

France: Reflections on the Political and Social Crisis

By HANS A. SCHMITT

AMERICANS ARE generally "fed up" with France. I will neither justify nor deprecate that attitude. I will try to illuminate the presumable facts that cause our anger. We are fed up with French "instability." To us the French and their politics seem like the arbitrary acts of so many capricious children who—in our opinion—need nothing but a good caning to learn more acceptable behavior. Again, I shall not pontificate against corporal punishment. You deal with your capricious children and I'll deal with mine.

But are the French capricious, are they immature, are they unstable? In all fairness, I think, that from the American point of view these questions can be answered both affirmatively and negatively. There are in the history of modern France elements of caprice and solidity, maturity and infantilism, instability and consistency. To point up these contradictions I want to discuss briefly the salient developments in the political and social history of France.

Politically France shares with the rest of Europe a long monarchical tradition. It abandoned that tradition earlier than other great European countries, namely in 1792, and while the French marched in the vanguard of republicanism their example was eventually followed by all major nations of the western world, England excepted.

In abandoning the monarchy the French left moorings of tradition which had harbored them for more than a thousand years and embarked on an uncertain course. The Revolution began in 1789. It is very difficult to say whether or not that revolution has ended, and if so, when. In my opinion, one reason for the contradictions in modern France is that the overthrow of the monarchy has not yet produced substitute institutions of comparable vitality. The present Fourth Republic is as far as France has gone, but it seems to constitute no solution satisfactory to most. Some reject it, some cynically and masochistically revel in its inadequacies, no one acclaims it with any enthusiasm.

The French since 1792, then, have been engaged in a search for new political institutions and new political values. That

search is still in progress, and, I insist, it has been neither without purpose nor without positive results.

To begin with, the French knew what they were doing when they overthrew the King. No matter how many scholars have rightly seen the reforms of Napoleon as a continuation rather than a rejection of policy patterns of the old regime; no matter how many apologists have pointed out—and again with justification—that the Bastille held few victims at the time of its destruction and that the *lettre de cachet* was a dead letter indeed, notwithstanding all these softenings of the relentless black with which the sympathizers of the revolution have painted the old regime,—the fact remains that it had serious and grievous defects which for centuries had vainly cried for redress. It is a fact that the French people, both high and low, exercised no control over affairs of state. Taxes were paid by those who could least afford to do so and privilege was hereditary and stationary. The corruptness, both moral and intellectual, of the old regime is best exemplified by the willingness of many of its luminaries to throw it overboard without any thought of alternatives.

The beginning of the French search is, to us, therefore, plausible enough. What of its later course?

THE FIRST French Republic, born amidst a war which its impending birth had in large measure brought about, was too delicate an experiment to stand the strain of conflict. Wars require "strong leadership" and an Emperor, Roman style, rather than a republican president provided France with it. Unfortunately, Napoleon I had no thought of peace, no matter how much he might afterwards argue to the contrary, and he thus discredited both the revolution and himself. In 1815 the French not entirely unlike the Englishmen of 1660 were in a chastened mood and willing to accept a restoration. This solution seemed as sensible as was the monarch who exemplified it. Louis XVIII has been not unfairly called the greatest French king since Henry IV. Like Charles II he was

tired of exile and therefore quite willing to maintain the form of absolutism while readily relinquishing its substance to the constitutional regime. Republicanism seemed dead, Bonapartism seemed dead. The French wanted peace; and like most Europeans of that day they had no attachment to the ballot.

What revived the revolutionary fervor? Surely no responsible Frenchman, but a very irresponsible one—Charles X—who ascended the throne in 1824. By attempting to revoke the constitutional privileges granted by his brother he brought the Parisians to the barricades and dealt the death blow to monarchy. The revolution of 1830, which brought Louis Philippe to the throne, was not really a revolution at all. It was a successful attempt to preserve the constitutional monarchy founded by Louis XVIII. It accomplished two things: (1) It succeeded in saving the Charter of 1814 suitably amended by the fairly complaisant Louis Philippe; but (2) it reawakened dormant republicans and Bonapartists, whom the political extravagances of Charles X and Polignac had once more convinced of the essential perfidy of Kings. The institution of kingship survived 1830, but confidence in its justice and integrity seems to have died during that fateful summer. A return to the safe harbor became henceforth impossible, not because the French arbitrarily rejected monarchy but because the King had failed.

