

Such a wealth has England earned, ever new, bounteous and augmenting. But the question recurs, does she take the step beyond, namely to the wise use, in view of the supreme wealth of nations? We estimate the wisdom of nations by seeing what they did with their surplus capital. And, in view of these injuries, some compensation has been attempted in England. A part of the money earned returns to the brain to buy schools, libraries, bishops, astronomers, chemists and artists with; and a part to repair the wrongs of this intemperate weaving, by hospitals, savings-banks, Mechanics' Institutes, public grounds and other charities and amenities. But the antidotes are frightfully inadequate, and the evil requires a deeper cure, which time and a simpler social organization must supply. At present she does not rule her wealth. She is simply a good England, but no divinity, or wise and instructed soul. She too is in the stream of fate, one victim more in a common catastrophe.<sup>264</sup> [Ralph Waldo Emerson]

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## CHAPTER 3

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### ***DISPUTED SOVEREIGNTIES***

#### ***AN ERA OF STRIFE GROUNDED IN COLONIALISM, MILITARISM AND IMPERIALISM—DRIVEN BY AGRARIAN, INDUSTRIAL AND URBAN LANDLORDISM***

Against the tide, the radical supporters of Andrew Jackson in the United States were advancing the causes of the republic, or at least their vision of what they believed were the principles that had guided the framers of the Constitution a generation before. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of individual *Americans* of European heritage augmented by

recent immigrants set their sights on the conquest and settlement of all the territory between the Mississippi Valley and the Pacific coast of North America, caring little about the political battles waged in the East or about the moral issues inherent in the conquest of nature. To the north, south and west, the agents of British and Spanish authority watched and waited. Even as vast a territory as was held by the *Americans* seemed insufficient to quench their thirst for new lands.

Spanish-held territory in North America was most ripe for the taking. Spain's authority in the Americas as a whole was greatly weakened, no longer supported by the takings of conquistadors and an endless stream of riches carried away in treasure ships. The British government was, on the other hand, far from ready to turn over any additional territory to the continent-grabbing *Americans*, and British commercial interests were both politically influential and deeply financed. Believing that conflict with the *Americans* over the northern territories was inevitable, the British fortified Quebec and constructed at significant cost to taxpayers an inland canal designed to provide alternative access by water to the interior in the event the *Americans* gained control of the entrance to the St. Lawrence seaway. They did not have long to wait for tensions to erupt into armed conflict. A series of uprisings against British rule in Canada late in 1837 and 1838, supported by many individual *Americans* in the border areas, confirmed British suspicions that the United States included Canada as part of the *American* sense of manifest destiny. Spanish authorities were experiencing much the same pressure in the territory loosely controlled.

Although the United States government had acknowledged by treaty Spanish control over Texas as a province of Mexico, Spanish rule in Mexico itself was about to be overthrown from within. A small landed aristocracy had for three centuries shared power with the Catholic Church and protection under the Spanish monarchy in a manner that effectively prevented the general citizenry from developing the means of effecting reform. Individualism and the experience of self-government

remained alien to those living under Spanish domination even as the Colonials in British America discarded the chains of external rule. However, by the early nineteenth century a small minority of Spanish-Americans recognized in the surge of *American* and British commerce the apparent benefits of *laissez-faire*, and many intellectuals were sincerely affected by the socio-political creed offered in the writings of Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine and their generation. A fledgling reform era began during the late eighteenth century under the direction of Jose de Galvez, Minister for the Indies during the reign of Charles III. The mercantilist grip held by the Spanish aristocracy was loosened and an all too brief period of prosperity began. Unfortunately, Galvez also banished the Jesuits and their educational programs from Mexico, in the process destroying any real possibility of integrating the indigenous people into the Spanish-American culture.

