CHAPTER XIX

THE GOVERNMENT OF LOUIS PHILIPPE (1830–48) AND THE REVOLUTION OF 1848

REFERENCES: FYFFE, Modern Europe, Chapter XVI., pp. 641–44; Chapter XVIII., pp. 699–706; PHILLIPS, Modern Europe, Chapter XI., pp. 256–72; SEIGNOBOS, Europe Since 1814, Chapter V., pp. 134–52; Chapter VI., pp. 155–65; ANDREWS, Modern Europe, Chapters VII.–VIII.

SOURCE READINGS: ROBINSON, Readings, Vol. II., Chapter XL. (Overthrow of Louis Philippe); ANDERSON, Constitutions and Documents, Nos. 106–10.

Louis Philippe is supported by the middle class.

WE have seen that Louis Philippe, called to the throne by the revolution of July, was by the nature of the case obliged to found his power upon the monarchical section of the people, the middle class. It was unfortunate that the revolution had not been made by this class, but by republican workingmen, who ever afterward felt that they had been cheated of their labor, and immediately drifted into an embittered opposition. Thus Louis Philippe became, whether he would or no, the head, not of the nation, but of one of its social divisions, and this is the really significant feature of his reign. The name citizen-king describes not only his position, but also his character. He abandoned the traditional royal pomp, exhibited an easy good-fellowship, lived simply with his numerous family, and at every crisis fell back on his native thrift and obstinacy, characteristic qualities which he shared with his middle-class supporters.

Legitimists, republicans, socialists.

The monarchy of the bourgeoisie never had a day of absolute security. Its two most persistent enemies were the legitimists and the republicans. The legitimists, devoted to the elder Bourbon branch, were constantly stirring up opposition, but apart from one outbreak in that home of troubles, the Vendée, were content with a latent hostility. In the Vendée, the duchess of Berri, mother of the young Bourbon claimant, Henry V., courageously led a movement (1832) which appealed to the imagination, but also, from its failure to arouse the masses, served to show that the legitimist cause was moribund. Far more serious was the republican opposition. The leaders, young enthusiasts, appealed to the working-class, and the working-class, as it happened, were just then a growing section of the nation. For the industrial revolution, the product of science and machinery, had set in, and everywhere factory-quarters arose with a new population, housed amid soot and squalor. At first the republicans strove to organize the workingmen for a purely political revolution, but many of the leaders presently made up their minds that a social revolution, having as its object the improvement of the conditions of the wage-earners, was more to the point. Accordingly, they drifted into socialism. In France and under Louis Philippe this movement, which has since travelled round the world, took its start. With Louis Philippe in power the old republicans and their offshoot, the socialists, saw no reason to divide their forces, but kept up a united and violent opposition. In the first part of his reign they appealed several times to arms (1832 and 1834), but having been suppressed with bloody consequences, they settled down to a quiet propaganda until their hour should strike.

The Parliamentary issue.

Though from the social point of view the growth of the wage-earners and the secret ferment among them is the most interesting feature of Louis Philippe's reign, the con-

scious political life of that generation was hardly affected by it. We have noticed that the government never enjoyed the favor of the legitimists and the republicans, but after their early attempts these parties recognized their weakness and desisted from violence. Without doubt their continued existence implied danger, but, discouraged by failure, they abandoned the stage and left it to the middle class. This class, therefore, ruled, and if its members had been united might have held the reins for a long time. But perpetual union in a great body of thinking men is an impossibility, and the deputies in the Chamber soon split over the question of Parliamentary government. One section, led by Guizot, the historian, believed that the king should choose his ministers as he pleased; another, led by Thiers, also an historian and famous as the panegyrist of the Empire, maintained that he must take them from the majority and carry through their policy. In the one view the king was a free agent, in the other merely the mouthpiece of the Parliament and ministry, as in England. In this conflict, waged entirely among his supporters of the bourgeoisie, Louis Philippe seemed to occupy a neutral position, but secretly inclined to Guizot, and by adroit management secured to that leader, and incidentally to himself, a majority in the Chamber and the unquestioned control of the government. In 1840 Guizot came into power, and in spite of Thiers and every other form of opposition, held it till the monarchy fell.