Louis Philippe did not realize the precariousness of his position until it was too late and hence made no attempt to harness a substantial political majority to his royal cab. Alexis de Tocqueville in his *Recollections* described him as an "unbeliever in religious matters as the eighteenth century and sceptical in politics as the nineteenth." He had "no belief in himself" and "he did not believe in the belief of others." Nor was he disturbed by signs of oncoming disaster. In the words of de Tocqueville again: "he resembled the man who refused to believe that his house was on fire, because he had the key to it in his pocket." When the smoke and flame began to engulf him, the key was no comfort in face

of the fact that he had neither fire extinguisher nor insurance. His overthrow in 1848 became the second installment of a verdict actually reached eighteen years earlier by many of his subjects.

At this point the course of French revolution departed from the "everything will come out all right in the end" pattern of English revolutionary history. France had her Charles I—in Louis XVI, her Cromwell in Napoleon, her Charles II in Louis XVIII, and her James II in Charles X. She was—and is—still waiting for William of Orange.

THE EXILING of yet another King brought yet another republic, this time one based on an instrument fully as foreign to France as the executor of the Bill of Rights was to England. This was the American constitution. Its workings had become well known to Frenchmen through de Tocqueville's *Démocratie en Amérique* and a host of lesser commentators. Its applicability to the French situation was widely debated although its merits were universally recognized. Even royalists opposing republicanism under any guise did so in this instance because no man of Washington's stature was available to guide the French ship of state. This negative attitude accurately reflects the feebleness of their position, and a Constitution à l'Américaine was adopted.

It was in the shaping of the executive branch that the French leaned most on America as an example. The President of the Second Republic was the executor of the law and titular commander of the armed forces. He negotiated and made treaties with the advice and consent of the National Assembly (France, in contrast to the U. S. adopted unicameralism), watched over the defense of the nation and declared war, again in conjunction with the representatives of the nation. He received foreign ambassadors and appointed and dismissed missions to foreign countries as well as ambassadors. Most important, however, the President of the Second Republic, unlike any French executive before or since, was directly elected by universal manhood suffrage.

The constitution 1848 was an interesting attempt at transplanting a system of government and of establishing an institution comparable in vitality to the monarchy. The French electorate newly enfranchised was unfortunate in choosing a nephew of Napoleon I, who took lightly indeed his oath upon the constitution. The source of his authority was the same as that of the Assembly—the popular vote. In case of disagreement, both branches of the

government, secure in their mandate, proved equally adamant. The resulting deadlock found the executive in a position of incomparable advantage. The President could call on the army, the Assembly could not. The army, one might add, chose to take a position which it has often taken in Latin America. It was professional and tradition-bound. Its leaders reflected San Martin rather than Washington or Jackson. Here lies one of the significant causes of another republican failure. The army might not like Louis Napoleon, but it liked a democratic assembly even less. It would reconcile itself to another Bonapartist dictatorship, which if not legitimate was at least orderly; it would never accept popular government. So the army and Napoleon joined hands to extinguish the feeble light of freedom, to establish first a dictatorship and then restore the Empire. The Republic died, under protest to be sure, but it died nevertheless. The inability of its leaders to give France stable government during the long ten months from February to December 1848 had once more equated republicanism and democracy with chaos.

Unfortunately, the return of Cromwell also ended in disaster. Napoleon III avenged in the Crimea the defeat of 1812, and he humbled Austria on the plains of Lombardy. He built boulevards and cottages. He granted the workers the vote as well as the right to strike. But ultimately the winner of the last victory and the last accomplishment carries off the prize. Louis was not Napoleon I. Driven out of Mexico, thwarted in his quest for the time-honored natural frontiers on the Rhine, Napoleon III had not the strength to keep his hot-headed entourage from plunging headlong into war with Prussia, which made of the second Emperor a prisoner, too. This war ended in defeat at Sedan and two days later the Parisians buried the Empire. France once more held her fate in her own hand.

