of the state. . . .

"The decree was not greatly extended . . . it was not executed save in Paris and some departments. . . . In all others it succumbed to the law of facts, and the needs of the industrial situation." The decree was thus de facto void and should be erased from the record.

"If the decree of March 2," he concluded, "had not made the industrial situation impossible, if it had not . . . affected all of us, its abrogation would not be proposed. . . ." He did not seem to be aware that this conflicted with his statement that it had never been applied. "If the decree of March 2 had achieved the freedom of the working classes, we would not propose its abrogation, because it had achieved what we ourselves desire to attain, but because it has not . . . we demand of you the abrogation of the decree of March 2."15

Seeing that the demise of the March decree was almost certain, Michel Alcan16 proposed, "The work day in all the territory of the Republic, in establishments of industry or workshops occupied by ten or more workers shall not exceed a dozen hours." It was hoped by the left that this milder decree might be able to replace it. The proposal was not taken up until September 8,

11Moniteur, September 1, 1848.

15Ibid.

16Michel Alcan (b. 1811) played an active part in the 1830 revolution. He studied at the Central School of Arts and Manufactures and became a civil engineer (1834). He headed the above school from 1845, winning many awards for scientific achievements. He was on the committee on labor. Dictionnaire Général de Biographie.

17Moniteur, September 1, 1848.
Corbon vigorously defended shorter hours for workers. "A mason in Paris, who works ten hours, does a fourth again as much work as a mason in the other departments, who works thirteen and fourteen hours a day. It isn't long work which is good work, it is work done with intelligence and vigor." This seems today to be the most evident good sense, but it was not acceptable to the right wing of the Assembly. "I hear it objected," he went on, "that if labor is limited to twelve hours, then the fathers of families will have to work fourteen or fifteen hours a day. This is not a general thing, it is not even the case in exceptional circumstances."

Citizen Stroum also answered the critics of the shorter day. "It has been protested," he said, "in the name of liberty that the state has not the right to regulate the hours of labor. . . . But one ought to consider that the state has the right to dispose in general of the forces of the nation, that is to say, to conserve them, it is necessary as well to recognize the right of the state to secure well-being and morality."

But it was precisely the right of the state to conserve and dispose of the forces of the nation that his opponents denied. This is shown very clearly by the speech of Peupin who said, "Permit me . . . to declare that the amount

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18"Suite on the discussion of the decree relative to the hours of labor." Pascal Duprat, Stroum, Besnard, Corbon, Morin. Michot Lewasseur, Peupin, Sevaistre, Agricol Perdiguier, Grandin, Alcan spoke. Moniteur, September 9, 1848.
19Ibid.
20Ibid.
21Ibid.
of work per day, ought not to be at a maximum, more than twelve hours, but that while it ought to be lessened, the workers and employers should be free in this regard." The meaning of this clearly was that the state had no such right of intervention.

The matter of the abrogation was decided by a voice vote; it passed overwhelmingly, in other words. Alcan's proposal was voted on by ballot, but once again the left was heavily defeated.23

The significance of this debate on hours is that it makes clear that the opponents of social legislation (who must have accounted for at least two-thirds of the Assembly) were not willing to concede to the state the most basic powers to relieve the most obvious and gross injustice. Perhaps correctly, they felt that such an opening wedge might lead them down the path of socialism.

22 Ibid.

23 "Proposal to limit hours of labor to twelve," was defeated by a vote of 616 to 67. Arago, Lammenais, Raspail, Ledru-Rollin, Proudhon for. Against were Falloux, Montalembert, Rochjacquelein, Tocqueville, Trélät.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

Any attempt at reaching conclusions from what we have seen of the social debate carried on in the National Constituent Assembly of the Second Republic is likely to end in generalities which will tend to be somewhat misleading. But there are several features of these debates so striking that they cannot be ignored.

First of all, it appears that very few of the members of this assembly were seriously concerned with the social realities of the situation. Only too often they were ready to reject any attempt to better the condition of the poor as a matter of principle. This came either from a belief in the principles of Laissez-faire, or, more frequently perhaps, from a belief that nothing could really be accomplished. Typical of this attitude was the speech Benoist D'Asy\(^1\) made in the debate of July 9, 1849\(^2\) on the project of Armand de Melun for a

\(^1\)Denis, comte de Benoist D'Asy (b. 1796) became a deputy to the Chamber in 1842. As a member of the legitimist party (a supporter of the Bourbon pretender) he formed part of the right wing opposition to Louis-Philippe's government. He was not a member of the Constituent Assembly but was returned to the National Assembly in 1849. He opposed the coup of Louis Napoleon and retired from public life.

commission of thirty to investigate labor conditions.

"Dare you come here," he asked, "and produce a system; expound such a system in its entirety, discuss it, accept it as reasonable and true—that you are capable of making over the human race; you will never realize such a project, for in the words of the Lord, who Himself declared it to be impossible, 'the poor you will always have with you.'" This was only too frequently the attitude of the debaters. Only the specter of communism forced them to debate at all. The men like Louis Blanc, or Armand de Melun, who were serious in their interest in social questions were few indeed.

