

To My
Mother And Father

Individualism And The Role Of The Individual
In British And French Socialism: The Early
Years, 1800-1848

by

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PREFACE

Louis Blanc summarized the central question considered by all of the thinkers under examination in this study when he wrote in 1839: "L'ordre social actuel est mauvais: comment le changer?" The first half of the nineteenth century saw a gigantic effort on the part of thinkers in Western Europe to find and to develop their own solutions to this problem.

The decision to terminate this study at about 1848 was based on a number of factors. In the development of socialist thought in Western Europe, the period from 1848 to about 1851 marks an important watershed for the movement. Of those intellectuals who lived during the first half of the century, each turned in his separate way to new avenues and enterprises after mid-century; that is to say, they had completed most of their major works by that time. All of Robert Owen's major writings were done before 1848, the only exception being his autobiography. Saint-Simon and Charles Fourier were both dead, and their followers split into warring factions. Pierre Joseph Proudhon returned to writing in the late 1850's after a brief excursion into the realm of politics and economics in 1848; his most famous work came in 1840. Étienne Cabet left the old world in 1848 to establish

an ideal community on the American frontier and died a pauper's death in Saint Louis. Louis Blanc turned from organizing workshops to the writing of French history, and produced his multi-volume study of the French Revolution. G. D. H. Cole, one of the foremost authorities on modern socialism, has labeled the decade after 1848 as "almost a dead period for socialist thought."

As the title indicates, this study has attempted to gather and digest the major thoughts of early nineteenth century British and French socialists on but one main subject: individualism and the role of the individual. Specifically this effort involves consideration of several questions. How did each thinker contribute toward the meaning of the term individualism as it finally appeared about mid-century? In what ways did they view the role of the individual not only under the existing social order, but in their respective alternatives to that order? As writers they faced the dilemma of indicating the rights due to both the collective social body and of each individual in it. How does one secure both the blessings of mankind, and yet realize the wealth drawn from individual spontaneity? What is, therefore, the true social contract? Furthermore, to what extent were these various intellectuals influenced

in their decisions by their own national experiences? Clio was subjected to a great many pressures in order to "prove" a number of vastly different social programs. Never, in fact, was there such a pressing concern for the rights of the most numerous and the poorer elements in society. All of the thinkers examined here--Owen, Fourier, Saint-Simon, Proudhon, Cabet and Blanc--were agreed that the existing system of property relations generated and perpetuated a morally evil and inefficient social system. Western industrialization had brought, or was bringing, a social order based upon dehumanization and automatism. Thus, the key question was, to quote Louis Blanc again, "how to change it?" Their persistent love of humanity led such intellectuals to seek out the real, not necessarily the true, laws of nature and history. Such laws, they assumed, existed a priori in the universe.

Individualism is a topic which has received but scant treatment by modern scholars, although it is a subject which has prompted a great deal of commentary within the socialist movement itself. There has not been thus far any scholarly attempt to treat this topic as it relates to the Utopian Socialists of the early nineteenth century.

The role of the individual in the writings of this school of socialist thought is a relatively untouched area of investigation. Although researchers have examined many sources for the term "individualism," none of them have used the numerous dictionaries of the period, 1800-1848, to explain their findings further. And no study has sought to place both of these problems, the origins and history of individualism and the role of the individual, together into one project. As will be developed in the text, these two problems were interrelated for the six thinkers treated below.

Throughout this study, I have adhered at all times to the original definitions found in the primary sources referred to. Quotations from the French dictionaries have been kept in their original wording in order to avoid the possibility of misquotation and other etymological problems. When suitable English translations of certain primary materials of the major French works were available, they have been used after comparison with the original source at the discretion of the author. Certain problems of possible misleading translation have hopefully been solved also by citing both English translation and the original material in specific cases. Biographical information

in the following chapters is simply to aid the reader by way of a brief introduction to the thinker under examination at that point. There has not been any attempt here to pursue questions of biographical interpretation and bibliography further, since such excursions might distract attention from the primary topic of this study. Also, throughout this text all words and phrases in italics have been taken directly from the original materials. In cases involving extensive use of the italics, or in cases where there might be some confusion as to their origin, reference has been made in the appropriate footnote.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the many people who rendered assistance to me in this project. The following institutions were most helpful in providing me with sources: University of Chicago, University of Colorado, University of Nebraska at Lincoln, Nebraska Wesleyan University and, of course, the University of Kansas. I am particularly indebted to the efforts of Professor Ambrose Saricks and other members of the Department of History at the University of Kansas for their encouragement and advice.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. AN INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC.....	1
II. ROBERT OWEN.....	37
III. HENRI DE SAINT-SIMON.....	83
IV. CHARLES FOURIER.....	114
V. PIERRE JOSEPH PROUDHON.....	146
VI. ETIENNE CABET.....	180
VII. LOUIS BLANC.....	193
VIII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.....	210
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	220

CHAPTER I

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

"The Utopian," wrote the Russian Marxist George Plechanoff, "is one, who starting from an abstract principle seeks for a perfect social organisation."¹ Utopianism has been defined by a recent scholar as "a conception of social improvement either by ideas and ideals themselves or embodied in definite agencies of social change."² In their separate pursuit of such an abstract principle and the improvement of the social order by ideas and ideals, each of the six thinkers examined in this study found it necessary to introduce various neologisms into his writing in order to explain his principles. These principles were to be discovered in the realms of morality and philosophy, which meant that the vocabulary of such writers was automatically given certain ethical connotations. Also, the terms used similarly assumed a great deal of their meaning from the pens of their respective authors. They were therefore

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George Plechanoff, Anarchism And Socialism (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company, 1895), p. 21.

2

Joyce O. Hertzler, The History of Utopian Thought (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923), pp. 2-3.

generally regarded in somewhat a personal context depending upon the individual writer who used them. It was under such conditions that "individualism" entered the languages of Western Europe early in the nineteenth century. In this development the six thinkers treated here played key roles by providing certain connotations to the term. Individualism was used popularly by a wide range of thinkers, which included liberals like Alexis de Tocqueville and theocrats such as Joseph de Maistre. However its usage by the six intellectuals involved in this study--Owen, Saint-Simon, Fourier, Proudhon, Cabet and Blanc--contributed measurably to the definitions given to the term by mid-century. The term "individualism" accumulated more sinister connotations after it was paired with its antonym "socialism."

It is the thesis of this study that, although the term individualism was used by a number of critics, the application of this term to specific social conditions which ought to be changed came from the pens of the six Utopian Socialists treated here. It was they who provided the main connotations given to individualism by various dictionaries. For this reason, only passing attention has been given to the various schools founded in their behalf. Within the chronological and geographical framework of

this study, the writings of the six thinkers examined here constitute the most important sources in the early socialist movement.

At the present time the term individualism generally denotes at least two basic ideas: "(a) a political theory which, by emphasizing property rights as a necessary condition of liberty, seeks to set definite and circumscribed limits to the regulatory powers vested in the Government over social and economic processes; (b) the belief that the individual is an end in himself, and as such ought to realize his 'self' and cultivate his own judgement, notwithstanding the weight of pervasive social pressures in the direction of conformity." The first problem under investigation here is therefore to determine the origin and meaning of individualism as it developed in the major writings of the most important social theorists in the early nineteenth century socialist movement, the "Utopian Socialists." How did each of the six writers discuss the fact that "freedom" for one individual, or group of individuals, had in fact become tyranny for others?

3

Julius Gould and William L. Kolb (eds.), A Dictionary of the Social Sciences (New York: Crowell-Collier, 1964), p. 325.

Must one, in other words, concur with the late Professor R. H. Tawney's witty cliché that: "Freedom for the pike is death for the minnows?"⁴ Thus, one must face the basic issue of how to guide, toward some preconceived ideal of social harmony, the free and creative qualities of the more talented members in a community. How does one provide, at the same time, protection against the exploitation of one individual or group by another individual or group? At what point does individual sovereignty become no longer a blessing for the promotion of human progress, but rather the very negation of whole groups of similarly "free" individuals by others--a concept so frequently expressed, and later so vehemently attacked, by the formula of laissez faire, laissez passer? Historically, "individualists" have rejected the concept of being responsible for others, and regarded their actions as being their own private business. "A free man," wrote Thomas Hobbes in 1650, "is he that in those things, which by his strength and wit he is able to do, is not hindered to do what he has will to."⁵

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R. H. Tawney, Equality, Third Edition (London: Allen & Unwin, 1938), p. 205.

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Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), p. 137.

For Hobbes, man--unless curbed by some power--was anti-social and motivated by the rather un-abstract principle of simple self-love or egoism, an early ingredient in what would soon be called "individualism."

It was not long before the argument advanced further to hold that individual gain was in fact beneficial to the whole of society. Adam Smith has provided the classic statement to this effect in his An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations (1776). He wrote in part that:

As every individual, therefore, endeavors as much as he can both to employ his capital in the support of domestic industry;...and by directing that industry in such a manner as its produce may be of the greatest value, he intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. Nor is it always the worse for the society that it was no part of it. By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it.⁶

Society, therefore, was considered by the students of political economy as the vehicle for individual freedom. Individuals strove here for prosperity and happiness, and the function of the state was to remove obstacles which hampered such individuals in the pursuit of their goals.

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Adam Smith, An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations (London: Modern Library Edition, 1930), I, p. 421.

Thus, in the day to day relationships between equally free individuals, the creative and progressive energies of each member were ultimately and naturally reconciled. Any attempt at arbitrary restriction on the part of government was regarded as an unnecessary intrusion. As David Ricardo, another of the Classical Economists, so succinctly expressed the idea: "This pursuit of individual advantage is admirably connected with the universal good of the whole."⁷

The emphases placed upon common sense and individual good will were prime features which the early nineteenth century socialist writers inherited from the cultural movement known as the Enlightenment. Individual writers of the period 1750-1850 disagreed quite sharply among themselves, but they accepted the basic eighteenth century view that environment was the main factor in shaping human conduct.⁸ Such divergent figures in Great Britain as William Godwin (1756-1836) and Robert Owen (1771-1858) accepted similar postulates as: (1) the perfectibility of

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David Ricardo, The Principles of Political Economy and Taxation (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1926), p. 81.

8

G. D. H. Cole, A History of Socialist Thought (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1953-60), I, pp. 30-31; and J. Salwyn Schapiro, Movements of Social Dissent in Modern Europe (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1962), pp. 12-13.

the human race, (2) the gospel of inevitable progress, (3) the rational nature of man, (4) the simplicity of human needs and wants, and (5) the idea that the smaller the government the better it could serve society. Needless to say, they differed in their conclusions as to what these principles meant in terms of the social order, the former chose anarchism while the latter preferred collectivism.

In An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice (1793), Godwin's philosophical radicalism led him to repeat the Enlightenment's premise that "Society is nothing more than an aggregation of individuals." ⁹ While accepting the idea that individuals composed society, Owen refused to accept the position that this was all society was composed of.

About the turn of the century, there developed among certain intellectuals a determined self-consciousness and an awakened desire to alleviate the conditions of the poor by means of democratic institutions and an enlightened philosophy. The six thinkers presented in this study were in the vanguard of the reforming zeal. J. Ramsay MacDonald, a modern leader in socialist ranks, has correctly captured the spirit of the early nineteenth century socialists.

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William Godwin, An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1926), I, p. 136.

The Socialist movement, as conceived by the pre-Marxian Socialist, was not an incident in a social evolution in which the whole of society was to play a part; reason and moral affection were to bring the change as an act of individual will. Thus, Fourier, Robert Owen and others had no idea of effecting a great Socialist transformation by organic change brought about, in the first instance at any rate, by political action, but they spent their energies in attempting to found ideal communities wherein righteousness was to dwell and from which enlightenment was to beam all over the world.¹⁰

What distinguishes the six thinkers under discussion in this study from such other "utopian" literary figures as Plato, More, Mably and Morelly is the development of modern capitalism and with it the problems of the Industrial Revolution. Social reform after the turn of the century was simply the issue of the day. In the last half of the eighteenth century, however, Jean Jacques Rousseau wrote in 1762 how he sought to find a solution to the problem of the individual in society by "a form of association which will defend and protect us with the whole common force of the person and good of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before."¹¹ Toward the end of the century,

10

J. Ramsay MacDonald, The Socialist Movement (London: Williams and Morgate, 1911), p. 99.

11

Jean Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract (London: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 253-54.

François "Gracchus" Babeuf only carried Rousseau's doctrine of General Will to its logical conclusion; the aim of society was to promote the happiness of all, and the best means, he reasoned, to achieve this was total equality. At his trial in 1797 for treason, he reportedly stated that it was the existing system of individual property ownership which prevented the realization of social harmony by equality. Ownership of more property than one needed was indeed theft. Babeuf explained his position to the court at Vendôme:

Even someone who could prove that he is capable, by the individual exertion of his own natural strength, of doing the work of four men, and so lay claim to the recompense of four, would be no less a conspirator against society, because he would be upsetting the equilibrium of things by this alone, and would thus be destroying the precious principle of equality.

.....
 It is therefore necessary that the social institutions be such that they eradicate within every last individual the hope that he might ever become richer, more powerful, or more distinguished because of his talents, than any of his equals.¹²

Both Rousseau and Babeuf had in mind an ideal state of society in which the individuals who composed it would consider themselves as one will on matters relating to their common welfare--an idea that attracted many thinkers.

12

Francois Babeuf, as cited by Albert Fried and Ronald Sanders (eds.), Socialist Thought A Documentary History (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1964), pp. 66-67.

Private interests, acting under whatever guise of "public good," lost all concern for the people. Social institutions which sought to protect certain individual interests must therefore be eliminated. Social relationships founded on the theories of previous ages had resulted only in the creation and perpetuation of gigantic systems for the exploitation of the many by the few. Philippe Buonarroti, one of Babeuf's co-conspirators, identified in 1836 those who still blocked the way to equality. "Exclusive enjoyments, solitary pleasures, personal ease and privileges, will cause poignant regrets to some few individuals who are dead or callous to the pangs of others."

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The system of private property, or rather its most visible and repugnant manifestation--excessive capitalism and the exploitation associated with it--was attacked on a broad front. Here also the six thinkers selected for this study made important contributions. The existing system of economic and social relationships--more precisely the anti-social relationships--came under an ever increasing amount of criticism from moralists. Man, reasoned many idealists, was a vital part of an organic social order; he was a social being produced by history and natural evolution. The task

 13

Philippe Buonarroti, as quoted by Frank and Fritzie Manuel (eds.), French Utopias, An Anthology Of Ideal Societies (New York: The Free Press, 1966), p. 249.

of the early socialists however went beyond sheer criticism toward offering some alternatives, and for their efforts they were subsequently rewarded with the label of "Utopians." The writers who rallied to support the capitalist system of laissez faire were the Classical Economists, and their philosophy was that of "liberalism." For socialists, then and now, liberalism appeared as the pseudo-humanitarian program for the political, economic and moral exploitation by one group in society over the great masses of the population.¹⁴ In the last analysis, the whole debate between the forces of liberalism and socialism boils down to the basic issue of which program shows more concern for the individual in practice, a system which permits each member the maximum amount of individual freedom in society or a system of social organization which stresses a cooperative commonweal? What, therefore, is the most rational, natural, and historical human environment?

The last question is precisely the one which the six thinkers under examination in this study attempted, at some

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Max Beer, Social Struggles and Socialist Forerunners, 1750-1860 (London: L. Parsons, 1924), pp. 14-16. For a current definition of liberalism, see Gould and Kolb (eds.), Dictionary of the Social Sciences, p. 388.

point in their career, to answer. Here, in fact, is where the origin of the terms they used to express not only what they opposed, but what they sought to create, is of paramount importance. The use of particular terms gives to each writer a unique quality all his own, and one of the main terms involved all of their various works was criticism of what would be labeled "individualism." All six thinkers contributed to its definition in one way or another. There was also their search for the answer to such questions concerning the role of the individual. What ought to be the role of each individual ideally? How was the individual to be an instrument of historical change and social betterment? How, indeed, was each individual to be involved in the transition from the old immoral social order to a new one founded on correct principles? And further, upon achieving the desired new moral world, what would then be the role of the individual? All of the writers, as they developed their ideas in their major works, opposed the capitalistic individualism of their day, but still they sought to maintain something similar to the creative spirit generated by it. What made capitalism so dynamic? Was there, for example, the possibility of creating what one might call "socialist individualism?" Or, perhaps, an

"individualistic socialism?" This complicated issue, or rather series of issues, had to be faced. It is the way in which the six writers under discussion handled such a dilemma that makes the topic so interesting, and allows the modern reader an opportunity to see the fertility of their minds in operation. Because it was, however, a moral question of "ought," the subject was one on which a wide range of interpretations was offered and very heated debates held between the disciples of these six thinkers. Early nineteenth century moralists simply could not accept the idea of either devouring one's fellow human beings, or else of being devoured as every individual pursued his own private interests. To offer the hypothesis that such individual actions as this constituted a collective benefit for society was absurd to them. With the beginning of the nineteenth century, and the already observable evils of the capitalist system with its all too apparent lack of social responsibility, these thinkers sought to discover a means to get something done. For this reason, they looked at society not as a collection of individuals warring with one another, but as a living historical organism. They accepted the social nature of man, hence there only remained to determine the best social order in which man could express himself. The love of mankind was thus passed from

the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. However was the answer to individual tyranny collective despotism? Was there not a "golden mean" to social harmony? Once again it must be pointed out that within the framework of this study, it was the six thinkers--Owen, Saint-Simon, Fourier, Proudhon, Cabet and Blanc--who emerged as the most important of the early socialist writers. They, with their disciples, provided the basic connotations for the term individualism, even though other writers also popularized the term. Liberalism, which had originally sought to emancipate the individual from the fetters of tradition in all areas of life, had become so harnessed to the economic program of laissez faire capitalism that some critics echoed Voltaire's battle-cry "Ecrasez l'infâme!"

How was each individual within the social order to realize his greatest freedom and develop his individuality, which was not the same thing as "individualism," without disturbing the community? Anti-social individuality was attacked by many critics. The impotency of individualism to handle the social problems associated with a complex and modern society meant that elements of collectivism and individualism might both be necessary depending upon the circumstances. As if to confound the issue further,

J. Ramsay MacDonald wrote that: "Socialism is itself a theory of individualism because socialists contend that only under socialism will men be free."¹⁵ Louis Blanc (1811-82), the politically active French socialist, noted the necessity for certain individual distinctions in any organized society, but minus private competition and its resulting capitalist evils. Individualism Blanc regarded as the necessary second stage in a historical triad that led from authoritarianism through individualism to, at last,¹⁶ "la Fraternité."

Such doctrines as fraternity and association evoked responses from some quarters that sought a solution not in any moralistic egalitarian scheme, but in a responsible democracy among equally free but socially responsible associates. A charge made against social organization in the early nineteenth century, and repeatedly heard thereafter, was that such planning would lead to virtual cultural sterility. Although many socialists have attempted to assure critics that they need not fear such a development, perhaps the most eloquent answer to the charge has been

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MacDonald, op. cit., p. 27.

16

Louis Blanc, Organisation du travail, quatrième édition (Bruxelles: Société belge de Librairie Hauman, 1845), p. 31. Hereafter cited as Organisation.

only recently made by a modern socialist. "The plain fact is that, on the contrary, Socialism aims at the emancipation of the individual; it desires to set him free from the crippling and degrading forces of modern capitalism, to open to him, for the first time in history, the fullest opportunity for the development of his personality."¹⁷

There is no rejection involved, he pointed out further, of the rights of the individual under socialism; full satisfaction for each individual's rights and interests was, in fact, only possible in a socialist society.

Although they did not use these exact words, the early nineteenth century socialists with whom this study will deal sought to express themselves in somewhat the same fashion. Their strong moralist tradition would not permit them, however, to replace one system of tyranny by another. Robert Owen, probably one of the most dogmatic and dictatorial of the early socialists, was too much of a humanitarian to have "forced" his theories by resorting to violence. Like so many other ideas in the socialist movement, dogmatism also awaited the arrival of Karl Marx. Along with many contemporaries, Owen was outraged by the shocking

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John Lewis, Socialism and the Individual (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1961), p. 12.

inhuman conditions of his day. He saw in an idealistic co-operative community, constructed rationally by good men of common sense, his sought-after salvation on earth through social harmony among men. Thinkers at about the turn of the century, and certainly during the first decades of the nineteenth century, took to using some form of the stem "individual" to express the essence of all the deplorable manifestations and the ruthless system of unbridled competition inherent in contemporary capitalism. Thus, "individualism" finally emerged in the major writings of the six thinkers presented here as the final expression of the unnatural and unhistorical exploitation of man by man. Such connotations were soon to receive official sanction by a variety of dictionaries. While "individualism" thus developed and assumed from the beginning assorted perjorative connotations, "socialism" was invented as its antonym. In the variety of socialisms which emerged, each of the six thinkers again contributed. They all sought to integrate the individual within a larger framework, the community. But what was the community? These two terms vied with each other for the support of mankind. They were compared by one source in 1895, which obviously supported socialism.

Individualism regards humanity as made up of disconnected or warring atoms. Socialism regards it as an organic whole....The aim of Socialism is the fulfillment of service; the aim of individualism is the attainment of some personal advantage--riches, place, or fame. Socialism seeks such an organisation of life as shall secure for every one the most complete development of his powers; individualism seeks primarily the satisfaction of the particular wants of each one, in the hope that the pursuit of private interests will, in the end, secure public welfare.¹⁸

The noted historian of socialism G. D. H. Cole has described socialists as: "those who, in opposition to the prevailing stress on the claims of the individual, emphasized the social element in human relations and sought to bring about the rights of man let loose on the world by the French Revolution and by the accompanying revolution in the economic field."¹⁹ However, before proceeding with any further opinions regarding individualism and socialism, the origins of the term "individualism" must be more carefully traced and its connotations placed in a historical context.

According to one English dictionary for 1815, there was no such word as individualism.²⁰ There were, however, seven

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Bishop B. F. Westcott, "Address before Hull Congress," as quoted by W. D. P. Bliss, A Handbook Of Socialism (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1895), p. 5.

19

Cole, op. cit., p. 2.

20

John Walker (ed.), A Critical Pronouncing Dictionary And Expositor Of The English Language (Philadelphia: Edward Walker et. al., 1815), p. 499.

derivations of the noun stem "individual" offered to the reader of the day. Used in this fashion, the noun simply meant: "Separate from others of the same species, single; numerically, one; undivided, not to be parted or dis-²¹jointed." The term "individuality" was rather abruptly²² defined as having a "separate or distinct existence." In 1826 the same definition of "separate or distinct existence" was repeated, and again there was no indi-²³vidualism listed. Although the same entries were being re-stated, the base stem of the term was being so employed in the writings of the day that the resulting changes soon began to appear in the dictionaries.

It was Robert Owen who first adopted the root "individual" and thus altered a neutral term into a convenient word, or words, for labeling what he regarded as being a basic evil in society. Man "is individualised," he wrote

21

Ibid.

22

Ibid. This was the term which was so attractive to the writers of the Romantic movement, and which was also sought after by the utopians in their various programs.

23

John Walker (ed.), A Critical Pronouncing Dictionary And Expositor Of The English Language, Revised Edition (London: Ernest Fleischer, 1826), p. 253.

in 1817, "and made openly or covertly, to oppose every other human being."²⁴ Some time later, Owen again altered the base stem of the term "individual" and created the word "individualising."²⁵ It was in an Owenite publication also that there first appeared the term "socialist" for any person who sought to create social harmony.²⁶ Yet socialism did not appear until 1837 in Owen's publications.²⁷ Perhaps there is a great deal of truth to the idea offered by a modern psychologist: "The idea of socialism sprang not so much from the physical distress of manual workers, as from the moral distress of mental workers."²⁸ It was not until the early 1840's that the stigma of subordination

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Robert Owen, "Second Letter of August 7, 1817," A Supplementary Appendix To The First Volume Of The Life Of Robert Owen (London: Effingham Wilson, 1858), p. 86. Hereafter referred to as A Supplementary Appendix.

25

Robert Owen, Owen's American Discourses... (London: Longmans, 1825), p. 14.

26

The Co-Operative Magazine and Monthly Herald (November, 1827), p. 509; later again in the Poor Man's Guardian (August 24, 1833), p. 275; see also A. E. Bestor, "The Evolution of the Socialist Vocabulary," Journal of the History of Ideas, IX, 3 (June, 1948), pp. 259-302.

27

The New Moral World, III (September 2, 1837), p. 364.

28

Henry de Man, The Psychology of Socialism (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1928), p. 22B.

of the general interest of the community to that of personal gain was clearly established in the English language with the term "individualism." Webster's An American Dictionary of the English Language for 1841 carried the term for the first time and defined "individualism" as: "The state of individual interest, or attachment to the interest of individuals, in preference to the common interest of society,"²⁹ This definition was offered later in 1856 by another dictionary.³⁰ The stress placed on the interests of the community led thinkers on both sides of the English Channel to devise their plans toward this end. They desperately wanted to rescue humanity from the evils of laissez faire and its callous lack of social responsibility. There only remained to ascribe to a series of conceptual notions the necessary select terms which seemed somehow to capture the main points in their programs, either positively or negatively. The terms finally arrived at by mid-century, and given final semantic sanction by a variety of dictionaries, were individualism and socialism.

29

Noah Webster (comp.), An American Dictionary of the English Language (New Haven: B. L. Hamlin, 1841), I, p. 893.

30

Chauncey A. Goodrich (ed.), A Pronouncing And Defining Dictionary Of The English Language (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1856), p. 221.

Like Great Britain or America, a leading French dictionary for 1813 contained no entry for "l'individualisme," offering only "l'individu."³¹ Saint-Simon, the first of the Utopian Socialists from France to be examined here, used such rudimentary, but expressive, terms as "les intérêts individuels," "l'antagonisme," "l'association," and "l'égotisme." The first recorded use of the French term was by Joseph de Maistre in 1820, who lamented in conversation the divisiveness in society and bemoaned "le protestantisme politique pousse jusqu" à l'individualisme le plus absolu,³² ...". Thus the expression of anti-social individuality, or the willful separation and isolation from society, was introduced into French by a leader of the reactionary forces. However, it was the Saint-Simonians who first popularized the term to the reading public of France. In their journal Le Producteur (1826), Saint-Simonian authors attacked the perpetuation of outmoded theories from the past century, and suggested a need for a new social law to achieve real social harmony among unequal men. As one of

31

Académie française, Dictionnaire de l'Académie française, 5^e (Paris: Bossange et Masson, 1813), I, p. 730.

32

See the copy of a conversation held with Charles de Lavau by Joseph de Maistre, in Œuvres complètes, nouvelle édition (Lyon: Librairie général Catholique et Classique, 1884-86), XIV, p. 286. This conversation of 1820 was not entered in Maistre's works until July 20, 1876.

them put it: "Comment lier les unes aux autres, dans un but et un intérêt universel, des forces isolées portées naturellement à s'exercer dans le cercle de l'individualisme?"³³

If one would but consult history, this same author continued, one would see that an intellectual elite must lead society away from the reign of individualism toward a social order of peace and mutual assistance. After the death of their master in 1825, the Saint-Simonians attempted to clarify their interpretations of his doctrines in a series of essays during 1828-29. Here they used the term individualism widely. It must be pointed out here, however, that the term was never used by Saint-Simon himself, although he was responsible for providing the essential meanings behind the term as it was used by his students. In March, 1829, one of them wrote: "The public listens indulgently to the doctrines that tend to individualize beliefs or interests more and more. In short, egoism, expressed in political

33

Le Producteur, Journal de l'Industrie, des Sciences et des Beaux-arts (Chicago: University of Chicago Microfilm Collections, 1826), II, p. 535. This particular article is concluded with only the initials "P.M.L."; Henry-René d'Allemagne quotes a portion of this article incompletely and attributes its authorship to "Laurent," in Les Saint-Simoniens 1827-1837 (Paris: Librairie Gründ, 1930), p. 54. The author in question must be Paul-Mathieu Laurent, one of the lesser known members. See also Koenraad W. Swart, "'Individualism' In The Mid-Nineteenth Century," Journal of the History of Ideas, XXIII, 1 (Jan.-Mar., 1962), p. 79.

or religious terms, finds grace before it in whatever form it may appear."³⁴ In June, 1829, the author of the "Twelfth Session" used the term "l'individualisme" for the first time in this series. He wrote in part: "This formidable unanimity of all the defenders of individualism on questions of politics should suffice to prove to them that their social beliefs are not logical deductions from their so-called philosophic doctrines and should make them doubt the value of their beliefs for this reason alone."³⁵ In the session for July, 1829, there was discussion regarding the necessity of leading mankind "out of a state of isolation and egoism," two of the central connotations given to individualism by the early nineteenth century socialists in general, and by Saint-Simon, Owen and Fourier in particular.³⁶ The prevailing view was neatly packaged in the "Sixteenth Session" of late July, 1829, when the Saint-Simonian author stated:

34

Saint-Simonians, The Doctrine Of Saint-Simon: An Exposition; First Year, 1828-1829 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), p. 114. As noted earlier, when a suitable English translation of major works is available, it has been used.