AFTER THE FALL of the Empire, the French people elected a national assembly which contained a strong monarchist majority. Did this mean that the circle back to kingship was to be closed? Hardly. The vote for the parties of the right was primarily a vote for a speedy peace, for a peace which the radicals and socialists rejected. It might have led to a restoration, and then the problem of the feasibility of a constitutional monarchy would once more have arisen. But this time the King never came, because he committed himself against constitutionalism even before ascending the throne.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

This paper, which is Dr. Schmitt's second contribution to the Quarterly, presents in a somewhat abbreviated version an address that he gave at the annual meeting of the Oklahoma Association of College History Teachers, Tahlequah, December 2, 1955. In the short time since he joined the Faculty in 1953, Dr. Schmitt has become widely known as a teacher and eloquent speaker. In 1955 he received one of the \$500 Teaching Awards from the University of Oklahoma Foundation.

Henry V, grandson of Charles X, was true to the tradition of stubbornness and stupidity of his family. He wanted no part of the role of a "roi fonctionnaire," as Jean Lucas-Dubreton has called it. Symbol of his Bourbon outlook was the white flag, without which he would not rule, and with which the French nation—after one century of revolt—could never again reconcile itself. No one dared to restore Henry V and the National Assembly, whose dying royalist majority was giving way to a growing republican infiltration, decided in 1875 that it had waited long enough and declared France a Republic by one slim vote.

The Third Republic, though more the fruit of an accidental indiscretion than planned political parenthood, reflected a national French response to a century of revolution and reaction. There was universal manhood suffrage on the one hand, but the indirect election of senators of the other. There was a President elected for seven long years and indefinitely eligible for re-election. Nominally he exercised very much the same prerogative which enabled Louis Napoleon Bonaparte to snuff out the Second Republic. But the lessons of that frightening example had not been forgotten and were not disregarded. The new chief executive was put several notches below the legislature when his election was taken away from the multitudes. He promulgated the laws but only with the counter signature of a minister who depended upon the chambers for his political survival. He could not dissolve parliament as such, only the lower house with the advice and consent of the upper. France under the Third Republic—and under the Fourth for that matter—maintained a virtual legislative dictatorship which for all of its inadequacies is the fruit of political experience. Neither king, nor emperor, nor strongman has worked. In the choice of

political forms past events leave the French little choice but to make do what they have.

It should furthermore be pointed out that the French government structure is by no means unique. Parliamentary democracies with a weak executive are rather the norm in present day Europe. The British Queen is a delightful decoration. The current King of Sweden does not play tennis, but neither does he play politics. The President of Western Germany is scarcely more potent than M. Coty is in France. Yet France remains tense, dissatisfied, and unhappy. Unlike her neighbors she seems reluctant to accept the final solution. Why?

One of the grave divisions in France is of a social nature. One may or one may not agree with the Marxian assumption that every society in history has essentially been shaped by a struggle between classes. Yet one can hardly escape the realization that such a struggle has loomed large in the history of post-revolutionary France.

I am not suggesting that any given conflict in recent French history can be evaluated exclusively in social terms. But it is possible to recognize a social cleavage amidst all the other tensions that have held France in their grip.

After the execution of Robespierre in 1794, for instance, a commission found among his papers the revealing draft of a political catechism. Here is what is said in part: "What is our goal! . . . To carry out the constitution for the benefit of the people!" And he went on to ask, "Who will be our enemies?" And now listen to his answer: "The wicked and the RICH!"

At another point of this same document he went even further: "When shall their [the rich men's] interest be identical with that of the people?" He shouted back at himself: "NEVER!" At this point even Robespierre became frightened by his own courage and hastily lined out these last two bold statements.