The era of reform ended when Charles IV came to power. Jacobin agents then arrived in Mexico during the French Revolution and helped to ferment conspiracies against the corrupt viceroys appointed by Charles IV. An atmosphere of resistance gradually arose among younger Mexicans, many of whom were of mixed Spanish and indigenous blood (and referred to as *mestizos*). Spanish authority in the Americas then rapidly disintegrated after the abdication of Charles IV and the placement of Joseph Bonaparte on the throne. With chaos reigning in Spain, a series of uprisings began in 1808 that spread throughout Spanish America and lasted for more than two decades. The landed families of Mexico eventually joined forces with former agents of the Spanish regime to lead a fight for independence. In the process, they first recruited then subdued the indigenous tribes as well as the *mestizos*. Under the leadership of a parish priest, Miguel Hidalgo y Costillo, an almost spontaneous uprising spread across Mexico. Disorganization and dissent among the rebels soon appeared, however, and their poorly-trained armies retreated and scattered into the mountains to conduct guerilla warfare. Costillo and other leaders of the insurrection were

eventually captured and executed. Nevertheless, within a year, one of the Costillo faction, Jose Maria Morelos, managed to rebuild and train an army large enough to take control of most of northern Mexico. In 1812 his forces captured Acapulco and much of the south. A convention was then called by Morelos to form a government for the newly-declared and independent Republic of Anahuac. A constitution was drafted incorporating universal suffrage and other democratic processes, but the new government proved inept at the conduct of war and Spanish authorities regained control of most of the country. Early in 1813, Morelos was captured by the Spanish and executed.

What can be fairly stated about Morelos is that he was both a republican and a democrat living in a society with virtually no experience of self-government or respect for individual rights. Henry Bamford Parkes adds that "*Hidalgo and Morelos had failed because they had tried to do too much; they had fought not only for the expulsion of the gachupines [Spanish officials] but also for racial equality, for the abolition of clerical and military privilege, and for the restoration of land to the Indians. The result had been a devastating civil war, which instead of winning Mexican independence had probably delayed it.*"<sup>265</sup> Those who fought understood what they were fighting against but had given little thought to what they were fighting for. There had been no mechanism for the kind of widespread public debate and petitioning that characterized the experience of their *American* neighbors to the north and had served the former subjects of British rule well in the formation of an independent republic.

The defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte brought a new monarch, Ferdinand VII, to the Spanish throne and an end to reform efforts throughout the empire. Unrest exploded into armed conflict. Under the leadership of Simon Bolivar and Jose de San Martin, the southern portion of the Americas was already in mass revolt, uprisings destined to bring an end to Spanish and Portuguese control. Within Mexico, the ultra-conservative Catholic hierarchy (fearful that a revolution would

diminish its power and introduce freedom of religious practice) united behind a conservative nationalist, Agustín de Iturbide. After advancing a plan for independence that preserved Church privileges and the entrenched position of the landed, the wealthy in Mexico quickly rallied to the side of Iturbide. Faced finally with a united resistance and overwhelming odds, the Spanish viceroy ordered the withdrawal of the army. Liberated in this way from Spanish rule, the overwhelming majority of Mexican people were destined to be dominated and oppressed by the army, the landed and the Church.

Mexico's economy, almost totally dependent at this time upon silver mining, was in total disarray. Iturbide offered no solutions to the nation's problems and merely seized dictatorial power and had himself proclaimed emperor. Once in power, he borrowed heavily from private lenders without developing a tax base or any means to obtain revenue. His solution was to create a paper currency and to declare the government's notes legal tender. In the short run this allowed him to repay some of the debt with almost worthless paper. The secondary effect was a rapid increase in prices of basic commodities. He should not have been surprised that private sources of funds quickly disappeared. Within a year after taking the throne, Iturbide was forced to abdicate and seek refuge in Europe. A new constitution was adopted in 1824 that, in form, created a federal system of government similar to that of the United States. The question, once again, was whether Mexico could be governed under democratic institutions and with citizen participation. Added to these internal pressures was the growing problem of incursions from the north.