35

Ibid., p. 179. For the first use of the term, see the exact quotation as found in Doctrinè de Saint-Simon première année, exposition, 1829 (Paris: au Bureau de l'Organisateur, 1830), p. 216.

36

Saint-Simonians, The Doctrine Of Saint-Simon, pp. 232, 237, 239.

"Yes, my friend, the words 'order,' 'religion,' 'association,' and 'devotion' are a sequence of hypotheses corresponding to the sequence 'disorder,' 'atheism,' 'individualism,' and 'egoism.'"³⁷

With the change in governments from Charles X to that of Louis Philippe in 1830, the forces of anti-individualism reacted sharply to the laissez faire orientation of the new regime. Pierre Leroux discussed the fragmentation in thought and the fine arts in a letter of September, 1831, to the Revue encyclopédique. He warned of a result in which: 'C'est que la philosophie a abouti au doute, la politique à l'individualisme, l'art à l'exaltation de l'orgueil, l'erudition à la satisfaction d'une vaine curiosité.'³⁸ As an editor of Le Globe, one of the Saint-Simonian journals, he commented the following year that: 'Il n'y...en politique que deux systèmes, l'association et l'individualisme.'³⁹ In the fall of 1833, Leroux so used socialism and association as to make them synonymous and, in the process, introduced "socialism" into French.

37

Ibid., p. 247.

38

Quoted by P.-Félix Thomas, Pierre Leroux, sa vie, son oeuvre, sa doctrine (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1904), p. 40.

39

Quoted by Carl Grünberg, "Der Ursprung der Worte 'Sozialismus' und 'Sozialist,'" Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus (Leipzig: Hirschfeld, 1912), II, p. 376.

'C'était un néologisme alors, un néologisme nécessaire pour faire opposition à l'individualisme.'⁴⁰ Leroux then took the final step and paired the two terms in 1833 as antonyms. "Nous sommes pourtant aujourd'hui la proie de ces deux systèmes exclusifs de l'individualisme et du socialisme, repoussés que nous sommes de la liberté par celui qui prétend la faire régner, et de l'association par celui qui la prêche."⁴¹

Individualism first entered a French dictionary in 1836, and only then in a supplement to the two volume set issued by the French Academy the year before.⁴² The

40

Quoted by David Owen Evans, Le Socialisme romantique Pierre Leroux et ses Contemporains (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1948), p. 26.

41

Pierre Leroux, "De l'individualisme et du socialisme," Revue encyclopédique, LX (octobre 1833), pp. 94-117.

42

The term used by the French Academy in 1835 was the verb "individualiser" by which was meant: "T. de Philosophie. Considérer, présenter une chose quelconque isolément, individuellement; ou: Faire qu'elle ait un caractère propre et qui la distingue de toutes les autres choses de son espèce." Académie française, Dictionnaire de l'Académie française, sixième édition (Paris: Didot, 1835), II, p. 29. This was the term employed by Karl Marx in 1844; he wrote that "the estate is individualised with its lord," in Economic And Philosophic Manuscripts Of 1844, Second Impression (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1961), pp. 61, 62.

definition provided by the Academy in its supplementary publication of 1836 for "l'individualisme" was: "T. de Philosophie. Système d'isolement dans les travaux, les efforts; l'opposé d'Esprit d'association."⁴³ The Belgian Society provided a shortened version of the 1836 entry in their dictionary of 1837: "Système d'isolement dans les travaux, dans les efforts."⁴⁴ The French Academy later elaborated further on the new term in 1842. "Système d'isolement dans les travaux, dans les études, dans l'existence. L'individualisme est l'opposé de l'esprit d'association."⁴⁵ This last definition would be the one used through the mid-nineteenth century, in 1856 for example. The 1842-56 definition showed its Utopian Socialist origins rather clearly.⁴⁶ In the evolution of this term to about mid-century, the six thinkers examined here all contributed.

43

Académie française, Supplément au Dictionnaire de l'Académie française, 6^e (Paris: Barba, 1836), p. 455. Italics in original.

44

Académie française, Dictionnaire des dictionnaires ou vocabulaire universel et complet de la Langue française reproduisant le Dictionnaire de l'Académie française (sixième et dernière édition publiée en 1835) et le Supplément à ce dictionnaire (Bruxelles: Sociétés de Paris, Londres et Bruxelles, 1837), II, p. 193.

45

Académie française, Complément du Dictionnaire de l'Académie française (Paris: Didot, 1842), p. 615.

46

Ibid., (for 1856).

The Utopian Socialists by no means had a monopoly on the term individualism, other writers began to use the term during the 1830's in particular and all of them disfavorably. The connotation of egoism attached to individualism was well illustrated by the remarks of Balzac's character Benassis in "The Country Doctor" of 1833.⁴⁷ In fact, egoism and individualism were confounded, and the idea of egoism was perhaps the most popular expression of individualism. The full impact of this particular view is fully apparent in one of the most widely read political studies of the day, Alexis de Tocqueville's Democracy In America. First published in 1835, it was not translated and published in English until 1840. The semantic difficulties involved in the use of the term "individualism" were explained at the time by Henry Reeve the translator. "I know of no English word exactly equivalent to the expression." The passage in question reads in part:

47

Honoré de Balzac, "The Country Doctor," in Works (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 19??), X, p. 54. The statement was: "The great man who shall save us from the shipwreck which is imminent will no doubt avail himself of individualism when he makes a nation of us once more; but until this regeneration comes, we bide our time in a materialistic and utilitarian age."

Individualism is a novel expression to which a novel idea has given birth. Our fathers were only acquainted with egotism. Egotism is a passionate and exaggerated love of self, which leads a man to connect everything with his own person, and to prefer himself to everything in the world. Individualism is a mature and calm feeling, which disposes each member of the community to sever himself from the mass of his fellow-creatures, and to draw apart with his family and his friends; so that, after he has thus formed a little circle of his own, he willingly leaves society at large to itself. Egotism originates in blind instinct: individualism proceeds from erroneous judgement more than from depraved feelings; it originates as such in the deficiencies of the mind as in the perversity of the heart.

Egotism blights the germ of all virtue; individualism, at first, only saps the virtues of public life; but, in the long run, it attacks and destroys all others, and is at length absorbed in downright egotism. Egotism is a vice as old as the world, which does not belong to one form of society more than to another; individualism is of democratic origin, and it threatens to spread in the same ratio as the equality of conditions.

Thus, de Tocqueville went to a great deal of effort to distinguish between the two terms "individualism" and "egotism." A portion of de Tocqueville's analysis was in fact incorporated verbatim in an English language dictionary of 1856.⁴⁹ It has generally been held that Democracy In America saw the first appearance in English

48

Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy In America (London: Saunders and Otley, 1840), III, pp. 202-03.

49

John Oglilvie (ed.), The Imperial Dictionary.. (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1856), I, p. 1000.

of "individualism," but Michael Chevalier's account of his travels appeared a year before de Tocqueville's study, and he used the term to describe "the Yankee": "He is individualism incarnate; in him the spirit of locality and division is carried to the utmost."⁵⁰ Chevalier felt that the "spirit of division and individualism" was most pronounced in the New England States.⁵¹ As previously noted, the term (soon) entered the English language dictionaries of the day shortly thereafter. The writers who thus used the term individualism to describe the anti-social tendencies of the day were very strange bedfellows indeed. Yet the fact remains that it was the Utopian Socialists who consistently ascribed to "individualism" the pejorative connotations, and these were incorporated into the definitions provided to the reading public of Western Europe by many authoritative sources. Later dictionaries continued to build on the earlier definitions for individualism. The Larousse dictionary of 1873 stated that: "Le principe d'individualisme est celui qui, prenant l'homme en dehors

50

Michael Chevalier, Society, Manners And Politics In The United States: Being A Series Of Letters On North America trans. from the third French edition (Boston: Weeks, Jordan And Company, 1839), p. 116.

51

Ibid., p. 407.

de la société, le rend juge de ce qui l'entoure et de lui-même, lui donne un sentiment exalté de ses droits sans lui indiquer ses devoirs, l'abandonne à ses propres forces, et, pour tout gouvernement, proclame le laissez faire."⁵²

The following year, 1874, the Dictionnaire de la Langue française offered the following: "Terme de philosophie. Système d'isolement dans l'existence. L'individualisme est l'opposé de l'esprit d'association. Théorie qui fait prévaloir les droits de l'individu sur ceux de la société."⁵³

By the end of the nineteenth century, this latter definition was the most widely accepted in French circles.⁵⁴ Thus, the "individualist" was an autonomous being who was capable of willfully isolating himself from society in order to pursue his own egotistical ends at the expense of others. However, individualism was, and is, a most difficult term to define precisely. As one scholar on the subject wrote:

52...
Pierre Larousse (ed.), Grand Dictionnaire universel du XIX^e siècle (Paris: Administration du Grand Dictionnaire universel, 1873), IX, p. 657.

53
Emile Littré (ed.), Dictionnaire de la Langue française (Paris: Hachette, 1874), III, p. 76.

54
Henry Léon Follin, "Quelle est la véritable définition de l'individualisme?" Journal des économistes, XXXVII (janvier à mars, 1899), pp. 3-18.

From the very beginning 'individualism' was used to designate at least three highly dissimilar clusters of ideas: first, the idealistic doctrine with equalitarian implications of the rights of man, or what may be called political liberalism; secondly, the anti-statist, largely utilitarian doctrine of laissez faire, or economic liberalism; thirdly, the aristocratic cult of individuality, or Romantic individualism.

It was not until well after mid-nineteenth century, 1859-60, that anyone sought to use "individualism" in a positive sense. In one of the most popular books of the century, Samuel Smiles wrote in Self-Help (1859) that: "It is this strong individualism which makes and keeps Englishmen really free, and brings out fully the action of the social body."⁵⁵ So it was that during the first fifty years of the nineteenth century, terms which would later play such important roles in the history of socialism were given their respective definitions. Yet, it must be emphasized again, that what would be termed "individualism" or "socialism" were, in actuality, a multiplicity of complex ideas and actions which were political, social, economical and philosophical. Here, in fact, is precisely where the six thinkers treated in this study made their own contributions to the history of individualism, and socialism.

55

Swart, op. cit., p. 77.

56

Samuel Smiles, Self-Help, with Illustrations of Character and Conduct (London: J. Murry, 1859), p. 20.

Although the following chapters will examine various problems of individualism and the role of the individual as presented in the major writings of the most important men in Utopian Socialism, a few words of general introduction are in order. The creative abilities of each thinker were such that they varied a great deal in their individual solutions to the social system of the day, but they all had some similarities worthy of note. All of them were thinkers of some fame; hence, their basic presentation was designed toward presenting a convincing polemical discourse and the winning of semantic battles with their colleagues. They were, for the most part, conservative men in that they did not regard social change by violence as the answer to the problems of the day. They generally accepted the eighteenth century concept that only a good society could possibly produce good men. They tended to look at the worker with a rather romanticized notion in which each member of society accepted an adequate amount of society's produce, which they would determine, and lived happily with it. As a vital part of their heritage, a strong anti-clericalism pervaded much of their writings. Certainly they all, as moralists, loved humanity and tended to idealize mankind. All placed a great deal of emphasis upon a good system of education for the masses as one means of improving society.

They attempted to face squarely the issue of compensations and rewards for individual initiative, while providing a system of rules and regulations at the same time which would protect the community itself. Some Utopian Socialists were led to communism--Cabet and Owen--while others found a solution in another form of collectivism, or in the anarchism of Proudhon.

At differing points in the development of their thought, they attempted to resolve the basic problem of the individual's rights as opposed to those of the group. At what point must the freedom of the individual be subordinated to the general interest of society? What are the necessary criteria for opposing "individual" interests in the name of the community? Who is to select the criteria? It is the answers to such questions as these, and some raised earlier, that will be sought in the major writings of Owen, Saint-Simon, Fourier, Proudhon, Cabet and Blanc. These six figures constitute a cross section of the "Utopian" phase of modern socialism in Britain and France between 1800-1848. For all of them, "freedom" was something obtainable, but only under different conditions than those under which they themselves lived. As a modern British socialist put it: "It is the contention of Socialists that economic individualism leads ultimately to the negation of both freedom

and the individual, while the co-operative commonwealth with its responsibilities and obligations makes for real freedom and real responsibility."⁵⁷

A golden mean between "individualism" and "communism" was the prize which they sought, excluding Cabet and Owen. "Socialism," wrote the Fabian Society's Sidney Webb, "is, indeed, nothing but the extension of democratic self-government from the political to the industrial world, and it is hard to resist the conclusion that it is an inevitable outcome of the joint effects of the economic and political revolutions of the past century."⁵⁸ Although these six Utopian Socialists opposed individualism in varying degrees, they sought to maintain a healthy "individuality." A leading American socialist and labor leader, Daniel De Leon, has described the situation in part as follows:

For the very reason that the soldiers must be individually well trained, all of them must give up a certain portion of their individualism to the whole, without which there could be no organization. Without altruism in the army, each soldier would pull his own way, and you might have anything you please, but an army you would not have. It requires individuality, plus the surrender of part of yourself, and that is the point Socialism teaches--

57

Lewis, op. cit., p. 8.

58

Sidney Webb, Socialism And Individualism (New York: John Love Company, 1911), p. 22.

man is a social being, and the real capabilities of his individuality cannot develop so long as he is not in society, merging part of his individuality in the whole.⁵⁹

Thus, for any individual to have his proper role and the opportunity to assert his individuality, it was necessary for the community to be organized in some fashion. "Social organisation," wrote J. Ramsay MacDonald, "is the condition, not the antithesis, of individual liberty."⁶⁰ The task of organizing society was a challenge eagerly accepted by the early nineteenth century socialists in Britain and France. Individual creativity, operating in an intellectual climate of real freedom and responsibility, could only express itself through the medium of an organic community guided by enlightened principles. However, first it was necessary to determine what those enlightened principles were. For this, one must turn to the major writings of the individual writers.

59

Daniel De Leon, "Socialism vs. Individualism," New York Labor News (April 14, 1912), p. 15.

60

MacDonald, op. cit., p. xi.

CHAPTER II

ROBERT OWEN

Plechanoff's definition of the "Utopian" as one who sought for "perfect social organisation" from an abstract principle applies best to Robert Owen (1771-1858) of Great Britain. However, his utopian insights included such modern ideas as the sea as an inexhaustible supply of food, educational reforms, public works projects and the, as yet, misunderstood emotional and psychological problems of mass frustration and despair. Like Karl Marx later in the century, Owen's observations were based upon both truth and some half-truths, but they both founded their respective systems on the basis of incorrect conclusions about what these "truths" were. In addition to the national differences with his French counterparts, Robert Owen had other distinctions as well. After leaving home at the age of ten and serving as an apprentice in a variety of manufacturing enterprises, Owen and a group of partners took over the management of a cotton mill at New Lanark in Scotland. From the beginning of this large scale enterprise in 1800, Owen proved himself a competent supervisor and,

almost at the same time, an energetic reformer. On his own initiative he introduced a benevolent paternalism among the workers which soon made his mills famous. Owen personally inaugurated a series of policies which first removed the younger children from the factory, then improved sanitation facilities. He was an innovator also of limited hours of work for adults; he directed the establishing of a true co-operative store, built a modern education system for both children and adults, advocated religious toleration, and showed a profit while doing all of these projects. Owen's The Life of Robert Owen written during the 1850's, published with a supplement in 1857-58, is a fascinating account of the Welsh humanitarian's dreams for mankind.⁶¹

Owen's program of rational reform, as he developed it, stemmed from his central doctrine of environmental determinism--"Train any population rationally, and they will be rational." He believed that if mankind could constructively transform its institutional environment, then man could reform society along totally new lines.

61

Robert Owen, The Life of Robert Owen. Written By Himself. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1920), and A Supplementary Appendix as previously cited.

"Our hopes for the future condition of the human race," the Marquis de Condorcet had written previously along somewhat similar lines in 1794, "can be subsumed under three important heads: the abolition of inequality between nations, the progress of equality within each nation, and the true perfection of mankind."⁶² However, Robert Owen sincerely thought he was the first to discover certain laws operating within the social order. As one modern critic has observed: "Because his ideas were based so directly on his personal experience he held to them with immense tenacity, but he never learnt to evaluate them properly."⁶³ Indeed, Owen always referred to his program of reform in the most personal tones.

The advantages of this general domestic arrangement can only be known and appreciated by those who have had great experience in the beneficial results of extensive combinations, in improving the condition of the working classes; and whose minds, advancing beyond the petty range of individual and party interests, have been calmly directed to consider what may now be attained by a well-devised association of human powers, for the benefit of all ranks. It is such individuals only, who can detect the present total want of foresight in the conduct of society, and its gross misapplication of

62

Antoine-Nicholas de Condorcet, Sketch For A Historical Picture Of The Progress Of The Human Mind (London: Everyman's Library Edition, 1955), p. 173.

63

Arthur L. Morton, The Life and Ideas of Robert Owen (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1962), p. 17.

the most valuable and abundant means of securing prosperity. They can distinctly perceive, that the blind are leading the blind from the difficulties to danger, which they feel to increase at every step.⁶⁴

Such a statement explains why Owen always had so much difficulty explaining his rational system to others in anything other than a personal key. In the last analysis, one had to take a great deal of his ideas on trust or with reference to New Lanark, and whenever these ideas failed to make the satisfactory impression which he desired on his listener, Owen naively replied that it was only ignorance which prevented one's accepting his self-evident propositions. Or, under different circumstances, he would declare that various individuals, parties and sects allowed their own personal interests to blind them to the truth. This is what brought Owen into the ranks of the anti-individualists.

64

Robert Owen, Report To The County Of Lanark, Of A Plan For Relieving Public Distress And Removing Discontent, By Giving Permanent, Productive Employment To The Poor & Working Classes, Under Arrangements Which Will Essentially Improve Their Character, And Ameliorate Their Condition; Diminish The Expenses Of Production And Consumption, And Create Markets Co-Extensive With Production [1820] (London: Charles Vandrant, 1832), pp. 30-31.

With publication of his essays on social reform in 1816, based on his program at New Lanark, Owen launched his real literary career as a reformer. From about this point until his death in 1858, Robert Owen--"the Friend of Man"--enthusiastically expounded his program of rational reform. He even sought to transplant his system in the fertile soil of New Harmony, Indiana, between 1825 and 1828, but failed. This unsuccess he attributed to the irrational pursuit of individual gain, individual interests, certain individuals and party or sect interests. He never considered there was anything intrinsically wrong with his program, since he had seen it work before. He simply could not divorce himself from his spectacular successes, perhaps too spectacular, at New Lanark.

Millenarianism--making the globe "into an ever-improving earthly paradise"--was most definitely an early ingredient in Owen's thought. It continued to grow stronger with the passage of time, and took hold completely after his failure as a trade unionist in the mid-1830's. Yet, it was always somewhere in his writings. He wrote in 1817 in part that:

65

Robert Owen, A New View of Society: or, Essays on the Formation of the Human Character Preparatory to the Development of a Plan for gradually Ameliorating the Condition of Mankind, Third Edition (London: Longman et. al., 1817), p. 29.

"Even now the time is near at hand--almost arrived--when swords shall be turned into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks--when every man shall sit under his own vine and his own fig-tree, and none shall make him afraid."⁶⁶

Only ignorance prevented the realization of a world without violence and exploitation, of poverty and misery being alleviated for good; a world guided by intelligence toward lasting human happiness for all mankind. Owenism ultimately became a religious crusade for the spiritual regeneration of man. "It is a familiar paradox," G. D. H. Cole has observed, "that men tend to act most vigorously when they proclaim that they are doing what the order of the universe bids them do, and will achieve even in their despite."⁶⁷

This trait is particularly dominant among those elements in the intellectual community which seem obsessed with the desire to sacrifice everything for the sake of the general interest. Owen's love of mankind led him to think always of society or humanity rather than of the individual, or any grouping of individuals. "I cared, and I do still care,

66

Owen, A Supplementary Appendix, pp. 132-33.

67

G. D. H. Cole, The Life of Robert Owen (London: Macmillan and Company, 1930), p. 3.

as little for the individual as any of his opponents did or can. I make him, as they shall now be made, an instrument to forward measures for our mutual and the general benefit." ⁶⁸

For many a critic of society in early nineteenth century Britain, Owenism provided a vision of a better world for the future based on experience in the past and the present; it combined idealism and actual achievement into a program of action which competed with the other contemporary programs offered across the Channel. ⁶⁹ "It is time," formulated a pro-Owenite writer of fiction in 1828, "that ignorance should be superseded by intelligence; that destitution, misery and vice, the bitter fruits of the former, should be supplanted by abundance, happiness, and virtue;..." ⁷⁰

How did Robert Owen contribute to the meanings given the term individualism? As previously noted, it was Owen who spoke in 1817 of mankind being "individualised, and made openly or covertly, to oppose every other human being." From the very beginning, Owen identified and attacked

68

Owen, "First Letter of July 25, 1817," A Supplementary Appendix, p. 81.

69

One French author concluded that: "Donc entre 1833 et 1848 le nom de socialiste traduit l'opinion des adhérents et disciples du système de Robert Owen." Evans, op. cit., p. 26.

70

John Mintern Morgan, The Revolt Of The Bees, Second Edition (London: Longman et. al., 1828), p. vi.

the obstacles which he saw on the path to true social harmony. He described how they could only be removed "if those who have influence in society" prevented, what he termed, "individual considerations" from competing with and restricting important practical benefits. ⁷¹ By the time Owen published his four early essays under the single title as A New View of Society, he had very carefully used the term "individual" in such a way that it had lost its semantic neutrality. From time to time he did use the term in the sense that it was currently found in the dictionaries, a reference to a single person under any circumstances. It was his expansion of the word into a verb form which created the sinister connotations noted earlier. Likewise he used the term as an adjective with pejorative meanings before a variety of nouns. Throughout his literary works, Owen constantly employed derivations of the word "individual"; he most frequently used "individualising" or "individualised," ⁷² but later he also used "individualism" itself.

71

Owen, A New View of Society, p. 20.

72

For but a few of the many examples of Owen's usage of the first two terms for the year 1817 alone, see A Supplementary Appendix, pp. 112, 113, 114, 117; or later, 1849, see his The Revolution in the Mind and Practice of the Human Race, or, the Coming Change from Irrationality to Rationality (London: E. Wilson, 1849), p. 111.

Although "individualism" appeared in an English dictionary in the early 1840's, Owen did not first use the term itself until 1849. While discussing the anticipated problems involved in getting a sufficient number of workers for his communities, Owen attacked their apparent reluctance to join him. "But their present habits are those of ignorant, selfish individualism, most injurious to all, and they have no correct ideas of rational social habits, based on the fundamental principle of truth, and of a life in accordance with it: in consequence, all their false associations of ideas and injurious practices, emanating from them, must be changed." ⁷³ Since 1817, however, the ideas which he expressed by the term individualism had been implicit in his other terms and phrases cited earlier. In 1857, Mr. Robert Cooper, one of Owen's followers, read for the aged humanitarian an address in which Owen depicted individualism as the scourge of the earth. "Let it also be equally remembered, that it may sink deep in your minds, that individualism is another term for covert hatred, competition, contests, wars, poverty, degradation, and misery for the masses." ⁷⁴ At the same time, Owen informed

73

Owen, The Revolution in the Mind, pp. 49-50.

74

Robert Owen, "Speech of 24 May 1857," Robert Owen's Millennial Gazette, Second Edition (London: Effingham Wilson, 1858), pp. 86-87.

the Congress of the Advanced Minds of the World through Mr. Cooper that he was indeed a socialist, and paired the two terms "individualism" and "socialism" as opposites. "Let it be now known to all," Owen told the delegates, "that individualism and true Christianity can never co-exist.... Individualism is, and ever has been, the Anti-Christ, or opposer of truth over the world, in principle and practice, in forming the character, and in governing the human

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 races." For Owen, a "Socialist" was a person who "in spirit, mind, and practice, has love and charity for every human being, who loves his neighbor, as shown by his practice, as himself; who heartily and cordially desires and endeavours to promote the best permanent happiness of every one, without excepting even the worst made human character; who desires to be on an equality with his fellows, but not higher in rank, station, privileges, or enjoyments, than his equals in age, and one who will sacrifice his life before he would deny the truth or any of these all-important subjects." 76
 It took Owen some time to move voluntarily

75

Ibid., p. 87.

76

This passage would suggest that Owen was influenced by the inroads made by the English Christian Socialists during the mid-1850's. Certainly his statement that: "A true Christian and a true Socialist are two names for the same thing." Ibid., pp. 87-88ff.

into the general socialist ranks. Again, having created his own system and the necessary terminology to go with it, Owen was reluctant to abandon portions of them for an impersonal international movement. In fact, he constantly preferred his own terms since they were more intimately linked with his own plans--a trait of all the Utopian Socialists. In a pamphlet of 1841, Owen stated that what he had in mind for socialism was his own system, which ought always to be thought of as the "Rational State of Society."⁷⁷

Throughout his writings, Owen used the term "individual" in a variety of ways. When it was employed simply as a noun, "individual" generally referred to a single person placed in any particular context and with no pejorative connotations involved. However, whenever it was used in an adjectival way, it was always modifying nouns such as "interest," "party," "sect" or "gain." Its use as a verb of any kind was always malevolently inspired. He frequently had recourse to the word "individuality" too, by which Owen envisioned having more than just a separate existence. This term involved having a distinct, but yet

77

Robert Owen, "titlepage," What is Socialism? And What would be its Practical Effects upon Society? (London: The Home Colonization Society, 1841), a debate held in Bristol, 5,6,7 January 1841.

wholesome quality. Individuality seemed to capture the essence of that character trait which accepted the natural and empirical differences among persons living together in any social order, but which did not lead to selfishness or exploitation by any one element over another. Robert Owen therefore played a key role in assigning to "individualism" the idea of involving a person--the "individualist"--in a voluntary withdrawal from the community in order to pursue his own interests at the expense of the group. This was the anti-social nature of "individualism" and of the "individualist." In a series of observations presented to Parliament in 1815, Owen discussed the anti-social character of the manufacturing system and explained the origins of such behavior.

The acquisition of wealth, and the desire which it naturally creates for a continued increase, have produced a fondness for essentially injurious luxuries among a numerous class of individuals who formerly never thought of them, and they also generated a disposition which strongly impels its possessors to sacrifice the best feelings of human nature to this love of accumulation.⁷⁸

78

Robert Owen, "Observations on the effect of the Manufacturing System: with hints for the improvement of those parts of it which are most injurious to health and morals," A Supplementary Appendix, p. 38.

The spirit of competition was therefore responsible for sowing the seeds of disunity, of setting one individual off against another. Unbridled competition resulted only in a very few receiving any benefits, while the masses-- "from whose labour this wealth is now drawn"--sank further and further into poverty and despair. Thus, Owen contributed also in his numerous writings to another connotation given to individualism, the pursuit of individual interests-- specifically economic interests--at the expense of society.

In his now famous plan which he offered to the inhabitants of New Lanark, Owen pointed out to them how the existing system of political economy based on individual interests and personal gain meant only continual "ignorance, poverty and vice."⁷⁹ If mankind would but accept his plan for removing the forces of disunity, Owen predicted that these evils would be removed from the world and soon each individual would discover instead true "permanent happiness." No one, he optimistically reasoned, would ever want to return to the existing system of misery and ignorance once they had seen paradise.⁸⁰ For the individual, he elaborated

79

Robert Owen, A New View OF Society & Other Writings (London & Toronto: J. M. Dent, 1927), p. 110.

80

Ibid., pp. 93-119.

upon what he called his "more perfect state of society."

Owen described in part that he had in mind a social order:

...in which every individual shall be instructed, and his powers of body and mind directed, by the wisdom derived from the best experience, so that neither bad habits nor erroneous sentiments shall be known;--in which age shall receive attention and respect, and in which every injurious distinction shall be avoided,--even variety of opinions shall not create disorder or any unpleasant feeling;--a society in which individuals shall acquire increased health, strength, and intelligence,--in which their labour shall be always advantageously directed,--and in which they will possess every rational enjoyment.⁸¹

Owen was therefore moving from a description of society's current ills toward a full scale solution, from attempting to find an immediate remedy for the political, economic and social problems of the first large national demobilization effort in history to a plan for creating an entirely new social order. This process took from about 1815 to 1820. Until 1817, Owen was still a reforming manager, thereafter he became a managing reformer. Certainly after 1820, he was no longer the mild social critic, but a man with a mission. Armed with the power of reason and natural law, he set out not only to find the Holy Grail for himself, but to lead all of humanity there as well. He had

81

Ibid., 113-14.

become, in other words, a "utopian." After his "Report" to the County of Lanark, most of his later writing and speaking efforts were but extensive commentaries upon his earlier theories. The purpose here is to examine both what these principles were, and how Owen envisioned the individual in them.⁸²

The essence of Owen's environmental determinism was fully developed in A New View of Society. "Any character, from the best to the worst, from the most ignorant to the most enlightened, may be given any community, even to the world at large, by applying certain means; which are to a great extent at the command and under the controul, or easily made so, of those who possess the government of nations."⁸³ Therefore, he repeatedly informed any and all who would listen that "human character is always formed for, and not by, the individual."⁸⁴ Owen's "Plan" sought to bring individuals into a profitable co-operative social order "so as to create limited communities of individuals,

82

For the perplexities of Owen's "Plan" see the summation provided by Robert L. Heilbroner, The Worldly Philosophers (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961), pp. 88-89.