ROBESPIERRE MIGHT have been frightened by the spectre of social revolution which he himself had conjured up. The contemporary Francois-Noel Babeuf (1760-1797) cultivated it. Perhaps we can explain this first movement of social revolt by once more drawing a parallel to England, this time also quoting from the work of an English colleague. For David Thomson in *The Babeuf Plot* has well said that "in England religious and legal equality, hard won by Civil War and consolidated by nearly a century of tolerant oligarchic rule, could serve as the foundation for political and civil equality. These achieved,

social and economic equality lost their potency as operative ideals. In France, legal and social equality were achieved simultaneously in the Revolution and even a limited kind of economic equality was achieved, too, in the sense that financial privilege and exemptions from taxation were abolished and a large degree of economic independence was attained by the increase of peasant proprietorship."

Babeuf was a leveller; like the levellers he came to a bad end. But the consciousness that the French quest for new institutions was a social as well as a political conflict was soon recognized by others and independently of Karl Marx. In 1848 Alexis de Tocqueville at any rate provided this searching analysis of revolutionary France up to that point:

Our history from 1789 to 1830 viewed from a distance and as a whole affords as it were the picture of a struggle of the death between the Old Regime, its traditions, its memories, hopes and men, as represented by the aristocracy, and the NEW FRANCE led by the Middle Class. The year 1830 closed the first period of our revolutions . . . [and he continues] *In 1830 the triumph of the middle class had been definite and so thorough that all political power, every franchise, every prerogative and the whole government was confined and, as it were, heaped up within the narrow limits of this one class, to the statutory exclusion of all beneath them and the actual exclusion of all above!*

One may justly quarrel with de Tocqueville's use of the word middle-class but one cannot deny the phenomenon which he describes. Only a segment of the bourgeoisie had won the revolution of 1830. The successors of the Rolands and Neckers rather than of the Dantons and the Robespierres were the spear-carriers of Louis Phillipe.

So it came to pass that in 1848 a republican rip-tide swept away the bourgeois monarchy so-called, a republican wave which recruited its leadership from the salons, the counting houses, and factory halls. De Tocqueville had warned in 1847 that "before long, the political struggle will be restricted to those who have and those who have not; property will form the great field of battle; and the principal political question will turn upon the more or less important modifications to be introduced into the right of property."

But the enthusiasts who led the February revolt of 1848 shouted down de Tocqueville's disquieting prophecies of the impending class struggle. They preferred the inspired Jules Michelet who predicted a revolution of the people; the simple, hon-

est, peaceful, and freedom-loving folk who populated the pages of Jacques Rousseau. Writing of the French Revolution, Michelet identified the people as follows: "The humanitarian and salutary aspects of our revolution had the people as the actor, the whole people, everybody. The violent bloody aspects which danger produces in due time are the product of a small number of men." As a revolution becomes bloodier, Michelet asserted, it becomes less popular: "The people," he said, "is generally better than its leaders." Michelet's people were the patriotic segment of society, when one considers his word properly, and patriotism, as de Tocqueville rightly foresaw, was not an issue in 1848. I said earlier that in ten long months republican leadership was unable to establish a viable government. Let me add that it plunged France into yet another civil conflict. Michelet's people divided when the government disbanded the national workshops, and the proletarian leveller again rebelled against the good bourgeois. The latter had might on their side and truly maintained "every franchise, every prerogative and the whole government."

What a costly victory it was! To begin with, Napoleon III's subsequent subversion of the Second Republic was not only made possible by aristocratic forces of order—the Emperor seemed a far more sincere friend of the working man than his democratic and republican adversaries. He cleared slums, he provided work by public projects, both useful and gaudy; he legalized the union and the strike. He cunningly played on the deep divisions which the bloody July of 1848 had bequeathed to French society. Small wonder that Pierre Joseph Proudhon, who in 1840 had answered the question "what is property?" with the cry, "Property is theft," in 1852 "hailed the overthrow of the Second Republic as a great step of progress and extolled Louis Napoleon as the hope of revolutionary France."

The fact of the matter was that the Republic had become a bourgeois ideal. The Republic had kicked the worker in the teeth while Napoleon had provided new dentures. This was to count heavily in the attitude of future generations.