Despite deep concerns over *American* territorial ambitions, the Mexican government opened Texas to settlement from the United States, hoping to create a buffer between themselves and the existing United States territory. Within a few years the number of *Americans* in Texas surpassed 20,000, a population whose traditions and individualistic attitudes made them extremely difficult subjects. At the same time,

pressures on the new government from within the heart of Mexico were mounting. Unable to tax the Church or the country's landowners, the government repeatedly looked to European bankers for financial assistance. As the government's debt mounted beyond the political will of the leaders to tax themselves, Mexico's financial difficulties invited foreign intervention. By the late 1820s the position of the government had become critical. Civil war erupted, and the Spanish saw an opportunity to reclaim their colonial territory. A force was dispatched from Cuba and landed at Vera Cruz. Here, the Spanish were confronted by an army loyal to Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna and forced to retreat.

Anxious for leadership, the moderates in Mexico united to support the election of Santa Anna to the presidency. Rather than forming his own government, however, Santa Anna waited until 1834, then seized dictatorial powers. With order seemingly restored, he stepped down after the election of a new Congress and President. In the north, the *American* settlers were now in rebellion against Mexican authority and by the end of 1835 had routed government troops at a battle at San Antonio, driving them south across the Rio Grande River. Santa Anna decided to march north and take on the Texans. His army of some three thousand made its first real contact with *American* resistance at the Alamo in February of 1836. After taking the Alamo and executing all those who fought against him, Santa Anna pursued the bulk of the Texan army. Late in April, the Texans (commanded by Sam Houston) turned to face Santa Anna at the San Jacinto River. The Texans emerged victorious and, although the Mexican government refused to acknowledge the independence of Texas, the new republic attracted more and more settlers from the southern part of the United States. Mexico was powerless to intervene. The status of Texas remained precarious, however, because of resistance to accepting Texas—with slavery—into *the Union*. Northern opposition continued, in fact, until John Tyler became President of the United States and negotiated statehood for Texas as part of what became known as the Missouri Compromise of 1845.

To the south, the Mexicans were in a state of near economic collapse. Impatient French creditors managed to gain support from the French government, and a naval force was dispatched to secure payment of the money owed. Santa Anna appeared with his meager army, and the French finally agreed to withdraw after securing Santa Anna's promise of full repayment. The state of affairs in Mexico was deteriorating rapidly, with the northern areas in open rebellion and under the control of the still warlike indigenous tribes, whose chiefs thought they had a real opportunity to regain their full independence. With each passing day, the Mexican government was sinking deeper into debt. They were already in default on a \$2 million settlement owed to Texans for the destruction of property by Santa Anna's army but could obtain no credit from European financiers. In 1841 a coalition of Mexican generals formed around Santa Anna and took control of the government. Santa Anna was elected president and given dictatorial powers, which he used to extract loans from the Church and attach heavy duties on imports. Soon, however, the country was bled dry of financial resources and an uprising sent Santa Anna into exile.

Although the admission of Texas to *the Union* still awaited the election of John Tyler to the U.S. Presidency, his predecessor, James K. Polk, welcomed the prospect of statehood for Texas; and, in his inaugural address confidently declared what he firmly believed to be the manifest destiny of the United States:

It is confidently believed that our system may be safely extended to the utmost bounds of our territorial limits, and that as it shall be extended the bonds of our Union, so far from being weakened, will become stronger....

Nor will it become in a less degree my duty to assert and maintain by all constitutional means the right of the United States to that portion of our territory which lies beyond the Rocky Mountains....<sup>266</sup>

Polk's inept attempts to negotiate with the Mexican government of the moment produced no results. United States troops under Zachary Taylor were, as a result, ordered to take possession of the remaining territory north of the Rio Grande River. A skirmish between U.S. and Mexican troops ignited the conflict into a full-blown war, with Taylor playing a decisive role. Although disease decimated Taylor's force, he engaged and twice defeated the Mexicans, capturing Monterey in mid-1846. A small U.S. fleet was also dispatched around South America to take possession of California. Desperate, the Mexicans invited Santa Anna back from Cuba to take charge of the war. In order to get through the *American* blockade, Santa Anna managed to convince Polk he would seek a peaceful settlement once back in power. Instead, Santa Anna raised an army of twenty-five thousand and marched against Taylor, whose own force had been split in half (at Polk's orders) for an advance against Vera Cruz under the direction of Winfield Scott. Despite being greatly outnumbered, Taylor's superior firepower and outmoded tactics employed by Santa Anna held off the attack and forced the Mexicans to pull back under the cover of darkness. Chaos reigned in the Mexican capital, as the government changed hands almost as quickly as allegiances. Falsely declaring victory in the north, Santa Anna now turned to face Scott's force advancing from Vera Cruz. In March of 1847 the *Americans* handed him a resounding defeat, after which Scott advanced toward Mexico City.