83

Owen, "Preface" to A New View Of Society & Other Writings, p. 3.

84

Owen, A Supplementary Appendix, p. 66.

on the principle of united labour and expenditure, having their basis in agriculture, and in which all should have mutual and common interests." ⁸⁵ This agricultural community created by Owen was the product of his romanticized notion concerning the "comparatively happy simplicity" of the peasant's life.

For Owen, man was by nature a creature close to the physical universe, and so an agricultural life was the closest one could come to harmony with the universe. The Industrial Revolution was, therefore, in reality a most unnatural phenomenon, and he wished only to return man to where he rightly belonged and to an environment which would produce those character traits which rightly belonged to him. Owen's concern for developing proper character traits for mankind led him to speculate on the role of the individual under his program of rational reform. In 1817, he wrote in part that:

All the labour of the individuals under this system would be naturally and advantageously directed; first to procure for themselves abundance of all that was necessary for their comfortable subsistence; next, they would obtain the means to enable them to unlearn many, almost all indeed, of the bad habits which the present

defective arrangements of society have forced upon them; then, to give only the best habits and dispositions to the rising generation, and thus withdraw those circumstances from society which separate man from man, and introduce others, whose entire tendency shall be to unite them in one general interest that shall be clearly understood by each. They will afterwards be enabled to cultivate the far more valuable, the intellectual part of their nature; that part which, when properly directed, will discover how much may yet be put into practice to produce human happiness.⁸⁶

What, however, did Owen mean by "when properly directed," since this involved the key issue of leadership? Who, in fact, was to lead and who to follow? What were the criteria which he had in mind for leadership? All of these were vitally important questions, and problems upon which Owen was later forced to elaborate at some length.

One important question asked of Owen was whether or not individuals would, under his system, be "as industrious as when employed for their individual gain?" Since this would not be the last time that an advocate of a co-operative community would be asked this question, it is worth quoting Owen's response.

The supposition that they will not, I apprehend to be a common prejudice, and not at all founded on fact. Wherever the experiment has been tried, the labour of each has been exerted cheerfully. It is found that when men work together for a common interest, each performs

his part more advantageously for himself and for society, than when employed for others at daily wages or than when working by the piece. When employed by the day, they feel no interest in their occupation, beyond the receipt of their wages; when they work by the piece, they feel too much interest and frequently overwork themselves, and occasion disease, premature old age, and death. When employed with others in a community of interests, both these extremes are avoided; the labour becomes temperate, but effective, and may be easily regulated and superintended. Besides, the principles and practices are now quite obvious, by which any inclinations, from indolent to the most industrious, may be given to the rising generation.

Of similar interest to his public was Owen's view on the division of benefits derived from labor. Would not, they asked, community production result in community splits concerning distribution of goods? Owen immediately replied "Certainly not." Any such individual or party squabbling was the product of selfishness and the ignorant system he intended to change, and could not therefore, by definition, be found in the New Moral World. If mankind were but put in a "moderate occupation," they could obtain both necessities and comforts in abundance and therefore no one would hoard or seek his own personal interest at the expense of the community. Thus, there would only be good times for all.

"I might add, that under this plan each individual would soon discover that he possessed more for his own enjoyment without any anxiety, than he could have acquired under the existing system amongst the poor, with all the cares and troubles they now experience."⁸⁸

How were these communities to be directed by "men of great talents and benevolence" when such individuals are not very numerous? Once again, Owen draw on his years of work at New Lanark. "From my own experience, however, I can aver that such means and regulation may be adopted for the management of these villages, as would enable any one possessing fair talents, so to manage them as to give entire satisfaction to all the parties under his direction and care, with the greatest pleasure to himself and with unspeakable advantage to the country."⁸⁹ He furthermore predicted that any person animated by the proper spirit of co-operation and who followed the guide lines, which he

88

Ibid. In good eighteenth century style, Owen wrote in 1841 that: "I feel more for the working classes because they suffer more, still I know but one family, and that is the family of mankind." What is Socialism?, p. 26.

89

Owen, A Supplementary Appendix, p. 72.

would draft, could manage the communities with nothing more than good common sense. "Yet the principles being understood," he explained in 1820, "a man of ordinary capacity would superintend such arrangements with more ease than most large commercial or manufacturing establishments are now conducted." ⁹⁰ Such a community might be founded by any individual--landowner, or capitalist--and by public corporations, a county or even a parish. Regardless of who founded them, they were all to be "subject to the rules of the founders." Communities established by middle class elements were entitled to govern themselves by their own elected committee of citizens between the ages of thirty-five and fifty. Numerous sub-committees for health, instruction, agriculture, manufacturing, domestic economy and foreign relations were also to be created.

Owen distinguished all individuals by some four classes of "associates" in his new order: first, the parish poor; second, the working class; third, the upper tiers of the working class and the skilled artisans with

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Owen, Report To The County Of Lanark, p. 300.

property; and, fourth, those people with property who voluntarily joined the association for the sheer betterment of humanity. "Every individual, from the lowest to the highest, will enjoy the greatest possible advantages of Instruction, Health, Comfort, Liberty, and Recreation; and all their accommodations will be in proportion to the Capital they at first advance, or may hereafter acquire." ⁹¹ Of the four class divisions which he used, Owen subdivided the last two alone into categories depending upon the amount of initial capital invested. Each individual was therefore enrolled by Class, Sect and Party, a combination effort which thus totaled some one hundred and forty different possibilities. Owen theorized that the origin of any "associate" would not disturb the movement toward unity of interests, since none would irrationally interfere with "the honours and privileges of the existing higher orders." Every associate was to remain happy, and therefore content, with the benefits derived from his own station in the village of co-operation. Owen believed just being in possession of the correct principles was enough to insure social harmony among the

91

Ibid., p. 128; see also ibid., pp. 124-28, and 300-01.

members, regardless of any one individual's status there. The very removal of the causes of disunion meant that only harmony would prevail. Should, however, any individual associate change his mind or become dissatisfied with his condition, he was free to leave the community and take his property with him.⁹²

One means of easing the transition to a better society, Owen suggested, would be to replace the metallic standard of value for one based on labor. This step, he reasoned, would eliminate the desire for accumulation and selfishness. Money was responsible for making man "ignorantly, individually selfish; placed him in opposition to his fellows; engendered fraud and deceit; blindly urged him forward to create, but deprived him of the wisdom to enjoy."⁹³ Thus, the use of money, and with it individual gain, was not to be found in Owen's ideal community. He constantly emphasized how his villages would be animated by the positive values of "equity and justice, openness and fairness." These same principles which were to harmonize individual

92

Owen, "Fourth Letter of September 6, 1817," A Supplementary Appendix, p. 122.

93

Owen, Report To The County Of Lanark, p. 24.

differences among associates would eventually lead mankind into a new world order as well. He described what he meant by writing in part that:

Peace, good will, charity, and benevolence, have been preached for centuries past; nay, for thousands of years, yet they no where exist; on the contrary, qualities, the reverse of these, have at all times constituted the character, and influenced the conduct of individuals and of nations, and must continue to do so, while the system of individual rewards, punishments, and competition is permitted to constitute the basis of human society.⁹⁴

As long as mankind continued to accept the fallacy that "the character is formed by the individual," Owen warned, hatred, revenge and misery would plague it. "'That the character is formed for and not by the individual,' is a truth to which every fact connected with man's history bears testimony, and of which the evidence of our senses affords us daily and hourly proof."⁹⁵ Individual interests and those of society under the present social structure were at variance with each other, and for Owen the laws of communities and of individuals must be made to operate in complete harmony with one another. Therefore, he relentlessly

94

Ibid., p. 57. Italics in original.

95

Ibid., p. 59.

returned to attack the philosophy which perpetuated such nonsense. It 1820, he assailed it again.

It has been, and still is, a received opinion among theorists in political economy, that man can provide better for himself, and more advantageously for the public, when left to his own individual exertions, opposed to, and in competition with his fellows, than when aided by any social arrangement, which shall unite his interests individually and generally with society. This principle of individual interest, opposed, as it is perpetually, to the public good, is considered, by the most celebrated political economists, to be the corner stone to the social system, and without which, society could not subsist....From this principle of individual interest have arisen all the divisions of mankind, the endless errors and mischiefs of class, sect, party, and of national antipathies, creating the angry and malevolent passions, and all the crimes and misery with which the human race have been hitherto afflicted. In short, if there be one closet doctrine more contrary to truth than another, it is the notion that individual interest, as that term is now understood, is a more advantageous principle on which to found the social system, for the benefit of all, or of any, than the principle of union and mutual co-operation....The principle on which these economists proceed, instead of adding to the wealth of nations or of individuals, is itself the sole cause of poverty; and but for its operation, wealth would long ago have ceased to be a subject of contention in any part of the world.⁹⁶

When mankind shall be trained in principles "to act in union," Owen predicted, then and only then could humanity construct a new and happy social order for the benefit of all. In the last analysis, he argued, the existing institutionalized social order "ever will appear to be opposed

to the interests of those whom they govern."⁹⁷ Laws and policies of government were but the political and economic instruments of selfish sects who sought to protect their special interests. Such policies only resulted in misery and degradation for the masses. "My aim," announced Owen,⁹⁸ "is therefore to withdraw the germ of party from society." Thus, government, as an institution, was not intrinsically evil, only the petty factions which controlled, or sought to control, it were. "The aim of government," Owen told his audiences repeatedly, "is to make governed and the governor⁹⁹ happy." He never ceased to think of himself as the self-appointed champion of the poverty-stricken masses of humanity who had only to go forth armed with correct principles in order to slay the dragon of irrationality and individual selfishness. Not the sword of violent revolution, however, but of truth was the means to real happiness. The entire system of individual interest was

97

Owen, A Supplementary Appendix, p. 117.

98

Owen, A New View Of Society & Other Writings, p. 106.

99

Owen, A New View of Society, p. 129.

the logical result of a distorted environment and could be remedied quite simply if one would but alter the evil ideas which had produced it. "All are individualised, cold, and forbidding; each being compelled to take a hundred-fold more care of himself than would be otherwise necessary; because the ignorance of society has placed him in direct opposition to the thousands around him." ¹⁰⁰ The very first step was therefore to destroy the false notion that individuals had free will and that they "form their own characters." Misery or happiness depended upon environment.

In political terms, Owen further elaborated his own brand of utilitarianism when he wrote in 1817: "That government then is the best, which in practice produces the greatest happiness to the greatest number; including those who govern, and those who obey." ¹⁰¹ The realization of Owen's plan required only the true principles being applied, and then "ignorance being removed, experience will soon teach us how to form character, individually and generally, so as to give the greatest sum of happiness to the individual

100

Owen, "Address of August 14, 1817," A Supplementary Appendix, p. 114.

101

Owen, A New View of Society, p. 129.

and to mankind." ¹⁰² However, until society could produce its own leaders, who were men of experience and sufficiently enlightened, Owen felt obliged to provide that leadership.

As a means of effecting the change from irrationality --from the "abodes of mental darkness"--to rationality, he felt the British Constitution could be "admirably adopted" ¹⁰³ to the purpose of running society. Reason and common sense, harnessed by rational men of good principles and motivated by a desire to serve humanity, were the keys to success. Like so many of the early nineteenth century socialists, Owen abhorred violence of any kind. Owen's ¹⁰⁴ individuals were therefore always men of peace.

Perhaps nothing distinguishes Owen's system, and the role of the individual in it, from those of his contemporaries any more than the emphasis he placed on education. For the individual in his association, education--the means to understanding and interpreting experience--was the avenue

102

Ibid., pp. 26-27.

103

Ibid., p. 132.

104

For Owen's hatred of violence and revolution, see his address to the people of New Lanark to obey the law or else change it by legal means, in A New View Of Society & Other Writings, pp. 110-11, 118-19ff.

to human progress. He therefore elaborately planned a system of free education for each child in the community, with instruction to be given from factual materials only in order to prevent the children from acquiring incorrect, or irrational habits. In his educational scheme, as with his political and social ideas, Owen specified that there was to be no coercion, and certainly no violence meted out in the classroom. Teachers had to be able to convince and guide their students by the fine art of intellectual persuasion through reason and common sense. Owen's entire educational structure sought to place pupils "under such circumstances as shall remove them from unnecessary temptations, and closely unite their interest and duty."¹⁰⁵ Education, as he so frequently stated in all of his major writings, was Owen's most important means to "reform man, and to re-constitute society."

Thus armed with the true principles regarding the formation of human character, Owen's individual citizen would be educated for a New Moral World. Every individual would clearly understand from personal experience and his own reasoning the true value of real social harmony. Then

105

Owen, A Supplementary Appendix, p. 57.

society would cease to be an intellectual ideal, and it would in fact become a viable reality wherein each individual would be deeply committed to the good of all. In 1836, Owen described how the individual would react there.

The knowledge which he will thus acquire of himself and of nature, will induce and enable him through his self-interest, or desire for happiness, to form such superior external arrangements as will place him within a terrestrial paradise.

As in this New World, all will know, that far more happiness can be obtained by union than by disunion, all opposition and contention between man and man, and nation against nation, for individual or national advantages, of any kind, will cease.¹⁰⁶

At this time also, Owen distinguished what he called the five basic facts regarding the nature of any person:

- (1) "man is a compound being," whose character was formed at birth and developed throughout his life by "external circumstances" acting upon him;
- (2) every individual received his "feelings and his convictions independently of his will";
- (3) feelings and convictions together created the "will" which determined any action;
- (4) no two human beings were ever the same, nor could they be

106

Robert Owen, The Book Of The New Moral World Containing The Rational System Of Society, Founded On Demonstrable Facts, Developing The Constitution And Laws Of Human Nature And Of Society (London: B. D. Cousins, 1836), p. ix. Hereafter referred to as The Book Of The New Moral World.

manufactured as such; and (5) the character of every individual "is capable of being formed or matured" for good or evil depending upon the external circumstances. Owen, now in the 1830's, moved full speed toward millenarianism, and his views of human nature reflected this trend. Human nature was "a compound" which was composed of animal propensities, intellectual capabilities and moral values. In every individual these properties varied, and therefore Owen concluded that: "The different proportions of the same general propensities, faculties, and qualities, constitute the sole difference by which one individual is distinguished from another." Differences are beyond the individual himself in their origin. Every person was subjected from the beginning to the influences of many external circumstances which impressed upon his character different values, and "thus the local and national character

107

Ibid., p. 1.

108

Ibid.

109

Ibid.

is formed unknown to the individual."¹¹⁰ Yet, each person assimilated these influences differently. Owen accepted the empiricism of John Locke, and hence the reform of society was impossible as long as children were given "false notions" from their first entry into the world. Was it any wonder then irrationality and ignorance ruled? "Each individual is so organized, that, when young, he may be trained to acquire injurious habits only, or beneficial habits only; or a mixture of both."¹¹¹ In any educational process, Owen noted, each individual liked that which was pleasant and disliked that which was disagreeable. His goal was to present a plan of rational reform which sought to alter exterior conditions so as to be consistent with the laws of nature and man. He summarized these views in 1836.

Each individual is so organized, that he is made to receive a superior character, when his original constitution contains the best proportion of the elements of human nature, and when the circumstances which surround him from birth, and through life, are of a character to produce superior sensations only; or, in other words, when the laws, institutions, and customs, under which he lives, are all in unison with the laws of his nature.

110

Ibid., pp. 2-3.

111

Ibid.

These are fundamental laws of nature, not man's invention; they exist without his knowledge or consent; they change not by any effort he can make; and, as they proceed solely from a cause unknown and mysterious to him, they are divine laws, in the only correct sense in which that term can be applied. These laws, considered separately and unitedly, and viewed in all their bearings and consequences, form a perfect foundation for a true Moral Science--for that science, the knowledge of which is necessary to secure the happiness of mankind.¹¹²

Whenever the individual was molded by the irrational system of believing in "free will," Owen labeled him as "individualised." However, any person who now, thanks to Owen, perceived that his character was formed not by any act of will, but by experience and then sought to act in harmony with nature was demonstrating his "individuality." Each individual was indeed different, Owen merely sought to harness the potentially constructive qualities in every person for the betterment of humanity as a whole. However, to better the individual, it was first necessary to begin with the social order itself, or with the community of men.

Robert Owen wanted to end the irrational evils in all spheres of life, particularly the immediate economic evils.

112

Ibid., p. 3.

In both the formation of grades of associates and in his statements concerning "individuality," Owen clearly demonstrated that what he had in mind was the creation of an equality of condition and not an equality of person. "The difference between men exists by nature, and in opposition to all art, and is, therefore, inevitable."¹¹³ Yet, without the principle of "perfect equality" Owen theorized that there "can be no justice, no unity, no virtue, no permanent happiness."¹¹⁴ He therefore sought to resolve this dilemma by the careful use of his "equality of condition." Here, he reasoned, was the necessary mean between absolute egalitarianism on the one hand, and the tendency toward a neo-individualism on the other. "No one versed in this knowledge of his nature," Owen wrote confidently, "will think more highly of himself than any of his fellow-men; selfishness, therefore, from personal considerations will cease to exist, and a new mind, in this respect, will be formed."¹¹⁵ Such an understanding, that differences

113

Ibid., p. 12.

114

Owen, The Revolution in the Mind, p. 45.

115

Owen, The Book Of The New Moral World, pp. 12-13.

between individuals were not the result of any artificial standards but of nature itself, would eventually lead each person to simply regard their individual distinctions as a wholesome part of nature's plan. "Egotism, also, of every description, and ignorant selfishness, the great banes of society, must disappear under the practice of a system, founded on a knowledge of these fundamental facts."¹¹⁶

For Owen, natural diversity among the members of mankind was a healthy necessity for man's total happiness and the realization of his true "self," or his individuality.

The knowledge of the facts that men are made to differ one from the other in the proportions of all the elements of their nature, and that this difference is the source whence infinite excellence and happiness may be derived, will induce those who shall, hereafter, direct the public and private proceedings of mankind, to adopt such general laws, regulations and arrangements as will allow this natural diversity among men to have its full scope of action, and to produce all the endless benefits and enjoyments which must, necessarily, flow from its existence and encouragement.¹¹⁷

The individual was therefore a product of nature and environment. He could be fashioned either for good, or

116

Ibid., pp. 13-14.

117

Ibid., p. 18.

evil--for intelligence or ignorance--by the society in which
 he lived.¹¹⁸ The transition from the existing system of
 "Evil" to that of "Good" would ultimately change "all indi-
 vidualities into universalities, and all individual interests
 into universal interests."¹¹⁹ The existing social order had
 an obligation to provide its children with only the best
 possible external circumstances. Such "external circum-
 stances" as New Lanark in Scotland proved it could be done.
 In 1837, Owen explained his views further when he wrote in
 part:

The existing generation may with this knowledge decide, before the next shall be born, what character they shall possess, what conduct they shall pursue....Or, with this divine knowledge of human nature, the existing generation may decide, that their offspring to be born, shall be surrounded from their birth, by so new a combination of external objects, that they shall one and all be filled with truth only and with the most valuable knowledge become wealthy, kind, charitable, without motive to commit vice or crime, their minds shall be formed of an entirely new association of ideas, of the most useful and elevating character; their thoughts, feelings and conduct, will be, therefore, always consistent with each other and uniformly rational.¹²⁰

118

Owen, The Revolution in the Mind, p. 8 [1].

119

"The principle of Good is 'the knowledge that man is formed, without his consent, by nature and society.' The principle of Evil is 'the supposition that man forms himself.'" Ibid; see also, ibid., pp. 40-41.

120

Robert Owen, Six Lectures Delivered In Manchester... (Manchester: Heywood, 1837), p. 26.

What, therefore, was the role assigned by Owen to the individual in his parallelograms of prosperity? Formed as they were in a large square, these co-operative facilities were to serve as lodging quarters for families, mess halls, school rooms, lecture halls, and private apartments for visitors. Each one was a self-governing township oriented toward achieving maximum agricultural production. Every person, Owen assured his readers, would then produce more than he individually required. With one bold stroke of the pen, he eliminated the desire to hoard, selfishness and individual interest! If one accepts the premises upon which he operated and the definition of his terms, Owen's "Plan" follows only too logically. His idealistic view of these co-operative communities scattered across the countryside, with their gardens in bloom and home production at maximum efficiency, reflected Owen's concept of the historic English yeomanry. Everyone would be well-fed, well-clothed, well-housed, well-educated, fully employed in constructive labor and, therefore, happy.

Of all the individuals located in his community--or suffering more under the existing system of his day--Owen was most concerned about the fate of women and children.

Every individual child in his proposal would attend a public school after the age of three. They would sleep in dormitories and eat in a public mess during their early childhood in order to cleanse them of their parent's faults. Women were to care for the very small infants, tend to the domestic chores, work in the family gardens and they were forbidden in fact to work at any "manufacturing enterprise" for more than four or five hours a day. For the men, Owen thought an eight hour day at such labor was enough. Other important provisions he planned to provide for every individual included: attention and care for the sick, public care for orphans, vocational training for all so that the community would be "the abode of abundance" and he thus concluded that one would find there only "active intelligence, correct conduct, and happiness." He described this environment in part further:

Every one from birth to death will be amply provided with every comfort; and, according to the justice of these arrangements, each individual having occupied his youth in the performance of the duties devolving upon him, according to his age and progress, will at a fitting period find himself entitled to repose, and required only to aid his younger brethren with advice. The morning, noon, and evening of life will thus alike pass pleasantly away, amidst the relatives and associates who have become endeared to all by mutual sympathies, and the continual manifestation of kindness.¹²¹

121

Robert Owen, The Constitution And Laws Of The Universal Community Society Of Rational Religionists (London: Universal Community Society, 1839), pp. 10-11.

All of the anger and misery produced by the forces of disunion would soon wither away before the triumphant march of an enlightened mankind. "To divide riches among individuals in unequal proportions, or to hoard it for individual purposes, will be perceived to be as useless and as injurious as it would be to divide water or air into unequal quantities for different individuals, or that they should hoard them for future use."¹²² As Owen explained his program in later years, he moved more toward complete economic egalitarianism. He decided that much of the individual hoarding he so detested was due to private property in general, and thus he sought to eliminate the source of so many problems altogether. Private property was therefore attacked as "the cause of so much injustice, crime and misery." It¹²³ was simply a "demoralising" force.

What then was the role of the individual in Owen's community? The British humanitarian continued to adhere to his central doctrine of each individual's differing "propensities and qualities" which he regarded as similar

122

Owen, A New Moral World, p. x.

123

Owen, The Revolution in the Mind, p. 111.

to a chemical formula in nature. For each person to express his own "individuality" was not only permissible, it was only natural. In the intellectual sphere, where Owen put so much reliance, equality was impossible. By the normal processes of birth and experience, the labor of some individuals would be more valuable than others. ¹²⁴ So the dilemma remains: how does one pair Owen's writings on the equality of condition with the inherent differences among individuals? How, therefore, can one achieve self-realization without disrupting equality? In answer to such questions, Owen replied that every rational individual would willingly accept the distinctions due to nature, since truth was only to be found there. "The diversity of the human race is necessary to the happiness of man.... This diversity is, then, only a necessary result of the organization of man, but should be found, and in a rational state of society will be found, a potential cause of his greatest happiness." ¹²⁵ It was requisite to take Owen's word for it at this point; such a thesis could not be proven

124

Owen, A Supplementary Appendix, p. 84; or Millennial Gazette, p. 18.

125

Owen, A New Moral World, p. 17.

because no rational society as yet existed to demonstrate it. For this same reason, Owen could not envision any problems regarding individual differences in his communities of co-operation. In fact, the existence of "individualism" there was, by definition, a contradiction in terms!

However, in case any individual created a schism in the community while exercising his right of individuality, who was then to judge the merits of the case? What were the criteria one must follow in such cases? What, in other words, constituted freedom for the individual in a collectivist society? And, would the emphasis given to the group not stifle the individual's creativity? Owen, with his usual optimism, predicted just the opposite of any dull uniformity. His position here is worth quoting at some length.

It appears to me that quite the reverse of all this will follow; that the means provided in these establishments will give every stimulus to bring forth and to perfect the best parts only of every character, by furnishing the inhabitants with such valuable instruction as they could not acquire any other means, and by affording sufficient leisure and freedom from anxiety to promote the natural direction of their powers....As for the probability of a dull uniformity of character being produced, let us for a moment imagine individuals placed as the inhabitants of these villages will be, and contemplate the characters that must be formed solely by the circumstances that will surround them. From the hour they are born,

treated with uniform kindness, directed by reason, and not mere caprice, weakness, and imbecility; not one habit acquired to be again unlearned; their physical powers trained and cultivated to attain their natural strength and health; the mental faculties furnished with accurate data, by all the useful facts that the ingenuity and experience of the world have acquired and demonstrated, aided by the power of minds trained to draw only just and consistent conclusions, and each left to declare freely those conclusions, to compare them with others, and thus in the most easy and rapid manner to correct any errors that might otherwise arise;--children so trained, men so circumstanced, would soon become, not a dull uniform race, but beings full of health, activity, and energy; endowed by means of instruction with the most kind and amiable dispositions, and who, being trained free from motives,¹²⁶ would not form one exclusive wish for themselves.

If any disputes arose between associates, Owen felt the correct course of action could easily be determined by a committee on the basis of justice for all. He always maintained that his communities would be run by a consensus of opinion. As one of his biographers observed: "He was, moreover, so fundamentally convinced that the rulers, like the ruled, were good at heart, only so ill-educated under existing social conditions that they occasionally made disastrous mistakes, that he came to believe that there was no need to set about changing them."¹²⁷ As Owen wrote

126

Owen, A Supplementary Appendix, pp. 72-73.

127

Margaret Cole, Robert Owen Of New Lanark (London: The Batchworth Press, 1953), p. 165.

toward the end of his career; "Reason and common sense are
 the only weapons which can ever succeed."¹²⁸ Owen affirmed
 throughout his life that one could only convince others by
 "making the subject clear to the understanding" and that
 unless one could do this, every attempt at reform was doomed
 to failure. Only, in fact, by the free exchange of ideas
 and freedom of individual expression could a free community
 move toward a new social organization wherein all rational
 beings worked harmoniously together for their own mutual
 benefit, and at the same time the benefit of all mankind.
 True liberty, Owen stated, "can exist only in a society
 based on a true knowledge of humanity, and constructed to
 be consistent with that foundation, in all its parts and
 as a whole."¹²⁹ Such would constitute a rational system
 of society and would give the greatest amount of individual
 liberty possible. "Because it will of necessity," Owen
 reasoned, "make each one good, wise and happy; and such only
 can ever be trusted with the full amount of individual
 liberty."¹³⁰ Each person would always be perfectly free

128

Owen, The Life Of Robert Owen, p. 146.

129

Ibid., p. 213.

130

Ibid.

to express himself "without hindrance from any of their
 131
 fellow men, singly or united."

One of the more interesting aspects of Owen's career is the debate regarding his own handling of this very difficult problem of freedom. G. D. H. Cole has written that Owen was always too much of a "benevolent autocrat" to be
 132
 at home in any democratic movement. Owen was indeed charged on more than one occasion with the inability to take criticism. In one particular case, involving him and the Chartist leader William Lovett, Arthur Morton has quoted Lovett's description of the incident.

"I began by telling him of his having submitted an amendment to our circular, of the committee having rejected it by a large majority, and of his taking it upon himself to authorize its insertion in the circular notwithstanding; and concluded by asking him whether such conduct was not highly despotic? With the greatest of composure he answered that it evidently was despotic; but as we, as well as the committee that sent us, were all ignorant of his plans, and of the objects he had in view, we must consent to be ruled by despots till we had acquired sufficient knowledge to govern ourselves. After such a vain-glorious avowal, what could we say but to report--in the phraseology of one of the deputation--that we had been flabbergasted by him."¹³³

131

Owen, Millennial Gazette, p. 2.

132

G. D. H. Cole, The Life of Robert Owen, p. 9.

133

William Lovett, as quoted by Arthur Morton in The Life and Ideas of Robert Owen, pp. 178-79; see also ibid., p. 45.