IN ASSUMING the importance of this split between bourgeois and proletariat, one must, however, remember that it had been foreshadowed by a bourgeois like Robespierre and predicted by an aristocrat like de Tocqueville. French socialism harkened back to men other than Marx, to Saint Simon and Fourier whose ideal was an

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both genera the flowers appear near the top of the plant and at the base of a conspicuous groove which occurs on the upper side of the tubercle. It turns out, however, that there is only one very much elongated areole on each tubercle. There is a single true *Mammillaria* which occurs in Oklahoma (*M. heyderi*) and it is known only from Jackson County. It is readily distinguished by its white flowers and the milky juice in its tubercles. The true mammillarias all have separate spine and flower-bearing areoles. Finding any members of this sub-tribe in the field requires patience and careful observation for none of them is conspicuous and they are often hidden by other vegetation.

The epiphyllum group (*Epiphyllanae*) comprises nine genera of plants most of which are tropical epiphytes. They have flat-jointed stems which resemble leaves and most of them are without spines. The flowers are often large and beautiful. The Christmas or crab-claw cactus has long been popular as a house plant. The orchid cacti are hybrids between white-flowered, night-blooming members of this group and red-flowered, day-blooming members of the genus *Heliconia*. Many horticultural varieties of orchid cacti are now on the market and their flowers rival in beauty any on earth.

The coral cacti (*Rhipsalidanae*) differ from the epiphyllums because of their very small flowers and fruits. They occur mostly as epiphytes and may be found hanging from trees or overhanging rocks in moist tropical forests. A few of them have flat-jointed stems, but others have cylindrical, pencil-like joints. Many of them lack spines and the plants therefore do not much resemble ordinary cacti. They look rather as if they ought to be in the mistletoe family. Coral cacti are most abundant in the forests of Brazil. One species, however, has been reported from Southern Florida and it is abundant in the West Indies. This is *Rhipsalis cassytha* which is possibly the only cactus native to the Old World, for it is found likewise in tropical Africa and in Ceylon.

This, then, is the cactus family, a study in variation. Exploring for its members, and growing them, has brought pleasure and healthful diversion to many plant lovers. Outside of distribution and classification, however, science still knows very little about them. Since we know relatively little, it is impossible to tell whether they may become of more economic value than they are at present. In the fields of morphology and development, physiology, and ecology, they present a nearly virgin area for investigation. Even generic and spe-

cific limits are uncertain. The logical place to conduct investigations on the family is in the American Southwest where they are abundant, not in Europe or on the East Coast of the United States. The University of Oklahoma is very favorably located in this respect. While it is not in the center of the cactus country it is readily accessible to Western Texas, Southern Arizona and New Mexico, and the extremely rich region in Central Mexico.

What Are the Russians Like? . . .

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getting drunk. And in his drunkenness the peasant would moan: "I am a miserable sinner. Have mercy on me, oh Lord!" Even when not drunk the Russian is a humble man. One rarely hears him boast. One is much oftener apt to hear him voice his discontent with himself. (All this Soviet bragging that has lately nauseated the world emanates from the Kremlin, not from Russia.)

Another avenue of escape leads into the dream-world of fancy which scholars call art but which to the common man everywhere is simply the urge to create a world nearer to his heart's desire. The most universal form of art in Russia is the folk song. The Russians, as we all know, are remarkable singers and so rich is the common man's store of songs that, like the nightingale, he can sing from morn till midnight without repeating himself. The range of his songs encompasses the whole soul, from deepest sorrow to keenest joy.

You may have found that Russians often talk about their "Russian soul." I believe the "Russian soul" is but a human soul and when a Russian intellectual begins to talk of his soul I feel uneasy. I am so afraid it is merely a pose. Yet the Russian peasant, too, likes the word "soul," and there is all the warmth of the heart in his talk. The Russian is not sentimental: yet he enjoys to feel his feelings, to turn them over in his mind and to invite his neighbors to share them. He does this without ostentation, sincerely, naturally, almost naïvely. In literature, this has produced many works in which there is no "action" but only mood, where the heart is like a harp that sings in the wind. A story of Chekhov's comes to mind which only a Russian could have written: *Toska*.¹ The old coachman has lost his only son; he needs to tell people his grief but nobody will listen, at least not long enough. He finally goes to the stable and starts talking to his horse, the gentle mare. And while she is contentedly chewing her hay he tells her all. Both the humor and the pathos of the scene are genuine

and their effect becomes overpowering through their simultaneity.