Guizot and Thiers.

Thiers agitates for a more liberal suffrage.

This maintenance of power looked like a capital achievement, but unfortunately, as the result proved, paved the way for revolution. For Guizot and the king, who were hand and glove, not only maintained their Parliamentary majority by freely bribing the electorate and the deputies, but took the ultra-conservative stand of refusing to listen to suggestions of change and progress. Now Thiers, though

a monarchist, made up his mind that the beginning of all improvement was the enlargement of the body of electors by lowering the tax-paying qualification, and the agitation which he inaugurated over this question was like the little stone in Nebuchadnezzar's dream which shattered the clay feet of the image of brass and brought it to earth.

The revolution of February, 1848.

The method chosen for the electoral agitation was a series of banquets, at which reform was demanded by the speakers. All through the year 1847 these banquets were in progress, and one, which was to be made a great occasion, with a procession and delegations of students, was set at Paris for February 22, 1848. The government, taking alarm, forbade the meeting, but crowds gathered nevertheless and began to demonstrate on their own account. The next day the riot grew so serious, coupled with so general a demand for reform, that the king yielded and dismissed Guizot. This was as much as Thiers intended, but popular passions had been aroused, and by February 24th had swelled to such a pitch that they burst all bounds. The morning of that day began with an assault upon the Tuileries by the republican masses, whose savage determination frightened the timid king into resigning in favor of his little grandson. While the sovereign himself sought safety in flight, the duchess of Orleans led her son, the count of Paris, to the Chamber of Deputies and had him proclaimed king. But it was already too late. The republican multitude invaded the hall, ignored the deputies, and set up a provisional government. Owing to the fact that the socialistic republicans had helped in the street-fighting, some of their leaders were associated with the government, and the two united factions began their rule by announcing to the world that France was henceforth a republic.

The republic is proclaimed.

Republicans and socialists.

But at this point harmony ceased, for the two republican parties stood for entirely different ideals. The old repub-

licans wanted merely a political revolution after the manner of 1793, but the new school of socialists was content with nothing less than complete industrial reorganization. The clash began immediately, the advantage resting at first with the socialists. By means of demonstrations on the part of the workingmen they forced the provisional ministry to proclaim that the state "undertakes to provide labor for all citizens," and to establish, as a means of fulfilling this promise, so-called "national workshops." That ended the socialistic triumph, for when in April the general elections for an Assembly, called upon to give France a constitution, took place, the country, placed between republicans and socialists, showed its horror of the unfamiliar tenets of the new school by returning an immense republican majority. At the opening of the Assembly the mixed provisional government resigned and the republicans took hold in earnest. The socialists no sooner noted the change than they took alarm, and by two insurrections (May and June) attempted to retrieve their fortunes. Their last rising, which lasted four days (June 23d–26th), led to the severest battle which Paris, familiar for ages with street-fighting, had ever witnessed. Certainly only men moved by courage and conviction could stand up, as these social reformers did, against cannon and musketry fire, but they were overborne, their leaders killed or exiled, and the party shattered for many a day.

The socialists overthrown.

The national work-shops.

The great rising of June was not only a general protest against the republican majority, but was undertaken for the specific purpose of saving the "national workshops," which the republicans were preparing to close, and which, after their victory, they suppressed summarily. This socialist experiment has invited a good deal of attention on the ground that it tested the theory that industrial enterprises can be profitably nationalized; that is, put under the control of the

state. But the French experiment was a test only in name; for the government, having no sympathy with the socialist programme, instead of establishing workshops, merely set the unemployed to digging at the fortifications of Paris. That this accomplished nothing, as the republicans averred, but the embarrassment of the treasury, is true; but it is also true, as the socialists asserted, that the failure of the experiment in this absurd form did not dispose of their theory.