Robert Owen, who optimistically elaborated his views to any and all who would listen, never lost faith in either his program or in his personal right to direct its implementation. He could never forget he was "Mr. Owen" of New Lanark. He alone had actually superintended workers to their overall benefit, and, as he managed people in the manufacturing sphere, so he sought to manage them in the intellectual realm as well. Although the principles he espoused were natural and universal, for the time being Robert Owen had a monopoly on them! If this most rational of men was himself subject to a benevolent dictatorship, then one can only imagine the hazards of his system itself.

Owen's "Plan" offered the best of all possible worlds to the best of all possible individuals--the enlightened English yeomanry of the pre-industrial era. Although he frequently spoke of humanity or mankind in general, Owen really was thinking in British terms. Thus, for the individual in his social structure, there was available unlimited happiness if he would but grasp it--however it was always Owen's definition of happiness. Exactly what part emotional responses to suffering and frustration play in the human psyche are still a mystery; however they do undoubtedly effect the totality of human life. To assign

such conditions to the existing irrational state of society was a gross over-simplification of the problem on the part of Owen. When mankind understood the principles which determined character, then misery, poverty, human degradation and egotism would all be removed by rational individuals working together toward construction of a new world. Perhaps, one might even say, the heavenly city of the nineteenth century Utopian Socialists.

Individualism was therefore a product of the existing social order only, and must be eliminated. The role of the individual, as Owen interpreted it, was to act as the instrument of change from an evil system of social organization based on individual interests to one based upon principles for social harmony drawn from nature and reason. Each individual was thus obligated to follow the dictates of common sense and the need of humanity. If each person honestly understood the principles upon which true social harmony ultimately rested, then there was no doubt in Owen's mind that a rational individual would always take the best course. And since his program was entirely rational, Owen never doubted for a minute the righteousness of his cause. Owen's individual was therefore rational, charitable, patient,

perseverant, tolerant and loved humanity. Accepting the thesis that man lived in a natural world order, Owen's individual sought to create a society most consistent with it. After about the mid-1830's, Owen increasingly turned away from the individual among the masses to his own disciples. The Owenites, bearing proudly their spiritual gold medals, were confident that the follies of mankind under the existing irrational system would sooner or later bring man to grasp the significance of their "first principles." They sought to lead all mankind to an earthly paradise if men would but abandon their "individualism" of the day. Man, they sincerely believed, was a rational creature and ought, therefore, to live rationally. In the last analysis, it was their fundamental view of human nature which deceived them, and their master.

CHAPTER III

HENRI DE SAINT-SIMON

If Claude-Henri de Rouvroy, Comte de Saint-Simon (1760-1825), had written nothing more than any one of his major single works, he would have contributed a great deal toward understanding the era in which he lived. In a number of important publications, his fertile mind and imagination traversed a wide range of subjects, even if he was not always consistent or clear. ¹³⁴ Saint-Simon was not, like Robert Owen, a successful manufacturer; therefore he was not familiar as an active participant with the Industrial Revolution, still in its infancy in France. Although both he and Owen lived through the chaotic years of the French Revolution, the latter did not have any personal contacts with the Reign of Terror as Saint-Simon did--an experience which would cause any philosopher to reflect deeply on human nature. Yet, both thinkers would have agreed that: "...c'est sur l'avenir que l'homme doit principalement ¹³⁵ fixer son attention."

134

Frank E. Manuel, The New World of Henri Saint-Simon (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 118.

135

Comte de Saint-Simon, Oeuvres choisies (Bruxelles: Van Meenen, 1859), III, p. 266.

Saint-Simon's personal life resembles a great adventure story. As a young man he commanded elements of the French forces in America during the Revolutionary War. He returned to France after the concluding of peace, and from there he traveled widely drafting plans for canals and other spectacular--and expensive--projects in Europe and Panama. During the early stages of the French Revolution, Saint-Simon made a fortune in land speculation but soon lost it. He was nearly beheaded during the executions of 1794 in a case of mistaken identity. After questionable activities behind the scenes during the secret negotiations for peace at Lille in 1797, he "exchanged the rôle of financier for that of philosopher and prophet" in 1798.¹³⁶ His first literary

effort came shortly after the turn of the century, his Letters from an Inhabitant of Geneva to his Contemporaries.¹³⁷ From about this time, 1803, until the Congress of Vienna, Saint-Simon was reduced to poverty--a fate which generally awaits socialists who would save mankind. Yet he did manage to continue writing some autobiographical fragments and his

136

Henri Comte de Saint-Simon, Selected Writings (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1952), p. xiv.

137

Saint-Simon, Œuvres complètes (Paris: Editions Anthropos, 1966), I, pp. 8-60. Hereafter cited as Œuvres.

Introduction to the Philosophy of the Nineteenth Century in 1808.¹³⁸ In 1814 he collaborated with his secretary Augustin Thierry, the future historian, on a treatise entitled On the Reorganisation of European Society.¹³⁹ After Thierry departed in 1817, August Comte served as secretary until 1824; the last of his secretaries was Olinde Rodrigues, a rich young Jew, who had joined him only about a year before in 1823.¹⁴⁰ In his final year, 1825, Saint-Simon wrote three major works, of which the most famous is New Christianity.¹⁴¹ His death at this time provided Saint-Simon's followers with the opportunity to develop their master's doctrines as they saw fit, and in the process they changed them.¹⁴²

138

Ibid., pp. 89-103.

139

Ibid., pp. 150-247.

140

Saint-Simon, Selected Writings, pp. xvi-xvii. There was a rather large Jewish element attracted to Saint-Simon which included: Eugène Rodrigues, Emile and Isaac Pereira, Léon Halévy, Gustave d'Eichthal, Mofse Renaudet and Félicien David. See J. L. Talmon, Political Messianism, The Romantic Phase (New York: Praeger, 1960), pp. 77-78.

141

Saint-Simon, Oeuvres, III, pp. 100-192.

142

See the authoritative study by Sébastien Charléty, Histoire du Saint-Simonisme, Paris: P. Hartmann, 1931.

In his first published work of 1803, Letters from an Inhabitant of Geneva to his Contemporaries, Saint-Simon proposed that the world's educated leaders assemble "before the grave of Newton" and debate the evils of society and also propose how to remedy them. One of the consistent points in his numerous writings was his belief in the natural inequality of things in general and men in particular. Owen sought to provide an equality of conditions wherein each individual could develop himself; Saint-Simon retained the necessity of social stratification. Thus, in his Letters, Saint-Simon divided society into three classes: the haves, the have-nots, and the men of science. Leadership would come mainly from the last element, the scientists. In 1803 he described the situation he had in mind by writing in part:

For this purpose I address my remarks to different sections of humanity, in which I distinguish three classes. The first, to which you [the imaginary correspondent] and I have the honour to belong, marches beneath the banner of human progress: it consists of the scientists, the artists, and of all men of liberal ideas. On the banner of the second class is inscribed 'No innovation.' All the property-owners who do not qualify for the first class belong to the second. The third class, which rallies to the word 'equality,' comprises the rest of humanity.¹⁴³

143

Saint-Simon, Selected Writings, p. 2.

In a tone reminiscent of the Encyclopedists, he urged in the Letters also: "Let the mathematicians, who are in the vanguard, begin!"¹⁴⁴ For a person who had neither training nor experience in the sciences, this whole idea of scientific elitism was somewhat bizarre. Nonetheless, Saint-Simon proceeded to explain to the have-nots of the world why enlightenment meant prosperity for all. "A scientist, my friends, is a man who predicts. It is because science has the means of prediction that it is useful, and makes scientists superior to all other men."¹⁴⁵ Referring in 1808 to the scientist's idealized conduct, Saint-Simon stated that science was the "véritable source de la sagesse." If, however, more proof was needed, he pointed out further-- with the usual over-simplification typical of Frenchmen writing about Great Britain--that: "The educated classes in England have more respect for scientists than for kings;

144

Ibid.

145

Ibid., p. 6. "I ask the reader to reflect on this observation: the haves govern the have-nots, not because they own property; they own property and govern because, collectively, they are superior in enlightenment to the have-nots." Ibid., p. 2.

everybody in England knows how to read, write, and add.
 Well, my friends, in that country the workers in towns and
 even in the country eat meat every day." ¹⁴⁶ Throughout his
 many works, Saint-Simon placed the mantle of leadership on
 the men of enlightenment and science, although this burden
 was distributed from time to time to industrial leaders and
 intellectuals. Even when he included the industrialists,
 after about 1816 to 1819-20, he carefully informed his
 readers that in any collaborative effort the scientific
 method must constantly serve as the guide. "The method
 of the experimental sciences should be applied to politics--
 reason and experience are the elements of this method." ¹⁴⁷
 Saint-Simon automatically assumed that leadership in society
 would have to be by the most educated persons. The success
 registered depended upon "the degree of activity that
 persons of great influence over humanity would choose to
 exert on this occasion," which may or may not at the moment
 be scientists, but would certainly be the most enlightened. ¹⁴⁸

146

Ibid., pp. 5-6.

147

Ibid., p. 45.

148

Ibid., p. 2.

"Great men," he wrote in 1808, "are formed by great moral
 149 crises." The "great men" Saint-Simon had in mind were
 "les industriels," by whom he meant merely the most productive
 among the enlightened leaders in society in their respective
 fields.

Moral crises are produced in social environments, and
 for Saint-Simon institutions were but tangible manifestations
 of the philosophical system which underlay any given social
 order. Correct ideas could only be discovered and correctly
 interpreted by an enlightened elite of progressive indi-
 viduals for the mass of mankind. Therefore, politics
 rested upon morality and ethics. Using a scientific analogy,
 he wrote in 1808: "L'installation du principe de la gravi-
 tation universelle en première ligne, a déterminé un grand
 changement dans la coordination des idées de physique. La
 même effet sera produit dans la morale par le installation
 du nouveau principe."¹⁵⁰ Any system in the universe, he
 reasoned, was composed of certain principles, and it became

149

Ibid., p. 13.

150

Saint-Simon, Œuvres choisies, I, p. 222.

151

still more perfect when reduced to one. Like his colleagues in the early nineteenth century socialist movement, Saint-Simon assumed he had discovered the solution to the perplexing conditions of the day.

Saint-Simon's proposal for the reorganization of Europe, a plan which placed Britain and France in the forefront of the European community, was one attempt to utilize a new principle for international relations. This new principle was the march of an enlightened humanity toward a future world order of national harmony and goodwill among states. It was to be a world order in which the desires of each individual nation, and each individual within it, did not conflict with the general European interests. Europe ought to be organized for progress. "La philosophie du dernier siècle a été révolutionnaire; celle du XIX^e siècle doit être organisatrice." ¹⁵² For the politically conservative Saint-Simon, it was better to lead the social order onward than to wait to be dragged there.

Il viendra sans doute un temps où tous les peuples de l'Europe sentiront qu'il faut régler les points d'intérêt général, avant de descendre aux intérêts nationaux; alors

151

Ibid., p. 148.

152

Ibid., II, p. 256.

les maux commenceront à devenir moindres, les troubles à s'apaiser, les guerres à s'éteindre; c'est là que nous tendons sans cesse, c'est là que le cours de l'esprit humain nous emporte! Mais lequel est le plus digne de la prudence de l'homme ou de s'y traîner, ou d'y courir? 153

Saint-Simon's plan for a general harmony of interests between European peoples, a harmony he thought could be achieved by instituting a European parliament with an impartial executive, was merely the first step he took on the road to abandoning the Newtonian principles of science for those of universal brotherhood among men. "With a union of peoples as with a union of individuals, common institutions and an organization are required. Without these everything is decided by force."¹⁵⁴ Throughout his writings, he defined this brotherhood in exclusively European terms. As he did in so many other ways, Saint-Simon foreshadowed a development which came later in the century, namely, racism.¹⁵⁵

During the first few years following the return of peace after Waterloo, Saint-Simon courted the support of various bourgeois elements in France. His program--as he

153

Ibid., p. 328.

154

Saint-Simon, Selected Writings, p. 35.

155

Ibid., p. 49; or in Oeuvres choisies, II, p. 293.

elaborated it in L'Industrie (1816-17)--advanced the increased importance of the technological and commercial elements in society.¹⁵⁶ He repeatedly announced that the industrial class--doomed to obscurity by Owen's plans--was bound to dominate the social order because of its advanced knowledge. "Our intention," he wrote an American friend in 1817, "is simply to promote and explain a development which is inevitable. Our desire is that men should henceforth do consciously, and with better directed and more useful effort, what they have hitherto done unconsciously, slowly, indecisively and too ineffectively."¹⁵⁷ Saint-Simon therefore concluded: "Une nation n'est autre chose qu'une grande soci t  d'industrie."¹⁵⁸ He regarded as necessary the free interplay of individual interests operating in a free business environment. In terms of the political relations in such a society, he told the American correspondent further:

Yes, sir, in my opinion, the sole aim of our thoughts and our exertions must be the kind of organization most favorable to industry--industry understood in the widest sense, including every kind of useful activity, theoretical as well as practical, intellectual as well as manual. The kind of organization most favourable to

156

Saint-Simon, Oeuvres, I, pp. 5-223; and ibid., II, pp. 13-173.

157

Saint-Simon, Selected Writings, p. 70.

158

Saint-Simon, Oeuvres, I, p. 69.

industry consists in a government in which the political power has no more force or activity than is necessary to see that useful work is not hindered; a government so arranged that the workers, who together form the real community, can exchange directly and with complete freedom the products of their labours; a government under which the community which alone knows what is good for it, what it wishes and prefers, will also be the judge of the worth and utility of its labours.¹⁵⁹

Accepting the theory that the principal duty of the individual in any social order was to work, Saint-Simon assumed the philosopher's duty was to supervise and show him the way. Only if socialism means "the conscious direction and planning of the economic system from the center" could Saint-Simon be called a "socialist" at all.¹⁶⁰ In fact, the social order he envisioned would have been led by a bourgeois scientific hierarchy, "les industriels," rather than any proletarian party of the most numerous and poorest individuals in it. For Saint-Simon, mankind was composed of two parts: (1) the productive workers, both employers and employees; and (2) the idle rich and parasite nobility, whom he termed "les oisifs."

159

Saint-Simon, Selected Writings, p. 70.

160

Ibid., p. xxvii; and G. D. H. Cole, A History Of Socialist Thought, I, pp. 37-38.

In the years between 1817-21, Saint-Simon gradually alienated many of his former middle class supporters as a result of his attacks first on inheritance in 1817, and, second, on organized religion in 1819.¹⁶¹ He still maintained the necessity of an elite; however, he returned his emphasis from the industrialists to a more intellectual element. It was at this time that he began to change his earlier views on the intrinsic value of individual efforts, and began to write against what his disciples would later call individualism. Yet, he continued to lament that men of ability, "hard working and thrifty," were relegated by ignorance and superstition to inferior positions.¹⁶² At first, he had felt that any competition between individuals would produce only long range benefits. Having lived through the era of the French Revolution, with all its notions of equality and the use of plebiscites, Saint-Simon could not, like Owen, put sublime faith in the masses. He was by choice a monarchist and could never have conceived of society being run by republicans.¹⁶³ Like so many of his Utopian Socialist colleagues, he was somewhat a social radical but a political conservative.

161

Saint-Simon, Oeuvres, II, pp. 5-242.

162

Saint-Simon, Selected Writings, p. 74.

163

Saint-Simon, Oeuvres choisies, III, pp. 281-82.

Around 1819-20, he began to write more with reference to the "social body itself" or society "taken collectively." However, he retained social stratification and was never an egalitarian. He believed such arrangements would be accepted without question since every intelligent individual knew that these divisions were both natural and more efficient than the present system. Only an enlightened leadership could determine the correct course of action.

Dans une société organisée pour le but positif de travailler à sa prospérité par les sciences, les beaux-arts et les arts et métiers, l'acte politique le plus important, celui qui consiste à fixer la direction dans laquelle la société doit marcher, n'appartient plus aux hommes investis des fonctions sociales, il est exercé par le corps social lui-même; c'est de cette manière que la société, prise collectivement, peut réellement exercer la souveraineté, souveraineté qui ne consiste point alors dans une opinion arbitraire érigée en loi par la masse, mais dans un principe dérivé de la nature même des choses et dont les hommes n'ont fait que reconnaître la justesse et proclamer la nécessité....¹⁶⁴

If society were only organized along the lines which he proposed, Saint-Simon thought it would need but one article in any constitution to achieve "la solidarité."
 "L'objet de l'association politique des Français est de prospérer par des travaux pacifiques, d'une utilité positive."¹⁶⁵ It was to "les industriels" that Saint-Simon

164

Ibid., II, p. 373.

165

Ibid., (1821), III, p. 15.

looked for leadership toward the most productive system of production and the best political organization in human history. Thus, he went to great lengths to define such people.

Un industriel est un homme qui travaille à produire ou à mettre à la portée des différents membres de la société, un ou plusieurs moyens matériels de satisfaire leurs besoins ou leurs goûts physiques; ainsi, un cultivateur qui sème du blé, qui élève des volailles, des bestiaux, est un industriel; un charron, un maréchal, un serrurier, un menuisier, son des industriels; un fabricant de souliers, de chapeaux, de toiles, de traps, de cachemires, est également, un industriel; un négociant, un roulier, un marin employé sur des vaisseaux marchands, sont des industriels. Tous les industriels réunis travaillent à produire et à mettre à la portée de tous les membres de la société, tous les moyens matériels de satisfaire leurs besoins ou leurs goûts physiques, et ils forment trois grandes classes qu'on appelle, les cultivateurs, les fabricants et les régirants.¹⁶⁶

It was evident to Saint-Simon that only "le régime industriel" could procure both the greatest amount of productivity and social tranquility, while at the same time permitting the maximum amount of individual liberty. The industrial leaders alone understood the complexity of modern society, and knew how to organize it in order that "toutes les parties contribuent d'une manière différent à la marche de l'ensemble."¹⁶⁷ Saint-Simon therefore planned for an

166

Ibid., (1823), p. 67.

167

Saint-Simon, Oeuvres, V, p. 177.

apportioning of tasks on the basis of individual merit or ability so that society would operate at maximum efficiency as a veritable social machine. This goal prompted him to search for the best means to eliminate the plight of the poor. Saint-Simon thought the most direct method of improving society would be a system of full employment, since "l'homme doit travailler." Then, ideas of "positive science" could create true enlightenment among the majority of the population. Saint-Simon's socialism was therefore always a means to an end, not an end in itself.¹⁶⁸ The best social organization was one which satisfied the needs of the majority, was open to talent, protected the people and fostered enlightenment. He wrote in 1825 that:

La meilleure organisation sociale est celle qui rend la condition des hommes composant la majorité de la société la plus heureuse possible, en lui procurant le plus de moyens et de facilités pour satisfaire ses premiers besoins.

C'est celle dans laquelle les hommes qui possèdent le plus de mérite, et dont la valeur intrinsèque est le plus grande, ont le plus de facilité à parvenir au premier rang, quelle que soit la position dans laquelle le hasard de la naissance les ait placés.

C'est encore celle qui réunit dans une même société la population la plus nombreuse et qui lui procure les plus grands moyens de résistance contre l'étranger.

Enfin, c'est celle qui donne pour résultat des travaux qu'elle protège, les découvertes les plus importantes et les plus grandes progrès en civilisation et en lumières.¹⁶⁹

168

Ibid., p. 128.

169

Saint-Simon, Oeuvres choisies, III, p. 221.

The management of something such as national wealth was a matter of extreme care. Like so many theorists whose sole criteria for success is efficiency, Saint-Simon wrote in 1825 that only by allowing men of proven ability to direct social organization could society move forward at all. As if he did not want to believe that scientists might also be subject to individual interests, he returned to them again on the eve of suggesting a new religion.

It follows from what I have said that the ambition of scientists, artists and industrialists, to participate in the administration of national interests, is not dangerous to the community. It is advantageous rather, since they can only succeed in their ambition through solid achievements; while the ambition which aims at a place in the government is harmful to the community, because the most incapable men may be consumed by such an ambition and, in order to justify it, strive to overthrow the whole social order.¹⁷⁰

Saint-Simon reasoned further that it was easy for any man to evaluate the merits of another in the sciences or in the arts, and when society was guided by the same values then it would be easy to persuade any individual that he either did or did not have the necessary talents to govern. Errors would soon be brought to the notice of the guilty party by his neighbors, and, unless the individual in question was blinded by vanity, he would correct them.¹⁷¹

170

Saint-Simon, Selected Writings, p. 79.

171

Ibid.

Was this not, however, the road to some form of scientific despotism? As with so many intellectuals absorbed in their own system making, Saint-Simon replied that such a fear was absurd and he continued to do as he pleased. "La crainte de voir s'établir un jour un despotisme fondé sur les sciences serait un chimère aussi qu'absurde, elle ne saurait naître que dans des esprits absolument étrangers à toute idée positive."¹⁷² Certainly with his abhorrence of violence of any kind, there was never any idea in his mind to force his plans on anyone. In fact, Saint-Simon thought his program would minimize class conflicts and other forms of social disturbances.

Il ne peut résulter aucun trouble d'un mouvement dirigé par les savants les plus distingués et par les industriels les plus importants, car les savants et les industriels sont de toute la société les membres les plus intéressés au maintien de l'ordre; ils sont ceux qui ont le plus d'aversion pour tout acte de violence.

Les savants et les industriels seront certainement obligés de développer une grande force pour opérer le changement de système; mais ce sera la force morale,¹⁷³ qu'ils emploieront, la force de l'opinion publique.

172

Saint-Simon, Oeuvres, II, pp. 157-58. For a description of the totalitarian authoritarianism established by the followers of Saint-Simon, see George G. Iggers, The Cult Of Authority The Political Philosophy Of The Saint-Simonians A Chapter In The Intellectual History Of Totalitarianism, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1958.

173

Saint-Simon, Oeuvres choisies, III, p. 305; see also ibid., pp. 68, 70, 72-74; or again, ibid., II, p. 152.

Saint-Simon also discussed the problem of equality, but the egalitarianism he had in mind was not that of the Babouvians. He wished to create equality based on the absence of abuses which stemmed from unearned privilege. This was an equality of opportunity only, for he retained social stratification. Social divisions would be based on individual talent and enlightenment. Theoretically, the way was always open to those individuals of talent and merit. What man rebelled against, he noted, was not the principle of inequality itself, but rather against inequality based on sterile or artificial standards of value.

The solution to France's ills, which seemed acute to Saint-Simon after about 1820, was a new religion--a "Nouveau Christianisme." With a preface quoting the Bible--"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"--he outlined his new system by using the ancient device of a dialogue between speakers. "Theology," he wrote in 1825, "needs to be brought up to date at different periods, just like physics, chemistry, and physiology."¹⁷⁴ Saint-Simon's "New Christianity" would have temporal institutions as well as spiritual principles.

174

Saint-Simon, Selected Writings, p. 83.

Both would be directed toward "the improvement of the well-being of the poorest class."¹⁷⁵ Since "opinion governs the world," Saint-Simon re-emphasized that there would be no resort to inquisitional methods in order to realize his new order.¹⁷⁶ While Owen turned to the great realm of nature for his principles, Saint-Simon was the first Utopian Socialist to place any emphasis on history within the socialist movement. It was an emphasis on the importance of history which eased him into the Romantic movement also.

Actually, he had begun to think about the role of the individual in his historical setting sometime earlier; this process had simply matured over a number of years and ripened with his New Christianity. His views on the reorganization of European society in 1814 were based on history rather than on Newtonian principles. Like the Romantics, he too thought the medieval Catholic Church had fulfilled a need in the Western world. However, he felt this need disappeared when the clergy, at first the intellectual leaders of Europe, failed to use science for the advancement of mankind and even attempted to curb those who sought to use it. "The attack on the religious system of the Middle Ages has really

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Ibid., p. 85.

176

Ibid., pp. 110-111; or ibid., p. 29.

proved only this, that it was no longer in harmony with the positive sciences." ¹⁷⁷ Thus, he concluded that religion does not disappear "only that it should adjust itself to scientific progress." ¹⁷⁸ At no point did Saint-Simon advocate the overthrow of religion completely; he merely wanted to modernize and expand it for a progressive world. Religion, he believed, should conform to its historical goal, to promote social unity and intellectual progress. "Redemption would come not through Christ," wrote one recent biographer, ¹⁷⁹ "but through science." Saint-Simon, like so many thinkers earlier in the Enlightenment, regarded religion as a convenient tool by which to keep the masses in check, while the enlightened man had no real need for it. "La religion est la collection des applications de la science générale au moyen desquelles les hommes éclairés régirent les hommes ignorants." ¹⁸⁰ God, therefore, was viewed as a necessary symbol for maintaining order. In 1808 he wrote:

177

Ibid., p. xvii; see also ibid., pp. 13-20.

178

Ibid.

179

Manuel, The New World of Henri Saint-Simon, p. 70.

180

Saint-Simon, Oeuvres choisies, I, p. 213.

I say, and I claim to have shown [sic], that the idea of God should not be used in the physical sciences, but I do not say that it should not be used in political matters, at any rate for a long time, since it is the best means that has been discovered of managing the fundamental political relations.¹⁸¹

As previously noted, Saint-Simon did not use the term "individualism" in any of his writings. In fact, early in his career he thought enlightened self-interest a healthy thing. He could only see general benefit from it to the whole social fabric. He always considered that "in the general interest, domination should be proportionate to enlightenment."¹⁸² As with Charles Fourier, Saint-Simon theorized that out of diversity came harmony. "To gather up and unite all these forces acting in different, and often contrary, directions; to direct them as far as possible to the single purpose of improving the lot of humanity--I do not think a better means can be found than the one I propose."¹⁸³ Toward the end of his life, he recognized that these different and contrary forces were operating virtually unchecked and would, unless controlled by some element, not improve man's life the way he wanted.

181

Saint-Simon, Selected Writings, p. 20.

182

Ibid., p. 8.

183

Ibid., pp. 9-10.

Therefore, he began to write against what he most frequently chose to call "l'egoïsme." "There are two routes," he had written as early as 1803, "by which a man may reach a position of superiority; one of them combines the individual and the general interest. My aim is to improve this way, and scatter thorns on the other."¹⁸⁴ Yet, then he proceeded to look at the problem of egotism in individuals.

Opinions are still divided on the question of egoism. Although discussion has hotly continued on this subject since the beginning of the world, the solution of the problem lies in opening up a path, which is the same for the individual and for the common interest. Egoism is essential to the security of organisms; every effort to combine the interests of individuals is a step in the right direction, but every argument of the moralists which goes beyond the conciliation of interests and tries to destroy egoism, is an error which is easily recognizable. Moralists often mistake words for things, the first generations of humanity were those in which there was the greatest individual egoism, because individuals did not combine their interests.¹⁸⁵

Until about 1819, Saint-Simon sought to harmonize "les intérêts privés" with the general interest. Thereafter he began to see some new developments, and he responded to them. "Jusqu'à présent, les hommes n'ont exercé, pour ainsi dire, sur la nature que des efforts purement individuels et isolés."¹⁸⁶ In 1821 he attacked

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Saint-Simon, Oeuvres, II, p. 194.

egoism as "la gangrène moral de l'espèce humaine."¹⁸⁷ He also termed certain individuals who attempted to dominate others, while not being suitably enlightened themselves but only greedy, as "les egoïstes."¹⁸⁸ Saint-Simon was particularly instrumental in popularizing the idea of "isolation" and "egoism" and in attaching them to individual interests disdainfully. In 1825 he assailed the rampaging egoism of his day; he wrote in part:

It is to this egoism that we must attribute the political malady of our own age, a malady which afflicts all the workers who serve the community; which allows kings to waste a great proportion of the wages of the poor on their personal expenses, and those of their courtiers and soldiers; which allows monarchy and hereditary aristocracy to usurp much of the esteem which should go to the scientists, artists, and industrialists, in virtue of their direct positive services to the community.

Thus, "New Christianity," Saint-Simon announced proudly, "is called upon to achieve the triumph of the principles of universal morality in the struggle which is going on with the forces aiming at the individual instead of public interest."¹⁹⁰ These forces were not the forces of the new

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Saint-Simon, Oeuvres choisies, III, p. 11.

188

Ibid., p. 33.

189

Saint-Simon, Selected Writings, p. 113.