These same sensitive Russians can turn around and become hard and cruel. Superficial observers have cited this as an example of a lack of balance and stability in the Russian character, or even of the "dual character" of the Russians. I cannot believe that the Russian character is any more dual than ours or anybody else's. I would rather say only that the Russian pendulum makes quite a hefty swing in both directions.

In this brief attempt at a characterization of the Russians I have made some sweeping generalizations. But there are infinite variations from type. You yourself will have to know a Russian or two, or two hundred, before you can say with some certainty: "This is Russian, this is not." And since for various reasons, including an iron curtain, few of you are likely ever to go and study the Russians in the flesh, I urge you to do the next best thing: read them! All Russia lives in the pages of her classics. Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Turgenev, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Gorky, Chekhov—remember these names. They are Russian writers. But they speak a universal language.

¹ The title defies the translator, at least this one, but to the Russian soul it may mean one or all of the following: grief, sadness, melancholy, anguish, agony, anxiety, distress, yearning, longing, dejection, boredom.

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egalitarian, harmonious, and self-less community, Christian as well as socialist, classless by consent rather than force. True, the foundation of Jules Guesde's *Parti Ouvrière Français* in 1882 and more obviously the *Parti Communiste Français* in 1920 reveals a healthy, dynamic, and dangerous Marxist strain, but its significance must not be overrated. Even after the disheartening May days of 1871 when the Paris commune, both bourgeois and socialist in composition, had succumbed to the deadly volleys loosened by the forces of peace and political respectability, even then the clamor of certain socialist voices for social harmony continued.

To this effect Charles Beslay, a prominent Commune, wrote in *La Verité sur la Commune* (1878): "The bourgeois ought to know that it is in its interest to extend a hand to the workers who ask nothing but to join them in the spirit of brotherhood." Charles Péguy, born two years after Commune blood had washed the pavements of Paris, writing when the passions engendered by the Dreyfus affair glowed red hot,

spoke in defense of "the bourgeois republic which contained the hope of the social republic." To Péguy the class struggle was anathema for yet another reason: It was competitive and hence capitalistic. A true socialist, in his opinion, believed in the harmonizing of all interests in society, and left strife, struggle, and competition to the barbarian. When Marxian and non-Marxian socialists were fused in the SFIO of 1899, Péguy quit the party and became a dissenter. With growing bitterness he watched socialist involvement in the separation struggle against the Catholic Church and eventually ended his days in the bosom of the Church and in the odor of sanctity.

Had Péguy remained a socialist after 1905, he would have had still another cause for alarm. For it became evident to the observer that the socialist party's involvement in political and religious quarrels brought to its ranks such fine talents as the librarian of the École Normale, Lucien Herr, the historian Jean Jaurès, and the literary critic Léon Blum, but not many representatives of the working class. As we pursue the history of the socialist movement, we lose the scent of class conflict because the French Socialist Party became more and more an intellectual coterie of college professors, civil servants, and literati. The horny-handed sons of toil lost faith in it and sought social salvation elsewhere. They had become skeptical when a socialist, Alexandre Millerand, had become a cabinet minister; they became downright incensed when another right-wing socialist, Aristide Briand, responded to the great railroad strike of 1910 by drafting the workers into the army, thus breaking it. Party socialism had become a bourgeois movement.