Between March and August, Santa Anna gathered a new army to defend the capital. Although the Mexicans fought vigorously, Scott eventually entered and occupied the city. The fighting deteriorated into violent and destructive guerrilla warfare, leading to many unnecessary deaths and the destruction of property. In the south, the Mayan tribes (supplied with weapons by the British) took advantage of the situation to drive the Mexicans from much of the Yucatan peninsula. Faced with total defeat, a new Mexican government formed by Pena y Pena opened peace negotiations with the *Americans*. Once again, Santa Anna escaped



with his life, exiled to Jamaica. By the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, ratified by the United States on March 10, 1848, the southern boundary<sup>267</sup> between the two countries was established, the Mexicans ceding all territory in California from San Diego north to the United States. The full realization of manifest destiny seemed within the grasp of the *Americans*.

Two years earlier, the British and U.S. governments had also reached an accord over the boundary between Canada and the United States, dividing the Oregon territory at the 49th parallel. All that was left to close the North American frontier was a generation of westward migration and population growth. The *Americans* were quickly establishing themselves as the dominant society in the Americas. Far to the south, nine sovereign nations were organized in the southern hemisphere following their own successful wars for independence against Spain and Portugal. For some time to come, Spain would continue to control Cuba, Puerto Rico and the colony of San Domingo on the island of Hispaniola. The French held Haiti, Guadeloupe and Martinique. Denmark possessed the Virgin Islands. Only British control of Canada and other territorial holdings remained as the primary threat to *American* hegemony and territorial objectives.

## THE MAKINGS OF AN IMPERIAL POWER

As mid-century approached, Britain controlled not only Canada but the islands of Bermuda, Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad in the West Indies, Guiana on the mainland of South America and the Falkland Islands. The significance of Britain's island possessions became more strategic than economic following the abolition of slavery and emancipation of the descendants of Africans brought to these islands. Sugar, the primary island product, was profitable only with slave labor and became even less viable after the agitation for free trade brought the dis-

mantling of protective tariffs. Many British sugar growers simply abandoned their plantations, leaving the ex-slaves to survive as best they could. By the 1860s, however, the appalling conditions experienced by their island subjects forced the British government to take over the responsibility for governing. Survival even at a subsistence level required the allocation of enormous sums out of the budget. On the other side of the world, British settlers (many of whom were transported for crimes great and minor, including agitation for socio-political reform) were establishing their own version of Anglo-European *civilization* out of the thinly-populated lands of Australia and New Zealand. The costs—in financial reserves and lives—of defending and maintaining this global empire was enormous. Hurricanes took countless ships and their men to the bottom of the ocean; dysentery and yellow fever killed tens of thousands more. Within Britain, where the government treasury was nearly bankrupt by years of warfare, the colonies were finally being understood by some as a drain rather than a benefit.

Britain's reformers and radicals struggled to advance measures they hoped would relieve the misery of propertyless workers and the unemployed, while the conservative defenders of the status quo stood guard over the legislative and ministerial means to prevent worker combinations, contain crime and mitigate all the social ills Malthus so easily convinced them were related to rising birth rates among the poor. The obvious policy choice was to take advantage of the huge and distant territories of Canada, Australia and New Zealand as *safety valves*, places where re-settlement of undesirables and the unemployed could be accomplished. To be sure, not everyone favored a reduction in the labor force; the new class of agrarian and industrial landlords needed a ready pool of workers who had no choice but to labor for subsistence wages under terrible conditions. Few foresaw the extent of the outward migration that was about to be. Initially, the impetus for resettlement came from reformers within and outside the government. In 1829, Edward Wakefield (1796-1862), a leading Benthamite, formed the

National Colonization Society and advanced a plan calling for large-scale migration. William Molesworth and other members in the House of Commons championed Wakefield's plan, producing a report that set the stage for later settlement efforts outside of Britain. Of even greater influence was a survey of Canada made in 1838 by John George Lambton (the first Earl of Durham).