190

Ibid., p. 105.

industrial order which Saint-Simon wanted to lead mankind forward, but "des nobles et bourgeois oisifs." Thus, his socialism was prompted by a negative response to forces which he discovered might possibly be limited only by an opposite. Although he did not use the term, Saint-Simon clearly had in mind the very phenomenon his disciples and other critics called "individualism." At the same time, he maintained his belief that the most enlightened individuals would always use their knowledge and talents to eliminate false privilege. In 1822 he wrote:

Tous les privilèges seront anéantis, et ils ne pourront plus se reproduire, puisque le système d'égalité le plus complet qui puisse exister sera constitué, les hommes qui montreront le plus de capacités dans les sciences positives, dans les beaux-arts et dans l'industrie, étant appelés par le nouveau système à jouir du premier degré de considération sociale et à être chargés de la direction des affaires publiques, disposition fondamentale qui destine tous les hommes possédant un talent transcendant à élever au premier rang, quelle que soit la position dans laquelle le hasard de la naissance les ait placés.¹⁹¹

In the early 1820's, Saint-Simon sought individuals who would help him in his effort to serve humanity and act

191

Saint-Simon, Oeuvres choisies, II, pp. 444-45.

as the vanguard of a new social order. There was no longer any appeal to the laws of science as such; rather Saint-Simon inaugurated a religious crusade of progress. He called upon his followers "à terminer cette sainte entreprise." He urged all men to regard themselves as brothers. The honor of organizing the temporal power conforming to his divine axioms was reserved by Saint-Simon to those who understood them. The appeal concluded with his appeal for a renewed commitment in order to save mankind. He wrote in part:

Vous avez été destinés de toute éternité à démontrer aux princes qu'il est de leur intérêt et de leur devoir de donner à leur sujets la constitution qui peut tendre le plus directement à l'amélioration de l'existence sociale de la classe la plus nombreuse; vous avez été destinés à déterminer ces chefs des nations à soumettre leur politique au principe fondamental de la moral chrétienne.¹⁹²

At no point did Saint-Simon ever abandon the idea of an intellectual elite leading mankind, he merely redistributed the importance attached to various kinds of leaders--from scientists, industrialists, bankers, artists, thinkers and philosophers to all individuals capable of rising on the basis of merit. He never doubted for a moment that the same reasons which had assured outstanding scientists the esteem of the scientific world could easily be applied to society as a whole. "la même confiance qui a tant fait

192

Ibid., III, pp. 7-8.

admettre aux gens du monde l'analyse de l'air et de l'eau, la loi de la gravitation universelle, la décomposition de la lumière, et tant d'autres découvertes astronomiques, physiques, chimiques et physiologiques, les fera également accepter par le peuple un peu plus tard." ¹⁹³ The dream of unquestioned confidence of the lower classes in their intellectual leaders was one of the most consistent pitfalls into which not only the Utopians, but other writers--even including "scientific" socialists--fell. This dilemma was, in fact, only corrected by the later revisionist tactics of Western European social democracy.

It was in the realm of history that Saint-Simon's individual operated. His interest in history came "despite the fact that he had no historical training, wrote abominable history, made no pretensions to historical scholarship, was, indeed, not to put too fine a point on the matter, no historian, but rather a philosopher of history, to whom it never occurred that the two vocations were independent." ¹⁹⁴

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Saint-Simon, Oeuvres, II, p. 155.

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Walter M. Simon, "History for Utopia: Saint-Simon and the Idea of Progress," Journal of the History of Ideas, XVII, 3 (June, 1956), p. 311.

History, for Saint-Simon, was the progressive march of enlightenment through the advancement of science and the men of science. During periods of relative peace and stability, it operated organically; during periods of stress, or of crisis, a critical point was reached and disharmony--prompted by conflicting systems of ideas--erupted and tore society apart. From the fifteenth century to the French Revolution, he viewed history as striking at the roots of the feudal order in preparation for the crisis which occurred in 1789. Saint-Simon added the idea of inevitability to his history. In 1814, while discussing revolutions in states and the breakdown of the old order, he described how the preceding era of the French Revolution had prepared the way for a better organization. "This reorganization cannot be achieved suddenly, at one stroke; for outworn institutions only gradually collapse, and better ones are only gradually built; they rise and fall slowly and insensibly." ¹⁹⁵ Now, he concluded, it was time for history to return to her organic development, and it was by a New Christianity that he hoped to achieve this move. In this most important epoch, he

195

Saint-Simon, Selected Writings, p. 32.

believed the most enlightened individuals would emerge to guide mankind. This new order, which he and his enlightened leaders sought, was clearly an industrial one.¹⁹⁶ "Les industriels" held the position in Saint-Simon's thought similar to that reserved for the dictatorship of the proletariat in communist theory.

La récapitulation du passé de la société nous a prouvé que la classe industrielle avait continuellement acquis de l'importance, tandis que les autres en avaient toujours perdu; et nous devons conclure de là que la classe industrielle doit finir par se constituer la plus importante de toutes.¹⁹⁷

History was therefore the means whereby any individual clearly grasped where he and his society had been, where they presently were, and--much more importantly--where they were going. History--like science, and because science was the historical catalyst--was therefore valuable too because it was predictable. History was the birth, maturity and death of ideas.¹⁹⁸ For Saint-Simon, the enlightened person recognized that history operated organically, and he led the way forward by knowledge to an ever-increasing amount of human progress. In order to achieve this goal, it was

196

Saint-Simon, Oeuvres, V, pp. 91-92; for an earlier view, 1808, along the same lines, see Oeuvres choisies, I, p. 195.

197

Saint-Simon, Oeuvres choisies (1823), III, pp. 96, 103.

198

Ibid., II, pp. 174, 241.

necessary for an enlightened individual to have complete freedom of action. However, whenever discussion centered around the role of the individual, it was prudent to define which individual. Was it the enlightened person only? Or, just an individual along any of the various rungs in his ladder of social stratification? Each individual's acts depended upon his place in the new industrial order because all persons had different duties depending upon their tier of placement.

Regardless of the rank one held in society, Saint-Simon envisioned a social order divided into two basic classes: (1) the masses who sought merely comfort and physical happiness; and (2) "les industriels" who sought to lead all of mankind toward a better world. Control of the former class was exercised by the progressive and enlightened leadership of the second, but classes there definitely were. Every individual was guaranteed a certain amount of what might be termed "equality." However, it was an equality of work opportunity only, depending upon the individual's enlightenment or training in science. Science, the means of enlightenment for humanity, was the absolute value by

which all other values and accomplishments were to be judged, all persons classified and society itself managed. New Christianity was in itself a secular theory of applied science based upon a moral commitment to the betterment of mankind. The fact that such a thoroughly scientific system had no real attraction beyond the confines of a very small element in society was simply never considered by Saint-Simon. Man, individually and collectively, was a rational animal who sought security and harmony in his social relationships. Saint-Simon's sublime faith in the scientist-artist-technocratic leader was a gross oversimplification of what constitutes efficiency. The very individuals who seemingly have the strongest tendency toward "individualism" were charged by Saint-Simon to create a socially viable system, when in fact they are the very elements most prone to squabbling.

In the changes which he went through, from being an advocate of individual freedom to the restricting of the individual and harmonizing of his interests with the good of the community, Saint-Simon was a pioneer. His ideas on egoism and the isolation of this individual--one who sought his own interests at the expense of others--gave two of the

early connotations to the idea which one of Saint-Simon's followers called "individualism" only a year after the master died. Saint-Simon clearly demonstrated in his later writings, after about 1819, the transition more clearly and became a foe of unbridled individualism. Likewise, he attributed this pursuit of individual interests to certain elements in society, elements which he felt ought to be replaced. For both Owen and Saint-Simon, certain groups perpetuated an inefficient and irrational system for their own gain at the expense of the majority. Both of these early nineteenth century socialists used their pen to attack such practices, and in the process contributed meanings to individualism.

CHAPTER IV

CHARLES FOURIER

The high priority given by Saint-Simon to "les industriels" was met by stiff resistance from a fellow Frenchman, Charles Fourier (1772-1837). Fourier did not oppose organizing society on the basis of certain principles, he just simply disagreed with Saint-Simon, and the Saint-Simonians, as to the nature of such principles and in the conclusions he drew from them. Like Saint-Simon, he too was arrested and narrowly escaped death during the Reign of Terror in a case of mistaken identity. In the performance of his later business activities, as a travelling salesman for the cloth industry, he learned a great deal about human nature. His numerous conversations with people in all walks of life led him to have a very intimate understanding of the desires and frustrations of mankind. Travelling by coach and stopping at inns and small town taverns, Fourier talked with the people and obtained firsthand information on a variety of subjects. For the great literary and moralist thinkers of the past, man was often an abstraction; for Fourier, "man"

involved persons with whom he was personally familiar. A sympathetic French biographer has written that: "Fourier ne fut pas l'érudit, le savant, l'omniscient que figurent certain critiques; les connaissances qu'il prit dans les livres furent superficielles et confuses: elles n'ajoutèrent que peu de choses à celles qu'il acquit par l'observation et l'expérience."¹⁹⁹ Fourier's entire life was that of the average bourgeois Frenchman, except that he spent his hours after work attempting to construct a social order in harmony with man's real nature.

Fourier's first published manuscript was his Theory of the Four Movements in 1808.²⁰⁰ The real essence of his thought was developed sometime later in 1822-23, with his Treatise on Domestic-Agricultural Association published in two volumes and one synopsis.²⁰¹ One further commentary

199

Hubert Bourgin, Étude sur les sources de Fourier (Paris: Société nouvelle de Librairie et d'Édition, 1905), p. 16. See also by the same author, Fourier contribution à l'étude du Socialisme français, Paris: Société nouvelle de Librairie et d'Édition, 1905.

200

Charles Fourier, Théorie des quatre mouvements et des destinées générales, Leipzig: no publisher listed, 1808.

201

Charles Fourier, Traité de l'association domestique-agricole, Paris: Bossange, 1822. Hereafter cited as Traité de l'association.

was written on the organization of society in 1829.²⁰² After about this date, however, Fourier concentrated more on attacking the systems of his rivals than on developing his own program further. All of the Utopian Socialists seemed to have this characteristic in common, they lacked the intellectual flexibility to reinterpret their own doctrines in light of fresh evidence or certain contradictions. It was always easier to charge others with deceiving people.²⁰³

In his first work of 1808, Fourier explained his idea that the driving force behind every individual was twelve passions. Thus, he reasoned that: "All those philosophical whims called duties have no relation whatever to Nature; duty proceeds from men, Attraction proceeds from God; now, if we desire to know the designs of God, we must study Attraction."²⁰⁴ While Saint-Simon had drawn his theories

202

Charles Fourier, Le Nouveau monde industriel et social-taire, invention du procédé d'industrie attrayante et naturelle distribuée en séries passionnées, Paris: Bossange, 1829.

203

Charles Fourier, Pièges et charlatanisme des deux sectes Saint-Simon et Owen, qui promettent l'association et le progrès, Paris: Bossange, 1831; and also, La fausse industrie morcelée, répugnante mensongère, et l'antidote naturelle, combinée, attrayante, véridique, Paris: Bossange, 1835-36.

204

Charles Fourier, Selections From The Works Of Fourier (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1901), p. 55. Hereafter cited as Selections.

from science, Fourier believed he had unlocked the secret of nature in his law of "attraction." In the operation of the four movements of nature--material, social, animal and organic--it was necessary, Fourier argued, to grasp the importance of the fact that: "Dieu seul est investi du pouvoir de distribuer l'attraction;..."²⁰⁵ Every person had twelve passions which might combine in over eight hundred possible ways. They were split into three categories: five sensory passions of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch; four affective passions of friendship, love, ambition and paternity; and, three distributive passions which he called cabalist, composit and "butterfly." Fourier maintained that these twelve passions were not the arbitrary classification system of one man, they were rather the ingredients provided for all men by God himself. "L'attraction," he wrote in 1829, "est le moteur de l'homme, elle est l'agent que Dieu emploie pour mouvoir l'univers et l'homme; on ne pouvait donc étudier l'homme, l'univers et Dieu, qu' en étudiant l'attraction dans son entier, en passionnel comme en matériel."²⁰⁶

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Fourier, Traité de l'association, I, p. 11.

206

Fourier, Le Nouveau monde industriel, p. 31. "C'est l'ordonnance," he wrote in 1822, "que Dieu a établie parmi les choses créées,..." Traité de l'association, I, p. 423.

Fourier believed that for more than three thousand years the study of, and search for, unity in the universe had neglected to comprehend the obvious natural links between man, universe and God. The diverse body of passions in each individual was God's way of extending his rule to the world of men, just as he had created and extended his rule to the natural world by laws of attraction. "Le problème était," according to Fourier, "de découvrir la voie d'application." 207 Here was where he proposed his new science of man. The harmony between the elements in the natural world indicated that such could happen elsewhere as well. "L'équilibre des passions doit se fonder sur la même règle, s'il y a unité dans l'univers matériel et passionnel, et cette règle doit être appliquée à la branche fondamentale de l'état socialitaire,..." 208 As with his contemporaries, Fourier sought to find a theory of stability and order amid the chaotic world of the early nineteenth century. Although his doctrine was taken from nature and God, it was expressed by a range of terminology taken from the world of contemporary science and mathematics. In fact, the great figures of science were

207

Fourier, Traité de l'association, I, p. ix.

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Ibid., p. lix.

still being invoked by lesser men to support their own plans.

"Je reconnus bientôt que les lois de l'attraction passionnée étaient en tout point conformes à celles de l'attraction matérielle, expliquées par Newton et Leibnitz; et qu'il y avait UNITÉ DU SYSTÈME DE MOUVEMENT POUR LE MONDE MATÉRIEL

209

ET SPIRITUEL." Fourier, in fact, took an almost childish delight in comparing himself to the great minds of the age of science. "Newton, en démontrant que l'attraction matérielle a la propriété de régir l'univers en harmonie, donnait à présumer que l'Attraction passionnelle dont on n'a jamais fait aucune étude, couvrait aussi quelque grand mystère. C'est de quoi l'on va prendre connaissance dans la théorie de l'Association, qui n'est autre chose que le calcul analytique et synthétique de l'Attraction passionnelle." 210

Thus, Charles Fourier reserved credit for himself in discovering the laws of passionate attraction in the universe. The constant references to the scientific minds of past ages in his works is certainly interesting also in that Fourier was essentially anti-intellectual.

209

Fourier, Théorie des quatre mouvements, p. 21.

210

Fourier, Traité de l'association, I, p. 66.

The novelty of his theory is the notion that from apparent disunity came harmony, by way of passionate attraction. Thus, Fourier asserted that: "L'art d'associer se fonde sur l'emploi des discordes autant que des accords."²¹¹ In the existing social order, he concluded that the origin of the chaotic system of social relations was due to arbitrary restrictions placed upon the exercise of individual passions. Fourier therefore argued that the more passions were freed from the prohibitive fetters of civilization, the greater would be their tendency toward what he termed "Unitisme," or harmony with the world of God and nature. "L'Attraction passionné est l'impulsion donnée par la nature antérieurement à la réflexion, et persistante malgré l'opposition de la raison, du devoir, du préjugé, etc."²¹² Man, he wrote in 1822, "ought to develop and not correct nature."²¹³ He was only utilizing things as they were, Fourier asserted, and as they ought to be. One could not argue with nature and God.

211

Fourier, La Fausse Industrie, II, p. F 9. Fourier's works are frequently plagued with unusual and inconsistent numbering of pages.

212

Charles Fourier, Oeuvres complètes (Paris: Librairie de l'école socialiste, 1841-48), VI, p. 47.

213

Fourier, Selections, p. 65.

My theory confines itself to utilising the passions now condemned, just as Nature has given them to us and without in any way changing them. That is the whole mystery, the whole secret of the calculus of passionate Attraction. There is no arguing there whether God was right or wrong in giving mankind these or those passions; the associative order avails itself of them without changing them, and as God has given them to us.²¹⁴

Thus, while Owen and Saint-Simon sought to achieve harmony for mankind by beginning their efforts with men, Fourier thought it necessary to begin with the individual man and the free exercise of his passions. "J'emploie ici l'expression de bonheur individuel d'ou naît le bonheur général qui ne peut se fonder que sur le contentement de chaque individu. Tant que cette condition n'est pas remplie, il n'existe point de bonheur général."²¹⁵ Every individual, he theorized, must be assured the right to develop himself to his fullest capacity. In his community of harmony, the phalanx, Fourier allowed the individual the opportunity to choose his work as he saw fit depending upon the individual passions of each member. Here was the only way mankind could attain harmony, or "Unitésisme." However,

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Ibid., p. 66.

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Fourier, Traité de l'association, I, p. 30.

the attainment of such a common goal as this required the proper conditions, which did not exist. Thus, Fourier described in detail the necessary environment to achieve unity. In 1822 he wrote:

A company will be collected consisting of from 1,500 to 1,600 persons of graduated degrees of fortune, age, character, of theoretical and practical knowledge; care will be taken to secure the greatest amount of variety possible, for the greater the number of variations either in the passions or the faculties of the members, the easier it will be to make them harmonise in a short space of time. ²¹⁶

Fourier's desire to allow the passions their natural freedom in each individual led him to criticize sharply what he disparagingly referred to as "civilisation." He used this term only as one of disdain to designate the existing system of isolated family interests in commerce, and he opposed civilization further because it attempted to prevent what was merely man's natural course. Under such circumstances, he concluded that: "Notre progrès est ²¹⁷ illusoire." The restrictions imposed upon individuals by civilization had created within mankind for too many years a feeling of hostility against such a social order. In the

216

Fourier, Selections, p. 139.

217

Charles Fourier, Publication des manuscrits de Charles Fourier (Paris: Librairie phalanstérienne, 1852), p. 23.

course of human history, civilization had created a tumultuous world because mankind had constantly acted contrary to the natural order of the universe, against the will of God and contrary to the nature of man himself. "Ma doctrine," proclaimed Fourier in 1835, "est la première, la seule qui s'appui sur des bases conformes au voeu et au système de la nature."²¹⁸

In response to the charge that he was being quite presumptuous in such claims, Fourier defended his discovery by arguing that it was the will of God entrusted to him. None of the other Utopian Socialists gave so much attention to having God on his side as did Charles Fourier. Humility was hardly a virtue among the early nineteenth century socialists either. In his first work, of 1808, Fourier explained:

I ALONE shall have confounded twenty centuries of political imbecility, and it is to me alone that present and future generations will owe the initiative of their boundless happiness. Before me, mankind lost several

218

Fourier, La Fausse Industrie, I, p. 355. "Ah! it is not the first time that God has made use of the humble to abase the proud, and that he has chosen the most obscure man to bring to the world the most important message." Selections (1808), p. 11.

thousand years by fighting madly against Nature; I am the first who has bowed before her, by studying attraction, the organ of her decrees; she has deigned to smile upon the only mortal who has offered incense at her shrine; she has delivered up all her treasure to me. 219

The task of understanding Fourier's ideas is certainly not made any easier by his vocabulary. He used a vast array of terms to express himself: "Harmonie," "harmonisme," "harmoniens," "Unitéisme," "Attraction," "sociétaire," "garantéisme," "phalange," "phalanstère," "Séries," and, although he did not invent it, he used "l'individualisme." 220 Fourier's works constitute an etymologist's nightmare. In addition to the obvious semantic problems cited above, Fourier confounds his reader further with what he called "pivotal" signs--such as an "X" or a horizontal "K." An explanation of Fourier's theories, and his views on related subjects, is therefore a formidable task.

Underlying all of Fourier's writings is the desire to create the proper environment in which the passions can freely operate. The passions tended toward unity of some kind. "Le secret de l'unité d'intérêts est donc dans

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Fourier, Selections, p. 14.

220

A. E. Bestor, "The Evolution of the Socialist Vocabulary," Journal of the History of Ideas, IX, 3 (June, 1948), p. 283ff. See also Edouard Silberling (ed.), Dictionnaire de Sociologie phalanstérienne. Guide des Œuvres complètes de Charles Fourier, Paris: M. Rivière, 1911. The term "phalanstère" has been used for Fourier's community in this study.

l'Association."²²¹ Fourier admitted that the first nine passions--the five sensory and four "affective" ones--were generally known to civilization. It was the last three which constituted his innovation: cabalist, composite and "butterfly." The normal operation of these passions would lead to "Unitéisme." Each individual saw his own good and well-being in the similar gaining of happiness for his fellows. Thus, Fourier was led to conclude that only in a completely new social environment could the individual achieve real happiness. Individual self-realization under the existing system was impossible. Fourier's alternative was a social order designed for just that purpose, the phalanstère inhabited by different classes of "sociétaires."

In physical structure the phalanstère resembled a giant hotel.²²² Like the communities desired by Robert Owen, it too was a social order geared toward agriculture and small local production. Fourier's provincial background and orientation led him to maintain automatically that:

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Fourier, Traité de l'association, I, p. 133.

222

Fourier, Œuvres complètes, I, illustration opposite p. ii.

"agricultural production must, therefore, be the pivot of all production, as it is also the natural vocation of man."²²³ Seven-eighths of the "sociétaires" were either cultivators or manufacturers, while only the remaining one-eighth was composed of capitalists, scholars and those engaged in the arts.²²⁴ "The associative order looks upon manufactures only as the complement of agriculture, a means of diversion in the passionnal calms which will intervene during the long winter vacation and the equatorial rains."²²⁵ *equinoctial?* Fourier's agricultural community was not to be egalitarian one; unity within the community and equality were not synonymous. "L'équilibre passionnel est un ordre dans lequel chacun trouve un dédommagement réel et suffisant à l'indemniser des inégalités de fortune et de facultés."²²⁶ The phalanstère was open to everyone, even wealthy capitalists.

223
Fourier, Selections, p. 27.

224
Ibid., p. 142.

225
Ibid., p. 118.

226
Fourier, Traité de l'association, II, p. 562.

Because the French were agriculturally inclined, and the Owenites were atheists, Fourier felt: "C'est donc le Français qui paraît la nation la plus faite pour l'Harmonie sociétaire."²²⁷ In the handling of the normal economic intercourse both within the phalanstère and between them, he thought in terms of direct individual exchange, or "labour-coupons." Thus, the system of wages was replaced in association by each individual member receiving shares of stock proportional to the value of his initial investment. Every individual could also realize a profit on his initial investment during the course of the year. The investment interest rate depended upon shares, and varied from five to forty per cent.²²⁸ Fourier worked out an arrangement based upon three standards of value: labor, capital and talent. He divided profits with five-twelfths going for labor, four twelfths to capital, and three-twelfths to talent.²²⁹ He explained his theory of organized diversity in 1822.

227

Ibid., p. 470.

228

Ibid., pp. 25-26, 29.

229

Ibid., p. 78.

It would not, then, suffice to combine a certain number of people; it is necessary, besides, to assort them according to graduated inequalities of every property, and to extend the scale of inequality in proportion to the degree of the experiment; that is to say, that in the high degree the scale of gradation should range from the man without any means, grade 0, up to the man owning a hundred millions; while in the low degree a scale of small graduated fortunes, 0 to 20,000 francs of capital, will be sufficient.²³⁰

To Saint-Simon's idea that "Man must work," Fourier would have added the word "pleasantly." One might enjoy his labor more if he were made to see how he could profit from it. "Le grande problème en mécanique sociale est d'élever le peuple au rôle de propriétaire."²³¹ Here is the germ of an idea which is most interesting, a community of harmony based upon recognition of each individual's right to property. Good economic relations between individuals in association created and fostered good social relations. Thus, Fourier saw the necessity of changing the

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Fourier, Selections, p. 125.

231

Fourier, La fausse industrie, I, p. 413. Fourier's emphasis upon elevating the people to the role of land owner stemmed in part from his own hatred of commercialism, and with this hatred came anti-Semitism--"des légions de Juifs, tous parasites." Le Nouveau monde, p. 499; or Selections, p. 96. Talmon asserts that much of Fourier's dislike of the Saint-Simonians came from their Jewish members, see Talmon, op. cit., pp. 77-78.

economic conditions as a prerequisite to changing society. Every individual had to fulfill in association what he termed "Seven Conditions of Associative Labor." For the individual member, these seven were:

1. That every laborer be a partner, remunerated by dividends and not by wages.
2. That every one, man, woman, or child be remunerated in proportion to the three faculties, capital, labor and talent.
3. That the industrial sessions be varied about eight times a day, it being impossible to sustain enthusiasm longer than an hour and a half or two hours in the exercise of agricultural or manufacturing labor.
4. That they be carried on by bands of friends, united spontaneously, interested and stimulated by very active rivalries.
5. That the workshops and husbandry offer the laborer the allurements of elegance and cleanliness.
6. That the division of labor be carried to the last degree, so that each sex and age may devote itself to duties that are suited to it.
7. That in this distribution, each one, man, woman, or child, be in full enjoyment of the right to labor or the right to engage in such branch of labor as they may please to select, provided they give proof of integrity and stability.²³²

Under normal conditions, shares in the profits of the community were evaluated on the importance of the task, and varied inversely with the pleasantness of the work involved.

232

Fourier, "Seven Conditions of Associative Labor," quoted in Fried and Sanders (eds.), Socialist Thought, A Documentary History, pp. 148-49.

Each individual was important, and deserved to be dealt with as an individual. "L'Harmonie ne peut pas connaître de communauté ni rétribution collective à des sociétés familiales ou conjugales; elle est obligée de traiter avec chacun individuellement, même avec les enfans au-dessus de 4 1/2 ans, et de répartir à chacun en raison des trois facultés, travail, capital, et talent."²³³ According to Fourier, equality was "political poison."²³⁴ Only by catering to the natural passions of the individual, and then building a social order compatible with them, could real harmony be attained.

For all of the early nineteenth century socialists the principal source of discord in society was "la pauvreté." An associative system was Fourier's solution to this problem because it would protect each individual member from not only physical poverty itself, but the fear of poverty too. Even in a stage of semi-association, he predicted that there would be "a solidarity or comparative assurance among the

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Fourier, Traité de l'association, II, p. 22.

234

Fourier, Selections, p. 127.

families extending over the entire mass, so that no individual may be excepted from the benefits of the guarantees."²³⁵ The transitional stage between civilization and association was termed "Guaranteeism." "The government of a Phalanx," Fourier assured his readers, "furnishes every group with all that is necessary to secure extreme neatness; but the wealthy members add to this according to their vanity and their generosity."²³⁶ The maintaining of individual property, interest on capital and the idea of hereditary rights indicate how opposed Fourier was to egalitarianism. "The associative régime is as incompatible with equality of fortune as with uniformity of character; it desires a progressive scale in every direction, the greatest variety in employments, and, above all, the union of extreme contacts, such as that of the man of opulence with one of no means, a fiery character with an apathetic one, youth with age, etc."²³⁷ Fourier thought

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Ibid., p. 135.

236

Ibid., p. 194.

237

Ibid., p. 127.

that each individual would find within his "series" or in a group cohesiveness, and he therefore deemed competition between such groups as healthful for each participant. Each associate exercised the spirit of "cabal" in this fashion constructively. He felt that group competition released certain passions which did not damage the relationship between individuals.

We must not persuade ourselves that in Harmony mankind are brothers and friends. It would be robbing life of its salt to cause the shades of opinion, contradictions, antipathies even, to disappear from it. But it must be observed that in the play of the series these disagreements operate only as regards the contact of group with group, and not individual with individual. It is of little consequence that the groups be irreconcilable, provided there exist bonds of connection between their respective individuals.²³⁸

By the variety of his work in the association, each individual expressed himself to the best of his ability and was rewarded for it. Competition was, therefore, encouraged by Fourier between "series." Every individual was a member of a number of "series," about forty on the average, and Fourier thus concluded that "nobody is interested in making one of them prevail over the others."²³⁹

238

Ibid., p. 159.

239

Ibid., p. 182.

1. The greater the number of Series frequented, the greater is the interest of the individual belonging to so many Series, not to sacrifice them all to a single one, and to uphold the interests of 40 companies that he cherishes, against the pretensions of each one of them.

2. The shorter and rarer the sessions, the greater facility does the individual possess of enrolling himself in a large number of Series, whose influence would cease to be balanced, if any of them, by long and frequent meetings, should absorb the time and solicitude of the members, and arouse an exclusive affection.

This mechanism, as regards distribution, possesses the inestimable properties:

Of absorbing individual cupidity in the collective interests of a Series, and of absorbing the collective pretensions of each Series in the individual interests which each member has in a host of other Series.²⁴⁰

Fourier sought to assure the independence of the individual while providing at the same time a means whereby this independence did not lead to discord, but to harmony. If man would but follow his passions, Fourier predicted a new life for every individual. God, he added, had in fact so made man with all of his passions that every person was "un être fait pour l'Harmonie et pour toutes les sortes d'association."²⁴¹ Thus, not only was service to the phalanstère a service to God, but each harmonian would then be able to understand the real essence of God which

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Ibid., pp. 182-83.

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Fourier, Traité de l'association, II, p. 183.

had eluded philosophers for centuries. He would now be able to comprehend how God, the universe and man were all bound together. ²⁴² So it was that from the free exercise of the individual passions came the thirteenth passion, "Unitéisme." Nothing delighted Fourier more than having the opportunity to elaborate upon some point in his doctrine. In 1823 he used scientific jargon to explain his theory.