As a result, the Socialist party never was able to control its potentially most important resource, the labor unions. The unions were neither Marxian, nor St. Simonian, nor yet Fourierist. They became Syndicalist. Syndicalism, as we know, rejects parliamentary party politics as bourgeois, notwithstanding the fact that socialists and communists participate in it. Again let me draw on David Thomson for a graphic comparative description of this development:

The English trade unions and other labor or co-operative movements grew up in tune with . . . the liberal and parliamentary tradition. They demanded equality of rights with other associations . . . and sought their ends eventually by familiar parliamentary and political methods. Their aim was legal protection, freedom of collective bargaining, and freedom of association. French trade unions grew up in hostility to the French liberal tradition, which was so closely identified with business

interests on one hand and with the interest of peasant proprietors on the other. They were more syndicalist, collectivist . . . than they were liberal; their demands were for freedom of direct action, for special powers *within* the community rather than for equality of treatment with other associations; their conception of economic equality was collectivist rather than distributivist. They wanted "National Workshops" rather than Workmen's Compensation Act, a "Worker's Republic" rather than a place within a parliamentary constitution; and they therefore quite logically eschewed parliamentary party-politics and adhered to a policy of direct action through strike, boycott and sabotage. In short, the peculiar tradition of the barricades found natural continuity within the movement of organized labor. . . .

The tradition of the barricades, one might add, exists on both sides, of course. The bitterness, engendered by pitched battles in the streets has made the entrepreneur as uncompromisingly hostile to labor, as labor has been to him. And here, then, is a division and source of instability that really counts.

Labor's distrust of socialism was greatly increased, in France as well as in the rest of Europe, by party socialism's failure to take steps to prevent or stop World War I. Only one socialist party had taken any direct and successful action, after first seizing the reins of government, and that was of course the Bolshevik group in Russia. Their example split the post war socialist parties of Germany, Italy, and France.

The French schism occurred at the national congress held at Tours in 1920. More than half the delegates seceded to form the Communist party. This new organization certainly did not conquer the labor movement through a process of open and official affiliation, but its operatives immediately began to infiltrate and obtain positions of leadership which they have held to this day. The continuing non-political nature of the labor movement thus has preserved the division, it has caused labor to continue to stand aside and view with profound and cynical distrust the workings of their democratic republican government. At the same time this stand has fortified the communist grip on the unions. Attempts by the Catholics and the non-communist left to compete with the general Federation of Labor do not in this context hold out much hope of breaking the communist hold.

Thus the social divisions of France that began with the great Revolution continue, a cancerous, incurable ill. They form part of the substance of the contempt in which many Frenchmen hold the political status quo. They undermine the loyalty and the enthusiasm necessary for the defense of country and government. They must to a large degree be held accountable for the

disaster of 1940 and for the continuing and disturbing feebleness of the sick man in the Seine.

Au Revoir, Saint-Simon . . .

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and also set him almost impossible tasks in the way of improving the court-precedence of the ambassador of France to the Spanish court (which nevertheless our hero fulfilled) while the regular ambassador of France tried to sabotage the work of the ambassador-extraordinary. Moreover, Saint-Simon spoke no Spanish and was occasionally in difficult straits when his loving punctiliousness in paying the calls of etiquette, giving high personages "what was due to them," brought him to a tête à tête with a Spaniard who did not speak French.

The ambassador-extraordinary did succeed in his mission and moreover obtained for himself and his second son the rank of Grandee of Spain and for his elder son induction into the chivalric order of the Golden Fleece. The Marshall, Duke of Berwick, illegitimate son of James II and soldier scarcely inferior to Marlborough whose natural nephew he was, Marlborough's sister Arabella Churchill being Berwick's mother, had established his son, the Duke of Liria, in Spain. Saint-Simon was on good terms with Berwick and so received much kindness and an introduction to Spanish court customs from Liria. The latter, by the way, was a much better linguist than Saint-Simon, who mentions only Latin as a foreign language he could manage. Liria could speak a variety of tongues, even the Gaelic.

What would Saint-Simon think of modern society? Alas, he might decide that "plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose." In the matter of human relations, for example, there is probably not nearly as much difference as might appear on first sight between the servants of a modern corporation or other large organization in the United States and the courtiers of Versailles as Saint-Simon saw them. The expressions "He is a good mixer" and "Il est très liant" may mean just about the same thing. Some dukes, even, says our authority, were "low courtiers, of a baseness that went as far as courting the lackeys." Traits which we amiably dismiss as human do not look so pleasant under the microscope of a Saint-Simon.

It is misleading, however, to speak as though there could be several, nay, a whole class of Saint-Simons when his claim to uniqueness is practically self-evident. Only