Secondly, it must be admitted, that these serious men were visionary and impractical on far too many occasions. The criticism was leveled against each of them that their schemes were impractical and impossible even to understand. Though this was often as not pure rhetoric, there was a good deal of truth in it. The schemes advanced by the advocates of social reform were not hardheaded enough to appeal to the minds of the bourgeoisie. They were usually practical in the abstract; that is to say, they did not violate any law of nature. Given ideal circumstances they might have been achieved. But they were grossly impractical in the concrete instances in which they were proposed. In stead of taking things step by step, the socialists were all too ready to demand a complete overturn of society. All of them were only too frequently the dupes of the politicians. It was too easy to put them off into an out of the way spot, like the Luxembourg Commission, or Melun's Commission of Thirty and let them talk to their hearts content while the practical politicians "minted the cur-

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3 Moniteur, June 10, 1849.
rent coinage elsewhere.

Speaking of Louis Blanc, his biographer Leo Loubère has said, "In the final analysis, he reminds one of those moderate revolutionaries, the Marquis de Condorcet, Friedrich Ebert, Alexander Kerensky, J. Ramsay-McDonald, Leon Blum, who ultimately failed because they were not prepared to undertake the brutal measures that their opponents, either to the right or to the left, willingly resorted to." Whether one accepts this analysis or not, one cannot fail to see in Blanc's speeches the mark of fatal inaction, the disease of Hamlet.

Thirdly, it is apparent, as Louis Blanc himself realized, that the real opportunity for social reform was passed with the June days. And despite the evident bad faith of the opponents of reform, the blame for the failure falls squarely upon the socialists themselves. There was a complete unwillingness on the part of all of them to cooperate with anyone who did not see eye to eye with them on each issue. Louis Blanc could not work with a Cabet, or even with a Blanqui. Vicomte de Melun took pains to distinguish himself from all the socialists. All of these men should have found some common interest on which they could unite. Their opponents did find such a common interest—the protection of property—which abolished all distinctions among them, whether

4Marx, Class Struggles, p. 33.
5Loubère, Louis Blanc, p. 80.
6Blanc, Révolution de 1848, I, 178-179.
7Etienne Cabet (b. 1788) was, like Proudhon, the son of working class parents. He became a lawyer and was outstanding in his defense of the republican cause prior to 1848. His Voyage en Icare marked him as a Utopian socialist. Although often called "the father of communism," his position was not nearly as realistic as that of Marx.
between aristocrat and bourgeoisie or between republican and monarchist. Just as these factions managed to unite under the banner save our property, so the socialists could have united under the simple slogan, relieve the misery of the poor. But this would have required a common plan of action, for it was their part to attack and that of the propertied classes to defend themselves. No such common plan could be found. A Considerant could not be persuaded of the necessity of working with a Barbes.

Karl Marx, watching with an interested eye, was disgusted with the factionalism and pettiness that was shown. "With the exception of a few short chapters," he exclaimed, "every important part of the annals of the revolution from 1848 to 1849 carries the heading: Defeat of the Revolution." 8

The last, and perhaps the most striking feature of the social debate, was its static quality. It is surprising how little this debate has changed from the Second Republic to the Fifth Republic, from 1848 to 1962. The same arguments which were advanced then are advanced today. One side cries, "the workers must organize and then they will be free," and the other answers, with equal plausibility, "the poor you will always have with you." To this day, one side see progressive taxation as the first step to socialism, while the other demands the expropriation of all corporate property. The specter of "atheistic Communism" is still with us, and it is kept alive in the pulpits of today, just as it was by the good abbés of the Second Republic. The curious thing about this long, and to a large extent, meaningless dialogue, is that neither side seems to be making any sort of real effort to convince the other of the rectitude of its own cause. Everyone remains convinced of his own

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8Marx, Class Struggles, p. 33.
doctrine, no matter how clever the strategems of the opposition.

In the debates of the Constituent Assembly of the Second Republic this is brought out very well at times. Proudhon's speech on the right to work convinced not a soul. It was in fact, only a sounding board for his doctrines on the abolition of debts, a scheme which no one took seriously. He found, as he must have known in advance, that when it came to a vote only one other deputy was on his side.

The whole problem with the social debate, in the Second Republic or elsewhere, is that neither side has really reached the ear of the other. Each side only awaits its turn to speak, and yet, when it does speak, it is fully aware that the opposition, to whom its remarks should be addressed, is not listening. Each side continues to regard the contentions of its opponents, not as rational arguments, but as temptations of the devil, which must be put out of the mind at once rather than entertained. And so, as happened in the Second Republic, the issues themselves are usually not solved by debate, but by force, as in the June Days, Falloux could not end the National Workshops, Cavaignac could and did.10

Violence was used to effect a solution when words proved unable to do so. The open violence of the June Days and the more subtle violence of Louis Napoleon's coup d'état of December 2, 1852 proved more effective and decisive than all the debates of the legislature. But, that such solutions are false solutions, resulting only in continued struggle, seems evident. One can only

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9 See supra, Chapter IV, note 22 and note 33.

10 See supra, Chapter II, note 80 (in text).
speculate on what might have happened in the Constituent Assembly if there had been no June Days, but it is entirely possible that a solution satisfactory to worker and employer alike might have been achieved.
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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Thomas P. Anderson has been read and approved by three members of the Department of History.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

Jan. 26, 1963
Date

Signature of Adviser