One result of Lambton's report was the Act of Union (1840) that brought all of Canada together under one governing body and instituted other measures in the name of reform. Lambton awakened his countrymen to the inevitable loss of Canada should the British government continue to follow the same policies that had so alienated Anglo-Americans in their former colonies to the south:

The experience of keeping colonies and governing them well ought at least to have a trial, ere we abandon forever a vast dominion which might supply the wants of our surplus population, and raise up fresh consumers of our manufacturers and producers of a supply for our wants.<sup>268</sup>

British-Americans in Canada became indignant at the government's early plan to transport convicts to their territory, and this plan was dropped in favor of the distant and empty continent of Australia. Between 1787 and 1820 more than 130,000 prisoners were transported to Australia. A few escaped into the harsh interior and learned to live off the land or joined forces in roving bands of robbers, but most spent their lives at hard labor or until their sentences were completed.

The first serious departure from the transportation system as the means of bringing settlers to Australia occurred with the founding of South Australia in 1834 by Edward Wakefield. Wakefield sold large tracts of land to yeoman farmers and used the proceeds to develop the infrastructure necessary to attract new businesses and settlers. German immigrants arrived to create extensive vineyards, and others turned the land into a bread basket covered by wheat fields. Adelaide, planned in

1836 under a grid system and surrounded by park land, became the administrative center for South Australia. "Adelaide," notes the Australian economist O.H.K. Spate, "*unlike Sydney and Melbourne, ... was founded by gentlemen for gentlemen.*"<sup>269</sup> Despite these efforts, however, gradual, orderly development and expansion—guided by a wealthy landed class—was not to be. Australia's immigrant population exploded during the 1850s after the discovery of gold in New South Wales and Victoria. Some 800,000 immigrants arrived between 1850-1860; and, as the gold fields expired, these miners (the successful and the unsuccessful) turned to the frontier for land or to the few cities for work. By this time, the total population of Australia had climbed to nearly one and a half million.

Wakefield's influence also extended to New Zealand. He created the New Zealand Association in 1839 and raised the finances necessary to send his brother William and one of his sons at the head of an expedition to the islands. The most important result of that journey was the *purchase* of a large portion of the country from the Maori chiefs. The British government followed by dispatching a military force to take control of the islands. A rough sort of rapprochement then developed between the British colonizers and the Maori tribes. In 1845, George Grey (until then the Governor of South Australia) was appointed governor of New Zealand; and, under his direction, the rights of the Maori as well as newly-arriving settlers were brought under centralized protection. In 1855 the six provinces within New Zealand came together under a loose confederation that guaranteed a considerable degree of self-government.

## MONOPOLY AND MILITARISM

### Bringing Modernization (and Christianity) To The Peoples of Africa and Asia

Although the initial efforts by the British to expand their sphere of influence in the Old World beyond Eurasia had been undertaken privately by the East India Company, government oversight of British interests in India became the responsibility in 1784 of an appointed governor-general. This was but a minor intrusion on the Company's activities. Supported by a mercenary army of British-trained Indians, the East India Company was able to control the course of events with a relatively small number of employees. This was accomplished, in part, because of the village-oriented socio-political structure that dominated rural life in India, exacerbated by the animosity existing between Mogul, Moslem and Hindu groups. An extraordinarily rigid form of feudalism also kept the Indian peoples isolated from one another. For many centuries this structure had enabled the Mogul rulers to dominate the population largely unchallenged. "*Within the village it was not the individual that mattered, but rather the joint family and the caste,*" writes historian L.S. Stavrianos. "*This group form of organization was a source of social stability but also of national weakness.*"<sup>270</sup> As a result, when the Mogul bureaucratic structure and military power weakened during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, India's peasants were frequently victimized by oppressive tax collectors and by marauding bands of robbers who demanded tribute. By the early eighteenth century, Mogul control over India was disintegrating and both Moslem and Hindu groups established independent states. The East India Company, assisted by indigenous merchants, effectively manipulated these groups against one another.