L'Association opère sur les passions, comme l'arithmétique sur les quantités numériques. On dispose les nombres en série de groupes ou masses échelonnées, dont le terme moyen multiplié lui-même se trouve en balance avec le multiple des deux extrêmes. Ainsi, dans une série de groupes, et dans chacun des ses groupes, les deux foyers extrêmes, la spéculative dite cabaliste, et la romantique dite composite, se trouvent multipliées par elles-mêmes, agissant combinément sur chaque groupe et chaque individu; pris elles sont tenues en balance, préservées de l'exces, par l'alternante, passion moyenne multipliée elle-même, agissant deux fois en début et fin de chaque séance, et faisant contre-poids aux deux foyers extrêmes, par les deux transitions qu'elle leur ménage. Ce mécanisme est conforme à celui d'une série géométrique, où le multiple des moyens termes est en balance avec les deux extrêmes; et quant au mécanisme des proportions, son analogie se trouve dans les séries mesurées, qui sont d'ordre supérieur aux séries communes. ²⁴³

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Ibid., I, p. 418.

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Charles Fourier, Sommaire du traité de l'association domestique-agricole, ou attraction industrielle (Paris: Bossange, 1823), p. 1410.

How does one create and maintain the maximum amount of individual freedom--the free expression of one's passional nature--in a social order? This is the question Fourier grappled with. With complete confidence in his system, Fourier's answer was association in the phalanstère. Here was an elaborate system of classes and groups, of divisions based on wealth and rights for some elements, and a strong devotion to a hierarchical form of social organization. Fourier's opposition to "civilisation" stemmed from his desire for individual freedom, but not toward democracy and republicanism. However, in the emphasis he gave to the rights of the individual, Fourier provided food for thought in a later development in European socialism, anarchism. He certainly gave to "civilisation" the idea that it was doomed, and that it would ultimately have to give way to a new social order--his.

With all his talent for inventing new terms, Fourier used "l'individualisme" only once. Perhaps this was due to the fact that his arch-rivals, the Saint-Simonians, made so much use of it. He employed other terms--"egoism," "individual interest" and "rights of the individual." He is particularly important because of this latter idea.

Thus, while Owen and Saint-Simon defended the rights of humanity, Fourier thought first of the individual. In his Theory of the Four Movements (1808), Fourier ascribed to "civilisation," in its commercial relations, a mutual conflict of interests between the paired opposites, collective and individual interests.

Industry offers a subversion far more striking; this is the opposition of the two kinds of interest, collective and individual. Every person engaged in an industry is at war with the mass, and malevolent toward it from personal interest. A physician wishes his fellow-citizens a good, genuine case of fevers, and an attorney good lawsuits in every family. An architect has need of a good conflagration which should reduce a quarter of the city to ashes, and a glazier desires a good hail-storm which should break all the panes of glass. A tailor, a shoemaker, wishes the public to use only poorly-dyed stuffs and shoes made of bad leather, so that a triple amount may be consumed--for the benefit of trade; that is their refrain. A court of justice regards it opportune that France continues to commit a hundred and twenty thousand crimes and actionable offences, that number being necessary to maintain the criminal courts. It is thus that in civilised industry every individual is in intentional war against the mass; necessary result of anti-associative industry or an inverted world. We shall see this absurdity disappear in the associative régime, where each individual will find his advantage only in that of the mass.²⁴⁴

Fourier maintained that "civilisation" resulted in inefficiency and enforced obsolescence, or the rule of

"chacuns contre le tout." In 1822 he again stressed that civilization perpetuated "l'intérêt individuel en contradiction avec le collectif."²⁴⁵ In the course of discussing this problem, Fourier explained his views further by writing in part:

7. Conflicting enterprises: civilised rivalries are malevolent, not emulative; a manufacturer strives to crush his competitor: the workmen are the respective opposing legions.

Nothing of this unsocial spirit in the Series, each one of which is interested in the success of the others, and which undertake only such labour, whether in the field or in the factory, as is guaranteed a market.

8. Opposition of the two kinds of interest, individual and collective, as in the destruction of forests, the game, fisheries, and the debasement of climatic conditions.

Opposite effect of the Series: general agreement for the maintenance of the sources of wealth, and the restoration of climatic conditions in the integral composite manner.²⁴⁶

The phalanstère, with its numerous provisions for the free exercise of individual passions, was the means by which Fourier intended to absorb "des antipathies individuelles,"²⁴⁷ dans les affinités collectives." Only association could

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Fourier, Traité de l'association, I, p. xxxvi.

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Fourier, Selections (1822), pp. 122-23.

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Fourier, Le Nouveau monde industriel, p. 64.

correctly remedy these problems, "civilisation" could not. Association would also, he predicted, have the positive effects of:

1. D'identifier l'intérêt individuel avec le collectif, de telle manière que l'individu ne puisse trouver son bénéfice que dans les opérations profitables à la masse entière.
2. De classer l'intérêt collectif en boussole de l'individuel, de manière que l'ambitieux ne tende qu'à l'intérêt collectif, devenu gouvernail de l'intérêt individuel.²⁴⁸

Fourier sincerely believed that his three-fold idea of rewards for achievement and effort--labor, capital and talent--would serve to promote all of the creative energies of each individual toward the desired goal of harmony in association. In another attempt to explain how his system would reconcile the differences between "l'intérêt collectif avec l'intérêt individuel," he stated in 1823 that he had four means in mind. Two were means "d'affection" and two were "de justice."

- A.1 L'absorption des rivalités individuelles dans les les affinités collectives, effet expliqué dans tout le cours du 2^e tome [Traité de l'association].
- A.2 Le ralliement des classes extrêmes et antipathiques.
- J.1 La balance des lots d'industrie et des lots de capitaux, dans le répartition en raison direct des masses et inverse des distances.
- J.2 La balance de cupidité et de mérite en contre-poids des prétentions extrêmes aux moyennes.²⁴⁹

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Fourier, Traité de l'association, II, p. 124.

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Fourier, Sommaire, p. 1350.

Charles Fourier was confident that he alone had solved the problem of individual freedom for all time. He had discovered the way to achieve harmony from apparent diversity. The mechanism was remuneration based upon labor, capital and talent. It had the capacity: "D'absorber la cupidité individuelle dans les intérêts collectifs de chaque série et de la phalange entière, et d'absorber les prétentions collectives de chaque série, par les intérêts individuels de chaque sectaire dans un foule d'autres séries." ²⁵⁰ The pitfalls of individual interests in "civilisation" lead ²⁵¹ "us only to evil, if we yield to them individually." Under his program of association, Fourier announced, there would not be any isolated groups or individuals. Therefore he proudly concluded that "as soon as the number of associates has reached 1600, the natural impulses, termed attractions, tend to form series of contrasting groups, in which everything incites to industry, become attractive, and to virtue, become lucrative." ²⁵² Thus, by the very

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Fourier, Le Nouveau monde industriel, p. 370.

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Fourier, Selections, p. 55.

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Ibid.

careful definition of terms, the isolated individual was a phenomenon of "civilisation" only.

Fourier did not use the term individualism for the first, and last, time until 1835. It was used then almost as though but a passing reference. In the second volume of this two volume work, he did not use the term again. "Quant à la concordance de l'esprit sociétaire et de l'individualisme, elle [harmony] ne peut s'établir que par le travail en courtes séances, qui, engageant l'individu dans une trentaine de fonctions et de groupes, fait naître pour lui des intérêts nombreux et gradués, absorbant l'égoïsme dans une masse d'affections corporatives." ²⁵³

Perhaps the reason for his reluctance to use the term was that like his colleagues in early nineteenth century socialism, he too had a decided preference for those words which he himself had created to explain his own system. To vary terminology in midstream, and to borrow words from a rival sect at that, would have broken a prime ingredient in Utopian Socialism, to see stability and order in semantic consistency.

Charles Fourier's works exhibit the rather strange workings of an unbalanced mind, however pleasantly he may have expressed himself. There is a great deal in his work that is rather old--the idea of a community of limited numbers, about 1600, is reminiscent of older utopians. His economic theories echo the Physiocrats of the eighteenth century. However, there is much in Fourier's writing that is new--the idea that the shares would be guaranteed by the community itself against losses of any kind calls to mind the Federal Reserve System. The emphasis given to the individual in his various work projects and the necessity of diversity in labor has many implications for the modern day--everything from the coffee "break" to the company bowling team. Unfortunately, there is a great deal in his writing that is drawn from his all too active imagination--his fantastic scheme for the melting of the poles by the aurora borealis, the sea turning into a pleasant lemonade solution and a human life span of nearly one hundred and forty-four years. In his desire to create an association which would be in harmony with God, nature and man, Fourier's fertile mind wandered over a variety of topics about which he knew nothing.

Throughout his works, there was always an importance given to the role of the individual. This, in fact, is what makes Charles Fourier a leading figure in the history of Utopian Socialism. His plan for association started with the individual and built upon this basis, while others started from the standpoint of society and incorporated the individual into their planning from above. Charles Fourier allowed the individual to have free will, which Owen denied.²⁵⁴ He joined with Saint-Simon in opposing equality. Both of these French Utopian Socialists provided for a guaranteed minimum standard of living for every individual, but Fourier went further than Saint-Simon and established opportunities for labor, capital and talent. Every individual did have the opportunity to be rewarded by his colleagues for his efforts. Fourier's doctrine of individual freedom led him to open the door of individual rights for woman--"L'extension des privilèges des femmes est le principe général de tous progrès social."²⁵⁵ He has been attacked for his belief in feminine liberties on the basis that they encouraged "free love" and the breakdown of morality; however, what such

254

Fourier, Selections, pp. 127-28. Other points of difference between Fourier and Owen, from the former's point of view, include: Owen had too many persons, he stressed "equality of fortune" between persons, and English reformers failed to give primary attention to agriculture.

255 Fourier, Théorie des quatre mouvements, p. 180.

critics fail to point out is that he similarly favored individual liberty for children, and for the same reason--the natural operation of his "law" of passional attraction.

Like Saint-Simon, Fourier developed a rudimentary philosophy of history. He regarded mankind as moving through four major phases of history, and thirty-two subdivisions which he called "periods."²⁵⁶ In the course of history's movement from the Garden of Eden to Harmony, Fourier had history reaching its apogee in "transforment le globe en paradis terrestre." He did not, like Karl Marx, stop history conveniently at this point. History not only moved upward to Harmony, but it descended from its heights into "Chaos."²⁵⁷ The consistency in history was the role of the human passions in every individual. The goal of so many philosophers, Fourier reasoned, the maintenance of "civilisation" was for him therefore a shibboleth devoid of any allegiance. In civilization the interests of the individual and the community were always divergent. By comparison, in the combined order each individual would have no superior--either singly or in

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Fourier, Oeuvres complètes (1808), I, p. 52.

257

Fourier, Sommaire (1823), p. 1414.

groups--that would use coercion in complete disregard of human passions. Fourier automatically assumed that liberty for the individual, that is to act in accordance with the law of passional attraction, would lead to unity under the right conditions.

For Charles Fourier, there was indeed an ideal social order laid up in heaven, the only problem was how to discover and communicate it. Once he alone had made the discovery, there only remained the task of presenting it-- Fourier regarded himself as the Christopher Columbus of the social world. Various interests in "civilisation," a term of constant disdain in his works, steadfastly refused to accept his theory even though it was drawn from God and nature.

Thus, in the final analysis, Fourier was an important figure in early nineteenth century Western European socialism. Unlike so many figures in this movement, Fourier began his program with the individual. In this respect, he contributed a great deal toward attempting to define the role of the individual in a social order devoted to harmony by association. With his colleagues in utopianism, he too rejected the use of violence. He preferred a system of public

education to reorient man to his new environment. Therefore individual interests and egoism, problems which so troubled the Utopian Socialists, were the results of "civilisation," or social disturbances produced by frustrating limitations placed on the twelve passions. Yet, by the very notion of primacy which he gave to the individual, despite his own conservatism and pessimism, Fourier contributed to another nineteenth century social alternative, anarchism.

CHAPTER V

PIERRE JOSEPH PROUDHON

Of all of the Utopian Socialists examined in this study, Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-65) was the only one who came from that element in society which Saint-Simon termed "la classe la plus nombreuse et la plus pauvre." In fact, none of his predecessors ever identified themselves with the proletariat as did Proudhon: "We who belong to the proletarian class: property excommunicates us!"²⁵⁸ Throughout his life and in his written works, Proudhon took a great deal of pride in his humble origins. For him, misery and poverty were not intellectual abstractions created in the mind by middle-class or well-to-do savants, but very real social ills with which he was personally familiar. Proudhon wrote voluminously on a variety of subjects between 1837 and his death in 1865, however his principal concern was with the role of the individual, and the relationship between the individual and society in economic enterprise.²⁵⁹ In his

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Pierre Joseph Proudhon, What Is Property Or An Inquiry Into The Principle Of Right And Of Government (New York: Humboldt Publishing Co., 18??), p. 90. Hereafter cited as Property.

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Only Proudhon's writings to 1851 have been used for this study; later works include: Of Justice in the Revolution and the Church (1858), War and Peace (1861), The Federative Principle (1863) and The Political Capacity of the Working-Classes, published posthumously.

writings, Proudhon--like Fourier from rural Besançon--never divorced himself from his own experiences, and thus one finds that his individuals mirrored the French countryside. "Agricultural labor, resting on this basis, appears in its natural dignity. Of all occupations it is the most noble, the most healthful, from the point of view of morals and health, and as intellectual exercise, the most encyclo-
 260 paedic." In this view on the virtue of agricultural labor, Proudhon was in complete agreement with his fellow Utopian Socialists, except for Saint-Simon. Proudhon wrote in 1840: "Likewise the land is indispensable to our existence,--consequently a common thing, consequently insusceptible of appropriation; but land is much scarcer than the other elements, therefore its use must be regulated, not for the profit of a few, but in the interest
 261 and for the security of all." The individual, as described in Proudhon's works, was always a man close to the soil.

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Pierre Joseph Proudhon, General Idea Of The Revolution In The Nineteenth Century (London: Freedom Press, 1923), p. 215. This was originally published in 1851.

261

Proudhon, Property (1840), p. 92.

Proudhon virtually educated himself, particularly while he worked as an apprentice printer. It was in his normal day to day task of setting type that he became inordinately well-read. He was extremely interested in many subjects, and his later use of frequent quotations from the Bible and from classical writers display his erudition. In fact, his first literary efforts, 1837-39, were treatises on grammar and religion.²⁶²

However, it was the publication of Property in 1840 which gained recognition for Proudhon in the field of social criticism. His unequivocal answer to the title of the book, What Is Property?, proved immediately popular--²⁶³ "property is theft." Proudhon then explained to his reader what he meant: "This proposition which seems to you blasphemous--property is robbery--would, if our prejudices allowed us to consider it, be recognized as the lightning rod to shield us from the coming thunderbolt; but too many interests stand in the way."²⁶⁴ Claims made by some people

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D. W. Brogan, Proudhon (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1934), p. 24; or see the analysis by G. D. H. Cole, A History of Socialist Thought, I, pp. 201-18.

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Proudhon, Property, p. 11.

264

Ibid., p. 12.

in their own interests to the exclusive right of property was, for Proudhon, the origin of a scourge which had plagued man's entire history. "The right of property was the origin of evil on the earth, the first link in the long chain of crimes and misfortunes which the human race has endured since its birth."²⁶⁵ He believed the best means to understand this institution was reason, and that reason would ultimately help develop the best kind of property relations for the good of the whole community. But what was "la propriété?" Proudhon insisted that: "Property is the Right of Increase claimed by the Proprietor over any thing which he has stamped as his own."²⁶⁶ Or again: "Property is the right to use and abuse."²⁶⁷ Thus, Property--as Proudhon defined and understood it--allowed those individuals who had not directly produced something to "rob" their fellows, the actual producers. Therefore, the former enjoyed the benefits of the latter's labor without actually having worked themselves in the production processes. Proudhon

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Ibid., p. 94.

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Ibid., p. 153.

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Ibid., p. 280.

joined the attack against the existing social order, and he too used certain terms to describe the "evil" social order which ought to be transformed. The assignment of specific ethical connotations or definitions to terms in order to distinguish between two diametrically opposed social systems was another development which Karl Marx inherited from the Utopian Socialists.

Proudhon believed it was the labor of the individual which gave value to a product, and hence he concluded that this physical labor ought to be suitably rewarded. With an emphasis on reason, he proceeded to determine the best system of economic relationships commensurate with his theory. Inquiries along these lines led him to become a reformer--"My life is a continual apostleship."²⁶⁸ He did not wish, however, to abolish individual ownership. Proudhon sought simply to reduce privilege in property relationships, and eventually he wanted to abolish all unearned incomes--such as interest. He was particularly incensed by the practice whereby capital improvements made upon a piece of land by the individual peasant did not

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Ibid., p. 452.

fulfill his obligations regarding rent. Capital improvements went exclusively to the property owner. Proudhon, therefore, distinguished between one who "possessed" the land and the one who "owned" it. For him, "possessor" and "owner" ought to describe the same person. Under the existing system of property relationships, however, the result was only gross injustice to the majority of the population. Proudhon reasoned further that the injustice in distribution was protected and perpetuated by the state. If one would remove this protective arm of the unjust system of personal property interests, society would operate smoothly and more efficiently. "Man," wrote Proudhon optimistically, "in his infancy, is neither criminal nor barbarous, but ignorant and inexperienced." ²⁶⁹ Society involved the realization of balance and social harmony, yet this ought not to be by enforced collectivization or communism. It ought instead to come from the natural balance of free individuals.

Proudhon elaborated on his ideas further in 1843 with his work On the Creation of Order in Humanity, or Principles

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Ibid., p. 253.

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of Political Organisation. Here he developed his theory of political economy in which there was indeed a science of production and distribution of wealth. Once again, he concluded that it was labor which determined value, and also that the utility of the product must likewise be considered.²⁷¹ As with his earlier statements in Property, Proudhon assured his readers that he envisioned change only by legal means.²⁷² By change, he meant going from the existing system of property exploitation to one of justice for all, which could be achieved without violence.

Many of Proudhon's ideas were given a more elaborate treatment in his two volume study of 1846, The System of Economic Contradictions, or the Philosophy of Misery.²⁷³ As the title indicates, he felt the real science of political

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Pierre Joseph Proudhon, in Oeuvres complètes de P.-J. Proudhon, nouvelle édition (Paris: C. Marpon et E. Flammarion, 1866-73), III.

271

Ibid., p. 291.

272

"Reader, calm yourself; I am no agent of discord, no firebrand of sedition." Proudhon, Property, p. 12.

273

Pierre Joseph Proudhon, Système des contradictions économiques, ou philosophie de la misère, Paris: Guillaumin, 1846.

economy was characterized by contradictions between opposites.

Proudhon recognized the contradiction between property and communism--a thesis and antithesis--from which he arrived at his own viable synthesis, mutualism or "mutualité."²⁷⁴

Proudhon criticized the intellectual rigidity and dogmatism of the early nineteenth century social reformers because they idealized too much. They were simply out of touch with the real desires of the poor for work, education, well-being and equality. He rebuked the system-making of the Owenites, Saint-Simonians and Fourierists--of the latter group he wrote: "The sublimity of the Fourierists' theories has made the elements of common sense unintelligible to them."²⁷⁵

Fourier's view of "association" seemed to Proudhon to be rather sterile, and furthermore it was opposed to his own concept of liberty. In 1851, Proudhon had the disciples of Fourier in mind when he wrote in part that:

Association is a bond which is naturally opposed to liberty, and to which nobody consents to submit, unless it furnishes sufficient indemnification; so that, to all utopian socialists, one may oppose this practical rule: Never, except in spite of himself,²⁷⁶ and because he cannot do otherwise, does man associate.

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Ibid., II, pp. 527-28

275

Proudhon, in Henry Cohen (ed.), Proudhon's Solution of the Social Problem (New York: Vanguard Press, 1927), p. 78.

276

Proudhon, General Idea Of The Revolution, p. 83.

Proudhon therefore sought to create a path between the equally offensive evils of capitalism and communism. A division of labor--not however the way it was employed by capitalists for the realization of profits from low wages--must be recognized as an important factor in production and distribution. Proudhon believed that a reconciliation of private and public interests could be achieved not by any plan of "association" drafted from some intellectual school, but by his program of liberty, justice and equality. Thus, he developed his doctrine of liberty for all, or "reciprocity."

During the disturbances of 1848-49, Proudhon had an opportunity to do more than merely criticize the government. He himself entered politics and developed his theories into a program of action intended to resolve the social ills of the day as he defined them. Proudhon created a bank for the people, a bank of exchange in which individuals agreed to join together voluntarily for the purpose of obtaining credit at cost. ²⁷⁷ Membership in the bank was open to

277

Cohen, Proudhon's Solution of the Social Problem, pp. 60-168. Or see any of the following pamphlets, all by Proudhon: Résumé de la question sociale Banque d'échange (1849), Idées révolutionnaires (1849), Banque du peuple, suivie du rapport de la Commission des délégués du Luxembourg (1849), and Organisation du crédit et de la circulation et solution du problème social (1849).

persons of all classes who needed to exchange their products, via the circulating of special bank notes, for items produced by others. Individuals agreed to pay back the principal plus a small amount of interest in order to cover the actual costs. However, before examining his system for achieving individual liberty, one should discuss Proudhon's use of the term individualism.

No other thinker treated thus far used the term more frequently than did Proudhon. Not until 1841, however, did he use "individualism" for the first time. To the Academy of Besançon, who had provided him with scholarship funds during the 1830's, he wrote in part: "On ne cesse de déclamer contre la soif de l'or et contre l'individualisme croissant du siècle, et puis, par le plus inconcevable contradiction on s'apprête à transformer toutes les espèces de propriétés en une seule: la propriété des écus." ²⁷⁸ In the same year, Proudhon later associated individualism with the evils of existing society. "I say that competition, isolation of interests, monopoly, privilege, accumulation

278

Pierre Joseph Proudhon, "A MM. les membres de l'Académie de Besançon," Correspondance (Paris: Librairie Internationale, 1875), I, p. 279.

of capital, exclusive enjoyment, subordination of functions, individual production ["l'individualisme dans la production"], the right of profit or increase, the exploitation of man by man, and, to sum up all these species under one hand, that PROPERTY is the principal cause of misery and crime." ²⁷⁹

Also in 1841, Proudhon responded to an article by a former associate of the Saint-Simonians Pierre Leroux and the latter's program of reform. "M. Leroux means, by this magnificent formula, that humanity is a single immense society, which, in its collective unity, represents the infinite; that every nation, every tribe, every commune, and every citizen are, in different degrees, fragments or finite members of the infinite society, the evil in which results solely from individualism and privilege,--in other words, from the subordination of the infinite to the finite; finally, that to attain humanity's end and aim; each part ²⁸⁰ has a right to an indefinitely progressive development."

In addition to repeating two pages later his earlier statement about the growing individualism of the age, Proudhon

279

Proudhon, "Second Memoir, A Letter To M. Blanqui," in Property (1 April 1841), pp. 314-15.

280

Ibid., p. 404.

termed certain persons with such privileges "individualized."

In 1846 Proudhon used the term "individualism" on seven different occasions in his System of Economic Contradictions. In all cases, individualism was employed, like Fourier, so that it was associated with the existing undesirable system.

"En vertu de principe de force collective, les travailleurs sont les égaux et les associés de leurs chefs; en sorte que dans le système du monopole même, la communauté d'action ramenant l'équilibre que l'individualisme parcellaire a troublé, la justice et la charité se confondent." ²⁸¹ In

keeping with his system of contradictions, Proudhon also paired the terms "l'individualisme" and "l'association" as opposites. ²⁸² He then added that: "Mais, appliquer la loi de division, c'est fomenter l'individualisme, c'est provoquer la dissolution de la communauté; il est impossible d'échapper à cette conséquence." ²⁸³ He went on to explain the whole problem further.

281

Proudhon, Système des contradictions économiques, I, p. 377.

282

Ibid., p. 395; or again, ibid., II, p. 511.

283

Ibid., II, p. 366; see also, pp. 361, 369.

Organisation du travail, division ou liberté du travail, séparation des industries, tous ces termes sont synonymes. Or la communauté périt par la séparation des industries; donc la communauté est essentiellement inorganique, elle ne peut exister, elle ne renaîtra sur la terre que par la désorganisation. Car comment concevoir une séparation des industries qui ne sépare pas les industriels, une division du travail qui ne divise pas les intérêts? Comment sans responsabilité, et par conséquent sans liberté individuelle, assurer l'efficacité du travail et la fidélité du rendement? --Le travail, dites-vous, sera divisé; le produit seul sera commun.--Cercle vicieux, pétition de principe, logomachie, absurdité. J'ai prouvé tout à l'heure que le travail ne pouvait être divisé sans que la consommation le fût, en autres termes que la loi de division impliquait une loi de répartition, et que cette répartition, procédant par doit et avoir, synonymes de tien et de mien, était destructive de la communauté. Aussi, l'individualisme existe fatalement au sein de la communauté, dans la distribution des produits et dans la division du travail: quoi qu'elle fasse, la communauté est condamnée à périr; elle n'a que le choix d'abdiquer entre les mains de la justice en résolvant le problème de la valeur, ou de créer, sous le couvert de la fraternité, le despotisme du nombre à la place du despotisme de la force.²⁸⁴

Proudhon thus maintained that with the division of work came uniformity, and with the arrival of uniformity liberty was lost forever. It was the oppressive theory of any uniformity under communism, or under state socialism, which aroused his indignation. On the other hand, the principle which ruled in existing society--"Each by himself, each for himself; God and LUCK for all"--was just as bad.²⁸⁵

284

Ibid., p. 368.

285

Proudhon, General Idea Of The Revolution, p. 62.

What Proudhon wanted was a social order in which each individual was assured the right of exercising his own "individuality."

L'individualité est pour moi le critérium de l'ordre social. Plus l'individualité est libre, indépendante, initiatrice, dans la société, plus la société est bonne; au contraire, plus l'individualité est subordonnée, absorbée, plus la société est mauvaise.

En deux mots, le problème social étant d'accorder la liberté de l'espèce avec la liberté de l'individu; ces deux libertés étant solidaires et inséparables, il en résulte pour moi, que comme nous pouvons beaucoup mieux juger de ce qui gêne l'individu que de ce qui convient à la société, c'est la liberté individuelle qui doit nous servir de drapeau et de règle.²⁸⁶

What Proudhon had in mind was allowing each individual to freely exert his individuality, or simply exercising those qualities which distinguished him from others. He searched for a system which one might call an escape from authoritarianism, as found under the rigid requirements of communism. Proudhon's solution was "positive anarchism," which appeared to him to avoid the entanglements of the planned communities of the Utopian Socialists. Unlike most of them, he wished to secure the liberty of the individual as the necessary prerequisite toward freeing humanity.

286

Proudhon, "A M. Robin," Correspondance (12 octobre 1851), IV, p. 375.

No thinker thus far had placed such importance upon the prerogatives of the individual, and certainly no writer developed such a flair for expressing his ideas in a manner that captured the imagination of European rebels.

Throughout much of his writing during the period, from 1840-1851, Proudhon used a negative method of presenting his ideas. However, on certain issues he was not only very insistent, almost to the point of dogmatism himself, but very uncompromising. This was very true regarding his theory on individual liberty. In Property he unequivocally announced his fundamental position.

Liberty is inviolable. I can neither sell nor alienate my liberty; every contract, every condition of a contract, which has in view the alienation or suspension of liberty, is null: the slave, when he plants his foot upon the soil of liberty, at that moment becomes a free man. When society seizes a malefactor and deprives him of his liberty, it is a case of legitimate defence: whoever violates the social compact by the commission of a crime declares himself a public enemy; in attacking the liberty of others, he compels them to take away his own. Liberty is the original condition of man; to renounce liberty is to renounce the nature of man: after that, how could we perform the acts of man?²⁸⁶

"Liberty," for Proudhon, was therefore the balancing of man's natural rights with his responsibilities as a

member of the community, or the principal of "reciprocity." The role of the individual was therefore to act as a free man, but a free man acting in a social environment with other similarly "free" individuals. This was what made his program of anarchy "positive." However, under the existing system, the individual was restricted in the exercise of his freedom. This situation led Proudhon to predict an inevitable revolution against, particularly, the economic structure of society and its oppressive institutions. Thus, Proudhon could conclude that liberty was the "sine qua non²⁸⁷ of existence." As he developed his theory of liberty, Proudhon demanded security and equality at the same time. "Give men liberty, enlighten their minds that they may know the meaning of their contracts, and you will see the most perfect equality in exchanges without regard to superiority of talent and knowledge; and you will admit that in commercial affairs, that is, in the sphere of society, the word superiority is void of sense."²⁸⁸ Proudhon reasoned

287

Ibid., p. 52.

288

Ibid., p. 314.

that liberty required the creation of an equality of conditions, that is an equality in which the differing rewards for effort and talent would simply not matter so long as there was no injustice. "Men, equal in the dignity of their persons and equal before the law should be equal in their conditions;..."²⁸⁹ Individual freedom meant each member of society ought to use his reason and other skills as he saw fit, without any interference from an institutional structure like the state. Proudhon explained that "liberty" involved more than equality, it was anarchy, variety and proportionality. He described what he had in mind in 1840.