The republican constitution of 1848.

The inference from the savage struggle of the spring of 1848 was that France, although a republic, was not ready to indulge in hazardous experiments. With their enemies overthrown, the republican majority of the Assembly proceeded to fulfil its mission of giving France a constitution. Insisting on the democratic principle that "all public powers emanate from the people," it vested the legislative power in a single Assembly of 750 members elected by universal suffrage, and the executive power in a citizen, elected as president for four years. As to the manner of the president's election, it was agreed, after much discussion, that he, too, was to be chosen directly by the people. The election followed on December 10, 1848, and to the surprise of all unacquainted with the heart of the French people the choice fell, not upon General Cavaignac, the leader of the republicans and the hero of the battles of June, but upon Louis Napoleon.

Career of the new president.

That this prince should ever be called to the head of the nation by universal suffrage would never have been dreamed by any one who had followed his career. He was the son of Napoleon's brother Louis, king of Holland, and after the death of Napoleon's only son at Vienna (1832) was regarded as chief of the House of Bonaparte. As such he felt it his duty to conspire for his dynasty, and made two attempts in ludicrous imitation of Napoleon's return from Elba, which

were greeted by Europe with an outburst of Homeric laughter. In 1836 he suddenly appeared in Strasburg, but in spite of his uncle's hat, sword, and boots, donned for the occasion, was marched off to prison. Undaunted, he made another attempt to rouse France in 1840 by appearing at Boulogne; but the boat conveying him and a few helpmates capsized, and wet and dripping he was fished out of the Channel by the ubiquitous police. For this second escapade he was condemned to imprisonment, but in 1846 made his escape to England. On the proclamation of the republic he became a candidate for the Assembly and was repeatedly returned by the electors. Plainly, he was outliving the ridicule he had aroused, and by his clever trading upon the magic name Napoleon was rallying about him all those classes, especially the peasants, who clung to the traditions of the empire. The election to the presidency of the republic was an honor addressed to the dead warrior rather than to his puny representative, but it furnished an ominous sign that the love of republican institutions was not very deeply rooted in the French conscience. Sincere republicans gazed at each other with consternation, and were assailed by the suspicion that the days of the new republic were numbered. How well-founded this fear was we shall presently see.

CHAPTER XX

THE REVOLUTION OF 1848 IN GERMANY, AUSTRIA, AND ITALY

REFERENCES: FYFFE, Modern Europe; PHILLIPS, Modern Europe, Chapters XII.–XIII.; SEIGNOBOS, Europe Since 1814, Chapter XI., pp. 335–48; Chapter XII., pp. 389–99; Chapter XIII., pp. 401–23; ANDREWS, Modern Europe, Chapters IX.–X.; THAYER, Dawn of Italian Independence, Vol. II., Books 4–5; BOLTON KING, History of Italian Unity (1814–71), Vol. I., Part II., Chapters IX.–XIII.; HENDERSON, Short History of Germany, Vol. II., Chapter VIII.

SOURCE READINGS: ROBINSON, Readings, Vol. II., Chapter XL., Section 2.

The revolutionary spirit manifests itself in central Europe.

As we have seen, the revolution of 1830 produced no great changes in central Europe because the liberal and national sentiment had not yet become organized and powerful. Hence, the succeeding period had been one of continued reaction, relieved, however, by signs that the masses were becoming conscious of their servitude and ready to shake off the shackles of absolutism. Again the events at Paris served as a signal fire. A wave of jubilation passed over all the peoples from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, and they arose and declared for a free government and a national state. France once again vindicated her claim to be regarded as leader of Europe, but it is a fact that, even without her example, Italy, Austria, and Germany would not have supported the rule of repression much longer.

Revolution at Vienna, March, 1848.

Metternich's own capital, the very hearthstone of the spirit of reaction, was one of the first to feel the breath of the new freedom. On March 13, 1848, Vienna rose and