The clash of cultural values and traditions intensified as the British system of agrarian and industrial landlordism was transplanted to India. For the general populace, what they experienced was a transition

from a state of familiar despotism to oppression under a foreign and largely incomprehensible system. The Indian reaction to the British version of *modernization* is described by Winston Churchill in this way:

By the 1850's railways, roads, posts, telegraphs, and schools were beginning to push and agitate their way across the countryside, and were thought by many Indians to threaten an ancient society whose inmost structure and spirit sprang from a rigid and unalterable caste system. If everyone used the same trains and the same schools, or even the same roads, it was argued, how could caste survive?<sup>271</sup>

The British presence, although powerful, was seen by many Indians as but a mere interruption in the flow of their ancient civilization. What the British thought their longer-term role in India would be does not come through very clearly. As the nineteenth century progressed, the primary question debated among the British was whether the monopoly of the East India Company was to be preserved under *laissez-faire* policies. Direct government rule in India was attacked by John Stuart Mill, who drafted the East India Company's response to a proposed Act for the Better Government of India introduced in 1857. He urged Parliament to permit the East India Company to assist the Indians in the formation of their own government and depend on an expanding trade to protect British interests. History and his own experience had shown Mill how clearly advantageous to all were the cooperative relationships established between distant peoples when mutually-beneficial commerce was permitted:

A people may be in a quiescent, indolent, uncultivated state, with all their tastes either fully satisfied or entirely undeveloped, and they may fail to put forth the whole of their productive energies for want of any sufficient object of desire. The opening of a foreign trade, by making them acquainted with new objects, or tempting them by the easier acquisition of things which they had not previously thought attainable,

sometimes works a sort of industrial revolution in a country where resources were previously undeveloped...

But the economical advantages of commerce are surpassed in importance by those of its effects, which are intellectual and moral. It is hardly possible to overrate the value, in the present low state of human improvement, of placing human beings in contact with persons dissimilar to themselves, and with modes of thought and action unlike those with which they are familiar. Commerce is now, what war once was, the principal source of this contact...

Before, the patriot, unless sufficiently advanced in culture to feel the world his country, wished all countries weak, poor, and ill-governed, but his own: he now sees in their wealth and progress a direct source of wealth and progress to his own country. It is commerce which is rapidly rendering war obsolete by strengthening and multiplying the personal interests which are in natural opposition to it.<sup>272</sup>

Mill was quite mistaken, unfortunately, in his assessment of the influence of commerce on the attitudes of peoples toward one another. Global trade was certainly increasing, but even in the United States the passing of generations had made only a small advance in bringing people of different ethnic, religious or racial backgrounds together. The "*patriot*" to whom Mill referred could have been neither the unpropertied laborer, agrarian landlord nor industrial landlord, the latter two groups acting repeatedly out of a perceived self-interest in order to gain government protection from foreign and domestic competition. And, finally, the foundation of commerce upon which the nineteenth century world was built linked the State and the landlords in a powerful partnership driven by nationalistic and imperial designs. Under these circumstances war was not only not obsolete but inevitable. For many of those societies following this path, the wars would erupt because of civil unrest, oppressive colonial policies and the quest to achieve hegemony within the core of Eurasian states. If Mill's ability to see into the future proved to be overly optimistic, he was more successful in the use of his prestige on behalf of political reform at home.