Liberty is equality, because liberty exists only in society; and in the absence of equality there is no society.

Liberty is anarchy, because it does not admit the government of the will, but only the authority of the law; that is, of necessity.

Liberty is infinite variety, because it respects all wills within the limits of the law.

Liberty is proportionality, because it allows the utmost latitude to ~~the~~^{the} ambition for merit, and the emulation^s of glory.

What did Proudhon mean by equality of conditions?

Drawing upon his rural environment and heritage, he

289

Ibid., p. 292.

290

Ibid., pp. 281-82.

answered that what he intended was an equality "of means." Proudhon maintained separate family households as the basis of the community. Also of importance, he stated that each individual must be assured "the autonomy of the private reason." In his letter of 1841 he explained his position further.

1. That equality, consisting only in equality of conditions, and not in equality of comfort,--which it is the business of the laborers to achieve for themselves, when provided the equal means,--in no way violates justice and équité.
2. That law, resulting from the knowledge of facts, and consequently based upon necessity itself, never clashes with independence.
3. That individual independence, or the autonomy of the private reason, originating in the difference in talents and capacities, can exist without danger within the limits of the law.
4. That proportionality, being admitted only in the sphere of intelligence and sentiment, and not as regards material objects, may be observed without violating justice or social equality.²⁹¹

The wide variety of possibilities for interpreting liberty included an area of prime importance to Proudhon-- economics. If one accepted the thesis that individuals made freely arrived at contractual obligations, then it followed that liberty in commercial and other economic relations was necessary in order for workers to exchange their products.

291

Ibid., pp. 280-81. Italics in original.

"La liberté du commerce est nécessaire au développement économique, à la création du bien-être dans l'humanité, soit que l'on considère chaque société dans son unité nationale et comme faisant partie de la totalité de l'espèce, soit qu'on ne voie en elle qu'une agglomération d'individus libres, aussi maîtres de leurs biens que de leurs personnes."²⁹² Proudhon assumed that individual liberty must

be assured in the realm of labor itself--"Le travail est l'éducation de notre liberté."²⁹³ Freedom to work as one pleased was most important. Every individual producer, such as the peasant in rural France, ought to receive the fruits of his labor. "The organization of labor is the proper object of individual liberty. He who works hard, gains much."²⁹⁴ As long as each member of an individual peasant household produced from their family holdings, Proudhon supported a policy of inheritance. With freedom in all spheres of every individual's life, he predicted a

292

Proudhon, Systeme des contradictions économiques, II, p. 5.

293

Ibid., I, p. 173.

294

Cohen, Proudhon's Solution of the Social Problem, p. 48.

community in which a spirit of friendly co-operation and competition would animate all members for the good of the entire group. This idea was, of course, to be found in Fourier's system as well. With Saint-Simon and others, Proudhon believed that every individual must work and produce; only through individual production could each person achieve liberty and freedom. Proudhon was also extremely optimistic about the future under such circumstances. "Progress, in industry as in science, is unlimited; labor knows no bounds to its bold enterprises." 295 The natural inclination of everyone was to work, and by keeping the means to labor open to all equally there would only result a freely organized community of individuals. Labor, Proudhon theorized, would reconcile the heretofore unresolved problem of individual versus group interests. Proudhon's program sought to "satisfaire également aux intérêts sociaux et à la liberté individuelle." 296 In Property Proudhon elaborated on his idea of "l'égalité."

295

Ibid., p. 165. In 1846, Proudhon wrote in part: "... l'humanité est progressive; c'est là son trait distinctif, son caractère essentiel." Système des contradictions économiques, II, p. 6.

296

Proudhon, Système des contradictions économiques, II, pp. 102-03.

In so far as laborers are associated, they are equal; and it involves a contradiction to say that one should be paid more than another. For, as the product of one laborer can be paid for only in the product of another laborer, if the two products are unequal, the remainder-- or the difference between the greater and the smaller-- will not be acquired by society; and, therefore, not being exchanged, will not effect the equality of wages. There will result, it is true, in favor of the stronger laborer a natural inequality, but not a social inequality; no one having suffered by his strength and productive energy. In a word, society exchanges only equal products --that is, rewards no labor save that performed for her benefit; consequently, she pays all laborers equally: with what they produce outside of her sphere she has no more to do, than with the difference in their voices and their hair.

.....
 Shall the laborer who is capable of finishing his task in six hours have the right, on the ground of superior strength and activity, to usurp the task of the less skilful laborer, and thus rob him of his labor and bread? Who dares maintain such a proposition? He who finishes before the others may rest, if he chooses; he may devote himself to useful exercise and labors for the maintenance of his strength, and the culture of his mind, and the pleasure of his life. This he can do without injury to any one: but let him confine himself to services which affect him only. Vigor, genius, diligence, and all the personal advantages which result therefrom, are the work of Nature and, to a certain extent, of the individual; society awards them the esteem which they merit: but the wages which it pays them is measured, not by their power, but by their production. Now, the product of each is limited by the right of all.²⁹⁷

The equality produced by this system of direct labor exchange was important in leading to the last element in

his triad of liberty, equality and justice. For Proudhon, the attainment of "justice" was directly proportional to the realization of individual freedom from the state. In an attempt to explain what he meant, Proudhon wrote in 1840: "Sociability is the attraction felt by sentient beings for each other. Justice is this same attraction, accompanied²⁹⁸ by thought and knowledge." Then he commented further on the subject of justice. "What is it, then, to practice justice? It is to give equal wealth to each, on condition²⁹⁹ of equal labor. It is to act socially." Justice was not, therefore, a metaphysical abstraction as Plato had thought in the Republic, but rather a science which "will sooner or later put an end to social disorder, by teaching³⁰⁰ us our rights and duties." The problem of realizing justice was how to achieve a balance or harmony between the interests of the individual and those of the community. The recipe envisioned by Proudhon was his threefold plan of liberty, equality and justice. But, one must first tear down the old structure in order to build anew.

298

Ibid., p. 234.

299

Ibid.

300

Ibid., p. 254.

It is time that the public should know that, in philosophy, in politics, in theology, in history, negation is the preliminary requirement to affirmation. All progress begins by abolishing something; every reform rests upon denunciation of some abuse; each new idea is based upon the proved insufficiency of the old idea.... Thus, finally, I myself, having demonstrated afresh, under the eyes of my readers, the illegitimacy and powerlessness of government as a principle of order, will cause to arise from this negation a productive, affirmative order, which must lead to a new form of civilization.³⁰¹

The symbol of negation in Proudhon's system was the existing state, which by its very organization was contrary to the interests of the people. "The history of governments," he wrote in 1851, "is the martyrology of the proletariat."³⁰² For this father of European anarchism, the existing form of government and its vast institutional structure was but the oppressive arm of the rich and the privileged few. "Government" was always aligned against the wishes and desires of the most numerous and poorer classes. The state was therefore a destroyer of liberty, not its preserver or defender; it deserved only destruction. Government and society--in the latter case "la communauté"--were two entirely different things. Regardless of its form,

301

Proudhon, General Idea Of The Revolution, p. 101.

302

Ibid., p. 108.

"government" meant corruption: "There is not a monarchy nor a democracy that is free from it."³⁰³ Proudhon did not want authority and conformity from any regime, and certainly not from one based on the absurd concept of majority rule which only served to mask the particular interests of unscrupulous politicians. He was disenchanted with the democratic arguments expounded by liberals and state socialists. For Proudhon, sovereignty ought to reside in the individual, not with the masses. In this respect, he voiced a fear found in all of the Utopian Socialists before Louis Blanc. They were profoundly suspicious of giving power and leadership to the people who were unready for such a responsibility. The French Revolution proved many things to many people. After his failure to create a new order in 1848-49, Proudhon wrote bitterly against the continuation of a system contrary to science and labor--by which he, of course, meant his.

In place of a natural order, conceived in accordance with science and labor, we have a fictitious order, in the shadow of which have developed parasite interests, abnormal morals, monstrous ambitions, prejudices at variance with common sense, which today all claim to be legitimate, invoking a tradition of sixty years, and, being unwilling either to abdicate or to modify their demands, place themselves in an antagonistic attitude toward progress.³⁰⁴

303 ibid., p. 67.

304 ibid., p. 75.

The individual therefore joined in co-operating with other members of the community, but each retained his own identity and only by universal agreement, by contracts, did one carry on relations with his neighbors. Proudhon denied the right of the state to exact capital punishment. "The individual alone has the right to judge himself, and, if he thinks expiation would be good for him, to demand punishment. Justice is an act of conscience, essentially voluntary, as the conscience cannot be judged, condemned, or acquitted but by itself; all else is war, the rule of authority and barbarism, the abuse of force." ³⁰⁵ Every individual would thus recognize that his own reason would indicate to him what course of action was needed, if any, and "...it is our privilege to recognize them, our honor ³⁰⁶ to obey them."

Like his colleagues in the Utopian Socialist movement, Proudhon accepted the idea that man was a social animal and had to live in society in order to be himself. The question was: what is the best type of social environment in which man can realize his full potentiality? Proudhon recognized the

305

Ibid., p. 257.

306

Ibid., p. 221.

need by man for association with his fellows, however the term "association" had taken on such a variety of interpretations from numerous sources that it seemed to Proudhon to be contrary to "liberty." He opposed communism because it merely substituted communal property for individual property interests, and also because it required the enslavement of the strong to the inability and laziness of the weak. The "pious and stupid uniformity" which advocates of mandatory association demanded of the individual was not, he reasoned, any science of society, but rather "c'est l'annihilation!" In Property (1840), Proudhon delivered an angry denunciation of communism. It was the very negation of everything he desired for the individual.

Communism is oppression and slavery. Man is very willing to obey the law of duty, serve his country, and oblige his friends; but he wishes to labor as he pleases, where he pleases, and as much as he pleases. He wishes to dispose of his own time, to be governed only by necessity, to choose his friendships, his recreation, and his discipline; to act from judgment, not by command; to sacrifice himself through selfishness, not through servile obligation. Communism is essentially opposed to the free exercise of our faculties, to our noblest desires, to our deepest feelings. Any plan which could be devised for reconciling it with the demands of the individual reason and will would end only in changing the thing while preserving the name. Now, if we are honest truth-seekers, we shall avoid the disputes about words.

Thus, communism violates the sovereignty of the conscience, and equality; the first, by restricting spontaneity of mind and heart, and freedom of thought and action; the second, by placing labor and laziness, skill and stupidity, and even vice and virtue on an equality in point of comfort. For the rest, if property is impossible on account of the desire to accumulate, communism would soon become so through the desire to shirk.³⁰⁷

Freedom, Proudhon believed, meant for all individuals on the basis of sex, age and skill in labor. However, he was not a supporter of feminine equality, and refused to encourage the emancipation for women desired by Fourierists and others.³⁰⁸ The woman's place was in the home as wife and mother to her family. Again, the individual, as Proudhon envisioned him, was the man of rural family ties; the community was association of such families in a commune of such people for exchange purposes. Proudhon defended the necessity of competition, or contradictions, between individuals as a guarantee of individual freedom from the excessive collectivization of certain elements. The competition he wanted was the friendly bargaining or bartering so common in the village squares of provincial France. Like Fourier, Proudhon believed man needed the

307

Proudhon, Property, pp. 261-62.

308

Ibid., p. 246; or Correspondance, IV, p. 377.

unrestricted inter-play of competition in the market place of ideas, passions, capacities and various interests. Such constructive competition was necessary to establish value, and would advance true equality.³⁰⁹ From apparent disharmony would emerge a balance among interests and actual social order, which Proudhon reasoned was all but the logical development of liberty.³¹⁰ Unlike Robert Owen, Proudhon did not envision the world of competition withering away before a new moral world. Far from it, competition was the natural order of things; it provided the atmosphere in which each individual labored for his own good and that of his family. Competition was not inherently immoral, it was however when one individual or group had an unfair or unjust advantage over others. The role of the individual was, therefore, to exercise his natural rights and capacities as he saw fit.

Proudhon's effort to attain and secure the sovereignty of the individual led him to develop his own alternative for that "unproductive organism" the state. His solution was "mutuality" in the community, which would foster liberty, equality and justice. Proudhon wrote:

309

Proudhon, Systeme des contradictions économiques, I, p. 108.

310

Ibid., p. 235.

We already foresee that there should be a law of exchange, a theory of mutuality, a system of guarantees which determines the old forms of our civil and commercial societies, and gives satisfaction to all the conditions of efficiency, progress and justice which the critics have pointed out; a society no longer merely conventional, but real, which makes of the subdivision of real estate a scientific instrument; that will abolish the servitude of the machines, and may prevent the coming of a crisis; that makes of competition a benefit, and of monopoly a pledge of security for all; which by the strength of its principles, instead of making credit of capital and protection of the State, puts capital and the State to work; which by the sincerity of exchange, creates a real solidarity among the nations; which without forbidding individual initiative, without prohibiting domestic economy, continuously restores to society the wealth which is diverted by appropriation; which by the ebb and flow of capital, assures political and industrial equality of the citizenry, and, through a vast system of public education, secures the equality of functions and the equivalence of aptitudes, by continuously raising their level; which through justice, well-being and virtue, revives the human conscience, assures the harmony and the equality of the people; a society, in a word, which, being at the same time organization and transition, escapes what has taken place, guarantees everything and compels nothing.³¹¹

Thus, Proudhon developed his doctrine of "positive anarchism." In 1840 he defined the term: "Anarchy,--the absence of a master, of a sovereign,--such is the form of government to which we are every day approximating, and which our accustomed habit of taking man for our rule, and his will for law, leads us to regard as the height of disorder and the expression of chaos."³¹² Reason would create

311

Cohen, Proudhon's Solution of the Social Problem, pp. 58-59.

312

Proudhon, Property, p. 277.

a "positive" social order. "He [the laborer] communicates with his fellows through the mind, before he is united with them in heart; so that with him love is born of intelligence,"³¹³ Thus, "reason" in the system of Robert Owen and Pierre Joseph Proudhon led in opposite directions. The former subordinated liberty to association, the latter association to liberty. Yet, they both sought to create what was best for the individual man. Proudhon reasoned that every individual ought to be a member of a social contract, but the social contract he had in mind was one based on a contract of exchange. In 1851 he described his vision.

The Social Contract is the supreme act by which each citizen pledges to the association his love, his intelligence, his work, his services, his goods, in return for the affection, ideas, labor, products, services and goods of his fellows; the measure of the right of each being determined by the importance of his contributions, and the recovery that can be demanded in proportion to his deliveries.

Thus the social contract [sic] should include all citizens, with their interests and relations.--If a single man were excluded from the contract, if a single one of the interests upon which the members of the nation, intelligent, industrious, and sensible beings, are called upon to bargain, were omitted, the contract would be more or less relative or special, it would not be social.

The social contract should increase the well-being and liberty of every citizen.--If any one-sided conditions should slip in; if any part of the citizens should find themselves, by the contract, subordinated and exploited by the others, it would no longer be a contract; it would be a fraud, against which annulment might at any time be invoked justly.³¹⁴

Proudhon attempted to implement his theory of direct participation in the social contract by his effort to organize credit in his bank of exchange. This was one way to assure balance and harmony between individual and group interests. A true social contract not only preserved liberty, but provided the opportunity for labor and property. Then, property was no longer "theft" or "robbery," but beneficial to all. The individual peasant could now secure necessary capital in order to make necessary capital improvements, and yet not be robbed in the process by the capitalist bankers and unproductive property owners. "The Bank of Exchange, finally is the principle, the means and the measure of wealth, of universal and perpetual peace."³¹⁵ Under Proudhon's plan, there was a very clear separation of economic planning and operation from the hands of the state as it then existed. Individuals would be assisted

314

Proudhon, General Idea Of The Revolution, pp. 114-15.

315

Cohen, Proudhon's Solution of the Social Problem, p. 69.

by syndicates of production and distribution. Here was the revolution Proudhon wanted from capitalism to positive anarchism. The role of the individual was to be both the "possessor" and "owner."

We desire a peaceful revolution, but we want it to be prompt, decisive, complete. We desire that to this system of oppression and poverty should succeed a system of comfort and liberty; that for a constitution of political powers should be substituted an organization of economic forces; that the man and the citizen, instead of being attached to society by any bond of subordination and obedience, should be held only by free contract. Finally we desire that for the realization of our wishes, you should make use of the very institutions which we charge you to abolish, and the principles of law which you will have to complete, in such a way that the new society may appear as the spontaneous, natural and necessary development of the old, and that the Revolution, while abrogating the old order, would nevertheless be derived from it.³¹⁶

Proudhon wanted to foster liberty, equality and justice by guaranteeing a social environment that would be conducive to those ends. The role of the individual was therefore to achieve success in the means of mutuality, and through the equality of production to realize a new social science. Proudhon's individual was always a worker, there was no room for idleness as far as he was concerned. In this respect, that of demanding work from all members of society, he adhered to an argument voiced by all of the utopians.

316

Proudhon, General Idea Of The Revolution, p. 174.

Proudhon rejected, however, the charge of system-building.

"Nevertheless, I build no system. I ask an end to privilege: the abolition of slavery, equality of rights, and the reign of law. Justice, nothing else; that is the alpha and omega of my argument; to others I leave the business of governing the world."³¹⁷

Yet, he did indeed become the father of several movements in European socialism: anarchism, mutualism, syndicalism and federalism. However Proudhon ranks among the important early nineteenth century socialists because he regarded the individual as fundamental to any program.

"The people," he wrote in 1840, "is nothing but the organic union of wills that are individually free, that can and should voluntarily work together, but abdicate never."³¹⁸

Perhaps this passage quoted above provides a convenient summation of Proudhon's ideas. With all of the contradictions upon which he prided himself, Proudhon's ideas and writings prompted a great deal of intra-school divisions. Unlike either Owen or Fourier, Proudhon regarded the community as based not on "an artificial centralization" but on the individual and his family--"La famille est l'élément qui constitue le peuple;..."³¹⁹

³¹⁷ Proudhon, Property, p. 14.

³¹⁸ Ibid., p. 276.

³¹⁹ Proudhon, De la creation de l'ordre (1843), p. 154.

In the last analysis, P. J. Proudhon sought to secure the liberation of society by the liberation of the person. The ideal social order was dependent on individual freedom. "It is neither liberty subordinated to order, as in a constitutional monarchy, nor liberty imprisoned in order. It is liberty free from all its shackles, superstitions, prejudices, sophistries, usury, authority; it is reciprocal liberty and not limited liberty; liberty not the daughter but the mother of order." ³²⁰ No writer to date had demanded the rights of the individual, to express his individuality, so consistently and so passionately as did Proudhon. In his dramatic defense of individual self-expression one finds the seeds of thought behind those anarchists who later prompted the fierce debates in the First International. Also, there was a great deal of attraction to Proudhon not so much for what he said, but the way he said it--"Property is theft!" In the atmosphere of Europe about 1839-40, other alternatives were also capturing the imagination. Two of these programs were introduced by Frenchmen, Louis Blanc and Étienne Cabet. Like Proudhon, they too deplored the individualism of the day and sought to create alternatives, by state socialism or communism, for the individual worker.

CHAPTER VI

ÉTIENNE CABET

At about the same time Proudhon published Property, there appeared among the works of social criticism a romantic travelogue entitled Voyage To Icaria. The author of this 1839 work, Étienne Cabet, claimed his treatise discussed morality, philosophy, social and political economy, and these ideas were presented by the old literary device of a visitation to an ideal world on far away shores. ³²¹

Unlike any of the other writers examined in this study, Étienne Cabet (1788-1856) moved from the troubles of Europe in 1848 to the American frontier, and he never returned to France or Europe again. Cabet dreamed of founding a society based upon examples drawn from Icaria, but died in poverty himself in Missouri. Cabet's early education and career in law had been rather distinguished, until he decided to save mankind. From a very early age, he had enjoyed participating in the radicalism of the day. ³²² He was quite proud of his friendship with Buonaroti during the 1830's. For a brief period in the early years of the Orleanist

321

Étienne Cabet, Voyage en Icarie (cinquième édition), Paris: au Bureau du Populaire, 1848. Hereafter cited as Voyage.

322

Sylvester A. Piotrowski, Étienne Cabet And The Voyage En Icarie (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University Of America, 1935), pp. 1-63.

Monarchy, Cabet served Louis Philippe's government on the Island of Corsica. However, his libertarian activities soon not only cost him his job, but brought legal charges against him and, finally, forced Cabet to seek exile in England. ³²³

While living in England after 1834, he read the works of both Robert Owen and Sir Thomas More, particularly the Utopia of the latter. 'From its first lines this system impressed me so that I closed the book to collect my own thoughts in meditations that led me to the most complete conviction.' ³²⁴

As with other utopians, Cabet believed that reason and nature explained man's true desires, therefore man--individually and collectively--was not destined to be unhappy, and man was not evil. He explained in 1839.

Quand on considère les richesses dont la bienfaisante Nature a comblé le Genre humain, et l'Intelligence ou la Raison dont elle l' a gratifié pour lui servir d'instrument et de guide, il est impossible d'admettre que la destinée de l'homme soit d'être malheureux sur la Terre; et quand on considère qu'il est essentiellement sociable, par conséquent sympathique et affectueux, il n'est pas possible d'admettre qu'il soit naturellement méchant.

323

Ibid., p. 29.

324

Étienne Cabet, "Tout la Vérité au Peuple ou Réfutation d'un pamphlet calomniaire," (1842), as quoted in ibid., p. 69.

Cependant, dans tous les temps et dans les pays, l'Histoire ne nous montre que troubles et désordres, vices et crimes, guerres et révolutions, supplices et massacres, catastrophes et calamités.

Mais si ces vices et ces malheurs ne sont pas l'effet de la volonté de la Nature, il faut donc en chercher la cause ailleurs.³²⁵

Cabet, like other thinkers of the day, asked the very important question of what is the best organization for society? All of the thinkers examined in this study agreed in principle that society must be organized in some fashion. Cabet regarded the existence of inequality as the origin of man's problems, therefore the best system of social organization for him would be the one which secured and guaranteed equality. Cabet reasoned equality would inevitably triumph not only because of its origins in the history of man, but because it was "la loi de la Nature."

Pour nous, plus nous étudions l'Histoire, plus nous sommes profondément convaincu que l'Inégalité est la cause génératrice de la misère et de l'opulence, de tous les vices qui sortent de l'une et de l'autre, de la cupidité et de l'ambition, de la jalousie et de la haine, des discordes et des guerres de tous genres, en un mot de tout le mal dont sont accablés les individus et les Nations.³²⁶

325

Cabet, Voyage, p. i.

326

Ibid., p. ii.

The main theme developed throughout the descriptive and historical narrative provided by the various citizens of Icaria to their foreign guests was how equality--the enemy of individualism--brought untold blessings and prosperity to a community which had itself formerly lived under the old corrupt system then found in Europe. The evils of the old order were, in fact, found not only throughout Europe generally, but in France in particular.

After a successful revolution, led by the proletarian hero Icar, the islanders had undertaken a series of measures designed to bring them to peaceful equalitarianism in fifty years. They sought to organize their society so that each individual lived according to the concepts of democracy, equality and generally in the spirit of "la Fraternité." The transition to equality was accomplished by a systematic redistribution of land, taxes on inheritance and a progressive tax on all incomes. As with the other members of the early nineteenth century socialist movement, Cabet intended that the transition to a new order be peaceful. "Nous sommes sincèrement et intimement convaincu," wrote Cabet at the beginning of Voyage To Icaria, "que cette transformation ne peut s'opérer instantément, par l'effet de la violence et de la contrainte, et qu'elle ne peut être que successive,

progressive, par l'effet de la persuasion, de la conviction,
de l'opinion publique, de la volonté nationale."³²⁷ The
individuals of Icaria were good rationalists and men of
peace.

Voyage To Icaria illustrates an argument found in many
works sympathetic to egalitarianism. Competitive insti-
tutions in the social order made men unequal, not only in
the more immediate and obvious areas of physical goods but
even in such realms as intelligence and education. Equality
was the solution to social problems in all areas of life--it
was an all-in-one science, principle, doctrine, theory and
system.³²⁸ "L'associé doit donc avoir l'égalité sociale et
politique, comme l'Égalité naturelle?--Oui, l'égalité sociale
et politique doit être la confirmation et le perfectionnement
de l'Égalité naturelle."³²⁹

With emphasis placed upon equality, the Icarians went
about their everyday tasks. It is not difficult, therefore,
to see why Cabet was in the front ranks of the anti-indi-
vidualists. In response to a question raised against such

327

Ibid., p. v; or again, ibid., pp. 564-65.

328

Ibid., p. 567.

329

Ibid., p. 555. Italics in original.

communal living by one of the visitors, Cabet used the authority on Icarian history, Dinaros, to respond regarding the advantages of "la communauté." Dinaros informed his listeners that he preferred the communal system because it alone avoided the problems associated with individual property. "Individualism" was used in this case to mean the isolation of one against the many under a regime of laissez faire, laissez passer. Dinaros, to this extent, reflected the current mood.

La Communauté n'a pas les inconvénients de la Propriété; car elle fait disparaître l'intérêt particulier pour le confondre dans l'intérêt public, l'égoïsme pour lui substituer la fraternité, l'avarice pour la remplacer par la générosité, l'isolement, l'individualisme et le morcellement pour faire place à l'association ou au socialisme, au dévouement et à l'unité.³³⁰

Later in his narrative, while discussing the origins of true communal living in the life and teachings of Christ and his disciples, Cabet attacked the institutionalized structure of the Church for its deviation from primitive Christianity, and into individualism: "...mais ces Communautés ne comprenant que des hommes seulement ou que des femmes seulement, et en petit nombre, c'était toujours

330

Ibid., p. 397. Italics again in original.

une espece d'individualisme, et le Communisme s'est arrêté, au mépris du commandement de Jésus-Christ."³³¹ Thus, Cabet was led to conclude that communists were "les Disciples,³³² les Imitateurs, et les Continueurs de Jésus-Christ."

The role of the individual in Icaria involved, among other duties, the practicing of a primitive form of Christianity.

The Voyage To Icaria consists of an elaborate alternative to individualism. Cabet's attack on it was in all areas of life, politics, economics, social relations and religion. Although his plan of social organization might not have won the allegiance of European intellectuals in large numbers, the thoughts he provided by way of the attack on the existing system, contained a great deal of material for the opponents of the French bourgeoisie. What then was the role of the individual in Icaria, a social order humbly referred to by its author as "un seconde Terre promise, un Eden, un Elysée, un nouveau Paradis terrestre?"³³³ Cabet's solution was virtually

331

Ibid., p. 567.

332

Ibid. See also Etienne Cabet, La Vrai christianisme suivant Jésus-Christ, Paris: Bureau de Populaire, 1846.

333

Cabet, Voyage, p. 3.

to eliminate the individual, as understood in the present context, from playing a decisive role at all. He carried his egalitarianism to the point that, since all individuals received their distinctive characteristics of talent or ability from nature, society and reason ought to redress these differences among individuals which had led to past evils. In fact, Cabet felt the satisfaction which the individual received from knowledge that he was distinct in certain qualities, such as intelligence, would be enough; hence, he avoided the possibility of differences by denying they could exist. The natural rights defended by so many thinkers were not individual rights, but rather social rights. Cabet therefore failed to give the same importance as Proudhon to the family as a necessary institution. For Cabet, the individual had no role outside the community; it was indeed the latter which gave meaning to the former.

Je n'ai pas besoin de vous dire que le Peuple est SOVERAIN et que c'est à lui seul qu'appartient, avec la SOUVERAINETÉ, le pouvoir de rédiger ou de faire rédiger son contract social, sa constitution et ses lois; nous ne concevons même pas qu'un individu, ou une famille, ou une classe, puisse avoir l'absurde prétention d'être notre maître.³³⁴

334

Ibid., p. 37.

Icaria itself was a model of neatness, of complete and absolute cleanliness and was protected by an elaborate system of sanitation--one sometimes gets the feeling that a general European malodorousness created socialism! Cabet's community was built according to perfect social symmetry. Icaria was forced to impose certain limitations on its citizens, however everyone knew the principal purpose was to produce and insure communal wealth and happiness. Cabet assumed that "knowing" was the secret to social happiness. The mandatory allegiance owed to society by each individual, their obedience to their fellow associates, did not invoke hostility because the passage of time cemented the will of each to the will of all. As in the other communities of harmony, every individual was rigorously disciplined and labor served to promote social cohesion. All workers, from shoemaker to doctor, were equal socially. Distinctions did exist between members of society in such things as mode of dress, between age groups, by sex and positions. But in Icaria such distinctions did not make any difference because all had the opportunity to obtain the same things and to serve the group as best they could. The Icarians were allowed some "free" time for their own individual enjoyment; however, the majority of the time, nine

of the ten days, was taken up with communal service. There was also a period of silence during the day in order that each individual Icarian might have time for self-reflection and meditation. Yet, this was counter-acted by prescribed periods of public festivities. Cabet placed the Icarian under complete regimentation by the community. Even his intellectual life was regulated by the periodic burning of undesirable books. Universal education did take into consideration certain variations in intellectual ability, but again Cabet did not envision that any person who was trained rationally would attempt to subvert the law of nature, equality. Education in Icaria promoted his system--"tous-à-tous"--and did not destroy man's social longings as happened elsewhere when men were animated by the destructive values of individualism. Each Icarian produced what he was able, and took what he needed--"Tous pour chacun. Chacun pour tous."³³⁵ For Proudhon the alternative to social misery was "la Liberté," for Cabet it was rather in "la Fraternité."

335

Ibid., titlepage.

With regard to "liberty," Cabet considered such a term as simply a convenient word to cover exploitation of the many by a few. Real liberty, he believed, could only exist within prescribed limits, and only then when it worked in the interests of the community--"dans l'intérêt du

Peuple."³³⁶ The devotion which some thinkers had for liberty he considered a great error. Liberty was a very serious mistake, a vice, which led to an excessive love of independence and extremism. "La Liberté n'est donc que le droit de faire tout ce qui n'est pas défendu par la Nature, la Raison et la Société, et de s'abstenir de tout ce qui n'est pas ordonné par elles; elle est soumise aux innombrables lois de la Nature, de la Raison et de la Société."³³⁷

Thus, for Cabet liberty was based on the needs of society, while for Proudhon society was predicated on liberty.

The individual Icarian did not have the usual freedoms associated with liberty. Cabet objected to the theory that society could ever be founded on the rights of the individual

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Ibid., p. 108.

337

Ibid., p. 404ff.

personality and minimizing control of the social order over the individual. Personal liberty in Icaria was defined by an elected council of representatives; but according to the rules of the community, liberty was only possible within the innumerable laws of nature, reason and society itself. His writing on liberalism reflected Cabet's basic belief that this doctrine was always where "chacun sacrifiait l'intérêt public à son intérêt personnel."³³⁸ Man, he naively concluded, did not want liberty, but equality and was always willing to sacrifice the former for the latter. The role of the individual was, therefore, to transform the system of individual suffering and poverty--"l'individualisme"--by accepting the real laws of nature. Each individual ought to live according to the scientific laws and the social needs of mankind. Cabet concluded that one could find real happiness only in communal relationships based on equality. Cabet's Icaria illustrated how every individual could live correctly and happily if he would but commit himself. His pseudo-scientific system was, in fact, not based upon the reason and laws of nature upon which he prided himself, but upon the necessity of a new moral system of social living.

338

Ibid., p. 320.

In particular, if France would only awaken to the real benefits of the paradise described in Icaria, then mankind could be happy forever instead of suffering in poverty and other forms of human degradation. Collectivism was the remedy; it alone assured each individual what he really wanted and needed; security and a sense of belonging in a world plagued by isolated individuals pursuing their own egotistical plans in conflict with others--in a word, "individualism." Thus, for Etienne Cabet, individualism was ascribed to a whole corrupt system of social disorganization. He was therefore one of the strongest opponents of individualism, and contributed measurably in his Voyage en Icarie to popularizing the anti-individualism of the Utopian Socialist movement.

CHAPTER VII

LOUIS BLANC

Étienne Cabet was not the only figure to present an alternative to the existing social system in 1839. Since his influence within the ranks of European socialism has been greater than Cabet's, Louis Blanc (1811-82) stands as a more important thinker. Certainly his emphasis upon direct political action by the individual was more modern than Cabet's outworn collectivization. Louis Blanc was born into a good family, but was forced to labor himself, and hence he gained firsthand experience with the problems of misery and poverty among the workers. Yet, he realized that in order to recast society into a better mold, it was necessary to utilize the instruments of existing power--the state. Thus, in the same year as Cabet's Voyage, Blanc published his imaginative essays entitled Organization of Work. In the development of his ideas, he too attacked the established order based upon individual interests. Publication of these two alternatives to individualism in the same year suggests the multiplicity of problems regarding the topic.

In Organization, Blanc advocated the creation of "social workshops" or worker's co-operatives within separate trades

or industries and between industries themselves under the guidance and protection of the state, an idea later developed in syndicalism. With the abdication of Louis Philippe and the creation of the Provisional Government of France in February, 1848, Blanc served the state himself for a short time. His ideas were actually attempted as a temporary expedient to allay labor unrest in Paris, but for a number of reasons the French experiment with "national workshops" failed. Labor unrest was not abated, and with further disturbances in Paris during mid-May, Louis Blanc sought exile in England. Here he remained until 1870 writing a multi-volume history of the French Revolution. The end of the Second Empire permitted him to return to France, where he continued to serve the cause of French socialism until his death.

Organization not only offered an attractive alternative to the existing system, but this work immediately placed Louis Blanc in the ranks of the anti-individualists. Contemporary society, according to Blanc, was sick: "L'ordre social actuel est mauvais: comment le changer?"³³⁹ In this diagnosis he was not alone, virtually all the Utopian

339

Blanc, Organisation, p. 116.

Socialists examined in this study would have agreed with him on this observation. They would not, however, have agreed with him on the necessary prescription. Blanc believed society was cheating itself; suffering was distributed over the entire social fabric, not--as some claimed--just among the poor. Thus, although society had its inequality of means, it in fact had a certain element of equality too--the equality of suffering and misery, although not all individuals suffered in the same way. Blanc reasoned that if any element suffers, then all suffer. He attempted to illustrate how competition was the root of all evil by its ruthless policy of extermination. This particular problem affected not only the poor, but the bourgeoisie also; it would result in their decline, materially and morally, in the near future. Put simply, competition, as it existed, was disastrous for everybody, regardless of class. ³⁴⁰ Only by a policy of careful reform, which would provide the means for all individuals to work at full capacity, could a real remedy be applied to a very sick patient. Like his colleagues in the early nineteenth century socialist movement, Blanc also believed that a moral reform would follow on the heels

of economic reform. "La réforme industrielle ici serait donc en réalité un profonde révolution morale, et ferait plus de conversions en un jour que n'en ont fait dans un siècle toutes les homélies des prédicateurs et toutes les recommandations des moralistes."³⁴¹ With the removal of misery and suffering, the inevitable result if all had the right to work, crime itself would disappear. Crime was only the desperate but legitimate defense mechanism of the unemployed laborer, who had sought merely to offer his talent to society and had been rejected by its fiercely competitive system which placed labor on the auction block. The worker without a family sold his services cheaper than one with a wife and children, therefore the former--who would work cheaper--obtained employment while the latter starved.³⁴² This was what competition, individualism in labor, meant to the individual worker. Competition also lowered wages. It contributed directly to the general immorality of the times fostering the crumbling of family bonds. The flagrant evils of child labor, as found in

341

Ibid., p. 130.

342

Ibid., p. 43.

the horrid mines and factories, repelled Blanc from laissez faire. "Ainsi, sans un réforme sociale, il n'y a pas ici de remède possible."³⁴³

In his search for the origins of this evil competitive system, Louis Blanc concluded that it was the product of "un régime d'individualisme."³⁴⁴ Like Cabet, Blanc also paired "l'individualisme" as the opposite of both "le socialisme" and "l'association"--individualism being the incarnation of something immoral, and socialism of solidarity and ethical behavior. Thus he concluded: "De l'individualisme, avons-nous dit, sort la concurrence;..."³⁴⁵ Blanc therefore echoed his fellow Utopian Socialists when he described how monopoly and tyranny masqueraded under the guise of freedom. Thus he asked: "Et comment n'y aurait-il pas eu encombrement dans toutes les sphères de l'activité humaine, lorsque l'individualisme, proclamé sous le nom de liberté, venait pousser à tous les excès d'une compétition universelle?"³⁴⁶ Blanc lamented at the same time that:

343
Ibid., pp. 82-83.

344
Ibid., p. 29.

345
Ibid., pp. 74-75.

346
Ibid., p. 221.

"La théorie de l'individualisme prévalut dans les lettres
 347
 comme dans l'industrie." Real opportunity for liberty
 was only possible when each individual could develop his own
 capabilities and faculties. Hence, a change in the power
 structure, politically, would ameliorate the lot of all.

As Blanc defined it, the present system was dominated
 not only by individualism and competition, but also associated
 with them was the spirit of "l'égoïsme." 348 These ingre-
 dients created a combination which engendered only universal
 antagonism and contempt. "La concurrence est un régime de
 hasard; elle pousse naturellement à une production aveugle;
 elle encourage l'imprevoyance; elle absout d'avance toutes
 les témérités; fille de l'individualisme, elle est mère de
 349
 l'esprit d'aventure." Under the supervision of the modern
 bourgeoisie, individualism had secured complete domination
 over the entire social order, and had imposed its values
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 upon society. Louis Philippe was only the first of his

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Ibid.

348

Ibid., p. 73.

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Ibid., p. 181.

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Louis Blanc, Histoire de dix ans 1830-1840, douzième
 édition (Paris: Librairie Germer Baillière, 1877), I,
 p. 6.

class in the realm; the rule of this element in France meant the reign of competition, scepticism and anarchy.

How did Louis Blanc propose to change France from the era of individualisme to association or fraternity? What would be the role of the individual under these circumstances if he succeeded? Since for Blanc the instrument of social reform was the state, the individual must become active in politics. "Le gouvernement serait considéré comme le régulateur suprême de la production, et investi, pour accomplir sa tâche, d'une grande force. Cette tâche consisterait à servir de l'arme même de la concurrence, pour faire disparaître la concurrence."³⁵¹ The state was thus charged by Blanc with establishing "les ateliers sociaux" in the most important branches of industry. Then everything regarding the status of these social workshops would be determined by the government acting jointly with committees from the workshops themselves. The state was to protect such workers associations. Individuals admitted to the first workshops would be paid the same wages; since these workers were to be only men of good character, they would gradually discover each other's capabilities and levels of

351

Blanc, Organisation, p. 117.

industrial responsibility. After the first year, the workers could take over their own affairs completely by popular election. The Utopian Socialists believed that once man had discovered what was right, he would never deter from doing it. The ultimate goal of Blanc's program was "l'absorption successive et pacifique des ateliers individuels par les ateliers sociaux."³⁵²

Ideas prepared the way for revolutions. From his study of history, Blanc concluded: "Aussi, la destruction d'une semblable despotisme est-elle une affaire de science, non de révolte."³⁵³ One achieved justice peacefully by the ballot and law, not by bullets. "Disons-le donc une fois pour toutes: la liberté consiste, non pas seulement dans le DROIT accordé, mais dans le POUVOIR donné à l'homme d'exercer, de développer ses facultés, sous l'empire de la justice et sous la sauvegarde de la loi."³⁵⁴ In an English translation of the "Introduction to the 1848 Edition" of Organisation du travail, Blanc explained his position. A new spirit of "realism" entered with 1848.

352

Ibid., p. 121.

353

Blanc, Histoire de dix ans, V, p. 457.

354

Blanc, Organisation, p. 30.

But if it is necessary to become engaged in a program of social reform, it is no less necessary to pursue one of political reform. For if the first is the end, the second is the means. It is not enough to discover scientific processes appropriate for inaugurating the principle of association and for organizing labor in accordance with the rules of reason, justice and humanity. One must also find a way to realize the principle that has been adopted, and to enable the processes that have been discovered through study to bear fruit. Now, power is organized force. Power depends upon chambers, tribunals, soldiers-- in other words, upon the triple force of laws, judgements and bayonets. Not to use it as an instrument is to encounter it as an obstacle.

Besides the emancipation of the proletarians is a most complicated task; it is involved with too many questions, it upsets too many habits, it is contrary, not in reality but in appearance, to too many interests, for anyone to believe seriously that it could be brought about by a series of partial efforts and isolated attempts. All the force of the State must be applied in this task. The proletarians lack the instruments of labor, which they need in order to emancipate themselves: the function of the government is to provide them with these. If we had to define the State as we see it, we would say that the State is the banker of the poor.³⁵⁵

Louis Blanc hoped for a better world in which each individual was an associate in labor and in society. At first his social workshops would exist side by side with private industry, however they would eventually replace the latter peacefully by the simple superiority recognized by all parties under such arrangements. Under the new system of Blanc there would not be any commercial "crises," no unemployment, no economic wars and a constant adjustment of

355

Blanc, "Introduction to the 1848 Edition," cited by Fried and Sanders (eds.), Socialist Thought, pp. 231-32.

production to demand. Inheritance would be maintained, but only through direct line. Blanc assumed also that the benefits of labor organization would lead to association in other non-economic areas as well, and hence to social equality. His desire to replace the existing system of competition and individualism by one of association was, however, not the same thing as the stiffling collectivization of Cabet or Owen. Although both French thinkers used "la fraternité," they did not mean the same thing by it. According to Blanc, each individual laborer would have the right to use the profits of his work as he saw fit; capitalists were even invited to invest in the various social workshops if they were willing to take their profits as the workers did.³⁵⁶

The establishment of social workshops would create better and cheaper products for the individual consumer. The state would regulate such production activities, and it would also prevent personal interests from interfering in the normal intercourse of the market place.³⁵⁷

Like Proudhon, Louis Blanc sought to encourage freedom; however freedom for all meant everyone in society--freedom

356

Blanc, Organisation, p. 120.

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ibid., pp. 121-22.

from individualism, competition and the pursuit of individual interests. Fraternity could only be guaranteed by the power of the state. Blanc also predicted that within a relatively short period of time the social workshops would be strong enough to serve as unifying factors within the European community, and would therefore serve to promote the worker's interests around the world. The duty of the state, however, was to prevent a return to the competitive system which was opposed to social interests.³⁵⁸ World order and peace among all men was a vision which attracted many thinkers. In a passage reminiscent of Saint-Simon, Blanc attacked the existing system of international anarchy and offered to replace it with his program. He wrote in part:

Les traités de paix et d'alliance ne suffiraient pas pour cela sans doute; cependant, que de désastres conjurés, si, à cette diplomatie honteuse, lutte d'hypocrisie, de mensonges, de bassesses, ayant pour but le partage des peuples entre quelques brigands heureux, on substituait un système d'alliance fondé sur les nécessités de l'industrie et les convenances réciproques³⁵⁹ des travailleurs dans toutes les parties du monde.

358

Ibid., p. 123ff.

359

Ibid., pp. 125-26.

Under his system of social workshops, Blanc theorized that where before the technological improvements made by scientists and inventors had gone to the highest bidder in the competitive struggle for survival, there would no longer be this individual exploitation. "L'inventeur serait récompensé par l'état, et sa découverte mise à l'instant même au service de tous." ³⁶⁰ Ideas and inventions for universal progress which had previously, under the reign of individualism, been beyond the reaches of the workers--individually and collectively--would become available to all equally.

Louis Blanc was also concerned about the problem of credit. On this important topic, an item which was so necessary for progress, he stated that credit ought to be available for any worker in order to furnish him with the means of production. Under the existing system, however, banks made credit available only to the rich; thus, he proposed to eliminate banks as they then existed. "Les banques constituées au point de vue individuel ne sauraient donc jamais être, quoi qu'on fasse, qu'une procédé admirablement imaginé pour les riches plus riches et les

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Ibid., pp. 127-28.

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puissants plus puissants." Here too, one found the evils of individualism. Blanc believed if one simply put aside a portion of the profits from the social workshops, there would be enough capital available for credit provisions, and the state could serve as the creditor. Profits were, in fact, to be split three ways: (1) they would be distributed equally among the members of the workshops, and each member could then do as he wished with his portion; (2) a certain amount would be allocated to support the aged, sick and disabled; and (3) a portion would be used to meet costs and provide funds necessary for capital investment. Again, he stressed that his plan would not only lead to industrial reform, but to social and moral reform as well. 362

What was needed for this reformation of society, Blanc asserted, was for the state's power to direct the movement. This reform could be seen in one very vital area, which was suggested by all of the Utopian Socialists, education. He wished to establish a universal, compulsory system of free instruction for everyone. If each individual worker was

361

Ibid., p. 129.

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Ibid., pp. 82-83.

guaranteed enough work to insure him a living--if work was organized in other words--Blanc reasoned that he would no longer have any objection to sending his children to school. Enlightenment diffused throughout the population insured perpetuation of the best social system. Louis Blanc noted that under the existing conditions, those of the first edition in 1839, education was dangerous in that it served to prepare some individuals for competition and ambition while taking delight in the plight of others.³⁶³ Like Robert Owen, he believed that if children were taught correct principles, then education was probably the most important means toward realization of a better social order. Explicit in Blanc's Organisation du travail is the theory that in addition to the education structure of contemporary society, the whole corrupt civilization itself ought to be replaced. Armed with the infallibility of human intelligence, a revolution had to be attempted.

1. Parce que l'ordre social actuel est trop rempli d'iniquités, de misères, de turpitudes, pour pouvoir subsister longtemps;
2. Parce qu'il n'est personne qui n'ait intérêt, quels que soient sa position, son rang, sa fortune, à l'inauguration d'un nouvel ordre social;

3. Enfin, parce que cette révolution, si nécessaire, il est possible, facile même, de l'accomplir pacifiquement.³⁶⁴

How was this necessary revolution to be carried out? By whom? Did Louis Blanc envision the necessity of the super-individual, such as an Icar? In contrast to Cabet, Blanc felt that all men were not equal in either their physical or intellectual capacities and that no social organization could create human uniformity. What Louis Blanc sought was to place the individual in such an environment so as to derive the greatest possible advantage from each without infringing upon the rights of others. This could be accomplished most effectively in the social workshops. He accepted the existence of natural inequality among individuals, and so retained a system of rewards whereby compensation went to each associate on the basis of differing needs. Those individuals with greater talents must bear the responsibility for harnessing their skills to the overall needs of society. He described the situation.

364

Ibid., pp. 132-33.

Beaucoup d'idées fausses sont à détruire: elles disparaîtront, gardons-nous d'en douter. Ainsi, par exemple, le jour viendra où il sera reconnu que celui-là doit plus à ses semblables qui a reçu de Dieu plus de force ou plus d'intelligence. Alors, il appartiendra au génie, et cela est digne de lui, de constater son légitime empire, non par l'importance du tribut qu'il lèvera sur la société, mais par le grandeur des services qu'il lui rendra. Car ce n'est pas à l'inégalité des droits que l'inégalité des aptitudes doit aboutir, c'est à l'inégalité des devoirs.

Although both Cabet and Blanc were opposed to the individualism of the day, they adopted vastly different solutions to this common problem. They agreed that individualism-- which they associated with the system of laissez faire-- meant only competition and continual conflict of interests among the members of society to the total detriment of all. In such struggles, the individual himself was always the real loser. Within the framework of these two contemporary alternatives to individualism, Voyage en Icarie and Organisation du travail--both published in 1839, the role of the individual was greater in the state socialism of Louis Blanc than in the communism of Étienne Cabet. There was no attempt on Blanc's part to intervene in the affairs of the workers in order to enforce equality; in fact he

placed a great deal of reliance on the family to resolve its own problems. Blanc believed also that social equality would be the inevitable result of a social order once individualism were removed from it. Blanc's equality was more particularly concerned with securing equality in the economic processes by the organization of work toward this goal. Cabet deemed it necessary to insure equality in all areas of life--a situation which calls to mind the vision of Big Brother in Orwell's 1984. Once man was freed from the caprice "de l'égoïsme individuel," Blanc could see only harmony among the workers and thus there was no need for the rigid collectivism of Icaria. For Cabet, the fundamental desire of every individual was equality; for Blanc, it was the desire to work in accordance with his capacities. So, Cabet organized societies and Blanc organized work. Louis Blanc sincerely believed that the end of Louis Philippe was the beginning of a new era; it was the end of individualism and the beginning of fraternity. Perhaps it was rather the beginning of the end for the era of which Blanc and the others were but a part, the era of Utopian Socialism.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The task of rendering not only a definition for the term "individualism," but also of determining its origin and history has not become easier with the passage of time. Two modern and reliable French etymological sources, both published in 1964, disagree as to the origin of the term. One cites the first usage of individualism from 1829, and the other from 1833.³⁶⁶ As previously noted, the first reported use of the word was in 1820, and the first well-documented use occurred in 1826. Louis Blanc, whose theories were more historically oriented than any of the other thinkers examined here, accounted for individualism in his later writings as beginning in religious revolt, which then passed into intellectual and political spheres. However, for the Utopian Socialists, "individualism" was the result of the misdirected economic structure and its social organization. This, in fact, is precisely where the Utopian Socialists contributed measurably to the definition of individualism.

If one examines the first French dictionary entries given for the term "l'individualisme," the connotations

366

Abert Dauzat et. al., Nouveau dictionnaire étymologique et historique (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1964), p. 388; and Oscar Bloch and W. von Wartburg, Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue française, quatrième édition (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964), p. 337. The former cites 1829, the latter 1833.

and meanings applied to the term are exactly those ideas made known by Owen, Saint-Simon and Fourier. Thus, the first definition by the French Academy stated in 1836: "T. de Philosophie. Système d'isolement dans les travaux, les efforts; l'opposé d'Esprit d'association."³⁶⁷ All of the Utopian Socialists accepted the idea that individualism was a philosophical term, and therefore must be combatted as such by creation of another term--such as association, fraternity, harmony, mutuality, communism or socialism to cite only a few. They certainly described in their major writings the phenomenon "d'isolement dans les travaux, les efforts." As early as 1803, Saint-Simon wrote of the need to "gather up and unite all these forces acting in different, and often contrary, directions," and later, 1819, he wrote against "des efforts purment individuels et isolés."³⁶⁸ In 1808, Fourier likewise lamented "the opposition of the two kinds of interest, collective and individual."³⁶⁹ He also rejected the situation where every person "is at war with

367

Académie française, Supplement (1836), p. 455.

368

Saint-Simon, Select@d Writings, p. 9; and, Deuvres, II, p. 194.

369

Fourier, Selections, pp. 86-87.

the mass" in an anti-associative world order. This is what Robert Owen had in mind too when he described how man was "individualised" in 1817.³⁷⁰ From the very beginning of their literary efforts, the Utopian Socialists used the meanings given to "individualism" in its first dictionary definition. The natural opposition between the two opposing systems of association and individualism was developed in the works of Proudhon, Cabet and Blanc also. The isolation or atomization of mankind assigned by the Utopian Socialists to individualism, and their reflection in dictionary definitions published later, indicates the role of these thinkers in the origin of the term.

Another idea frequently associated with individualism was the primacy of individual interests over those of the community, or "egoism." Owen, Saint-Simon and Fourier were again instrumental in attaching this pejorative connotation to individualism. By his use of the term individualism, each of the Utopian Socialists played an important role in either popularizing the word itself, or in Saint-Simon's case--who did not use "individualism" in any of his writings--using terms which expressed the same ideas found in individualism.

370

Owen, A Supplementary Appendix, p. 86.

Individualism thus evolved as a theory which advocated or supported the unrestricted ambitions of each individual in his physical and mental pursuits outside of the community. It was opposed to the spirit and practice of association, and therefore the six Utopian Socialists examined in this study were in the vanguard of the anti-individualists. It was particularly repulsive to humanitarians who sought to reorganize society in order that all members of society might equally enjoy their existence and labor for the good of mankind. "Individualism" served as a convenient label for the evils of existing society. As a result, individualism was born from a number of ideas and given its final form from a variety of critical sources, but all of them quite critical during the period under discussion. In this development, the Utopian Socialists played a key role. Yet, one must point out that the forces of anti-individualism gave too much credit to their opponent. In actuality, absolute individualism was overly stressed in order to dramatize the alternatives to it. By the same token, the complete collectivization and communism planned for places like Icaria was impossible of realization. Both individualism and socialism suffered in the hands of the more

determined and zealous writers, and the Utopian Socialists were certainly determined and zealous men.

All of the six thinkers in this study were universally agreed that man was by nature a social animal; mankind could only develop his full potential in combination with other beings. There was lengthy debate, however, among them over the best means to achieve this end; it ranged from the anarchism of Proudhon to the communism of Cabet. During the Enlightenment, the Philosophes had sought to bring the diverse socio-physical elements together in almost a chemical mixture labeled "mutual interest." Each of the writers involved here sought to prove that his program of social reform was the most compatible with nature's, society's and man's needs. In their separate ways, each of them wanted to define and defend the right of the individual to develop his real "self" in the community.

Here is the crux of the dilemma. What is freedom in a cohesive social order? What, indeed, are the rights--with responsibilities--which must be assured to each member of the community? It is interesting to note that there is a real paradox at this point: the Utopian Socialists were instrumental in fostering the wide-spread pejorative

connotations of "individualism" at a time when the mood was Romanticism, which espoused the primacy of the individual. Some of them reacted to their dilemma fatalistically--such as Owen, Fourier and Cabet--while others--like Saint-Simon and Blanc--interpreted the whole problem as part of the inevitable movement of history. "Individualism" epitomized all of the divisive elements within the social order, and it was divisiveness which they sought to eliminate. By mid-nineteenth century, "individualism" carried many connotations, all of them pernicious. The six thinkers treated in detail here, and their disciples, were important agents in the development of defining individualism during the first half of the nineteenth century.

The role each of them assigned to the individual was as diverse as the fertile imaginations behind each alternative. Of all those sources considered, only Cabet would have agreed with Owen's statement in 1817. "I cared, and I do still care, as little for the individual as any of his opponents did or can. I make him, as they shall now be made, an instrument to forward measures for our mutual and the general benefit."³⁷¹ Yet, all of these writers--even Proudhon--placed

371

Owen, A Supplementary Appendix, p. 81.

some restrictions or obligations on the individual. All of the six Utopian Socialists limited the freedom of the individual in order to increase the "freedom" of the community of which that individual was a member, it was a question of degree. None of them anticipated that man's release from individualism would mean a life of ease or laziness. Indeed, the individual would certainly be happier than before but he would also work harder now in whatever capacity he could. Work was enjoyable, they reasoned, because man was a social animal and was happiest when serving his fellow human beings. With the exception of Saint-Simon, they felt the proper environment for the realization of their goal was by returning mankind to the land and to small producer's communities.

The precise role of the individual must be sought in the major writings of each of the six thinkers presented here. The possibilities are extensive. All of them wished to provide a role for the individual in their respective social order, but in the last analysis this position depended upon the needs of humanity. These men were profoundly troubled moralists who wished to find something

pure and noble in the universe's greatest creation, man. Thus, each of them sought to idealize the actual and potential condition of man in order to place him in an environment which they envisioned he ought to have. Humanity, of which they were individually and collectively a part, needed to belong to something great, something infinitely more vast than just individual interest and the highly unflattering pursuit of material well-being alone. All of them sought to make mankind wealthy, however this wealth was not only physical--such as the elimination of poverty--it was also spiritual. Even those thinkers like Proudhon, who consciously opposed leading a particular school of thought, could not and would not shirk their duties as prophets of an essentially secularly-oriented religious movement, the religion of humanity. Even a "scientific" socialist like Friedrich Engels sounded a rather utopian note when he described the misery and poverty of London. He wrote in part:

The brutal indifference, the unfeeling isolation of each in his private interest becomes the more repellent and offensive, the more these individuals are crowded together, within a limited space. And, however much one may be aware that this isolation of the

individual, this narrow self-seeking is the fundamental principle of our society everywhere, it is nowhere so shamelessly barefaced, so self-conscious as just here in the crowding of the great city. The dissolution of mankind into monads, of which each one has a separate principle, the world of atoms, is here carried out to its utmost extreme.³⁷²

All of the thinkers in this study indicated in their writings that man could be changed, individually and collectively, for the better by a new system of education. They disagreed among themselves as to who was responsible for this education--father, mother, special teachers or simply society. They also debated other related matters such as curriculum, facilities, and whether education ought to be coeducational. However, they all believed man was rational, even when exercising his passions for Fourier, and could be convinced by reason. Their respective programs were designed to convince the reader by appealing to logic rather than coercion. Thus they invoked laws of nature and determinism in history in order to validate their respective theories. In fact, the quarrels between them were all the more heated because each accused the others of perverting nature and history. By the emphasis given to

372

Friedrich Engels, The Condition Of The Working-Class In England In 1844 (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1892), p. 24.

education, the Utopian Socialists expressed their belief in the necessity of each individual achieving his maximum potential, and then "knowing" the responsibilities which knowledge entailed.

The role of the individual was generally to employ a social "individuality" for the good of himself and the well-being of the community. Thus, by way of a final summation, the doctrine of individualism was regarded by the early nineteenth century Utopian Socialists as their prime ideological opponent. They all contributed in their own way to its final form of definition, and developed their own alternatives for the individual in a new social order. Individualism was both an incorrect state of mind and an evil system of political economy. Humanity had been corrupted by false institutions which had perpetuated themselves by a host of evil methods. In a world torn by the divisions of nationality, class race, sex, and religion, they sought to construct a bridge between most or all of these divisive factors. Their intentions were always the best.

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