By Mill's reasoning, the only legitimate government is one that takes a representative form and is subjected to the constraints of positive law and removal by the vote. Admittedly, there is considerable difficulty in moving with any deliberate speed from an oligarchical socio-political structure to one that inherently protects individual liberty. Equally important to Mill is the achievement of a far wider distribution of wealth than was possible under traditional circumstances. What Mill understood was that a democratic framework of government without significant equality of opportunity might survive but could not truly prosper. If real change was to occur, he argued, protectionist measures had to be removed on external trade, direct taxation ought to be no more than what was absolutely necessary for the cost of government and levied "*in proportion to the revenue which they [citizens] respectively enjoy under the protection of the state.*"<sup>273</sup> He makes a strong case against taxes on the necessities of life and for lower excise taxes on tobacco, wine, beer, sugar and coffee because they fall disproportionately on poorer consumers. Even in combination, these measures will only mitigate injustice; therefore, in order to secure and preserve democracy, Mill presses for government-funded universal education. He is convinced that only an educated citizenry will fight to preserve self-government and never voluntarily return to a "*patriarchal or paternal system*" dominated by the privileged few. "*To be under the power of some one, instead of being as formerly the sole condition of safety, is now, speaking generally, the only situation which exposes to grievous wrong,*" warns Mill, adding, "*[t]he so-called protectors are now the only persons against whom, in any ordinary circumstances, protection is needed.*"<sup>274</sup> To summarize Mill's overall positions: he believes the necessary and proper roles of government are to establish and instruct citizens in standards of moral behavior, foster competitive markets, prevent the formation of monopolies and make use of the tax system to effect a broader distribution of wealth than would result under *laissez-faire*. In these views he



is far closer to the cooperative individualism of Paine than to the liberalism of Ricardo or the utilitarianism of his father.

Some, but not all, of Mill's positions were adopted as guiding principles for policies adopted by the British government during the decades of his greatest influence. The India Act was passed in 1858, placing all authority for governing in the hands of the Secretary of State for India. A governor-general, assisted by an executive council, was empowered to determine policy; a Civil Service dominated almost exclusively by British nationals then saw to the implementation of laws by use of a large network of provincial services staffed by Indian nationals. Under this system, the traditional socio-political arrangements directing the lives of Indians experienced no significant reform or improvement. What Mill should have observed (and may have understood even intuitively) was that the privatization of land established under British influence combined with other property law and tax policies to even more deeply impoverish millions of Indian peasants in the same way similar practices operated in Ireland and in Britain itself. In order to meet the demands of a new class of landlords for higher and higher land rent payments, the peasant farmers were forced to shift from domestic food crops to cash crops (including cotton) grown for export. Manufactured goods then flowed from Britain into India, putting the village artisans out of business and seriously disrupting the system of subsistence production without creating alternative employment or bringing industrialization. Thus, British investment facilitated the overlay of a bureaucratic structure onto an economic system weighed down by the caste system. Population increases under these conditions intensified competition for access to even very marginal lands, driving up rents taken by the landlords and sending millions of unpropertied families to the expanding cities.

The Indian subcontinent had presented to the British who ventured there an opportunity to make their personal fortune and return home. Few considered themselves as settlers or India as their new homeland.

The land was far too densely populated for wholesale removal of the indigenous peoples, so the British merely superimposed their institutions and system of law on top of the existing cultures. A new civilization did not quite develop, but the old one was largely undermined. Within India's own intellectual community, a small number of individuals realized that the survival of India in an industrializing world depended upon an understanding of Western science, technology and institutions. Among the British, there were at least a few who felt a deep responsibility to assist the Indians in this regard. Thomas Macaulay, who in 1834 became head of a Committee on Public Instruction, envisioned the creation of a British-educated aristocracy of talented Indians who would serve as liaisons between the Indians and their British rulers. The system that finally emerged reached into the Hindu upper class but was rejected by Moslems and did nothing to address the near-universal illiteracy of the general population. The unforeseen consequences are summarized by L.S. Stavrianos:

The English had introduced their language and culture in India in order to modernize the country and to create a Western-educated class that would help them in the work of administration. They did attain these objectives, but at the same time they undermined fatally their rule in India. For it was precisely this Western-educated class that used European ideology to attack British domination and to organize a nationalist movement that eventually culminated in an independent India.<sup>275</sup>

On balance, the historical evidence suggests that British occupation prevented the creation of several independent nation-states out of the collapse of Mogul power. Whether some other Eurasian power, Russia most likely, might have forcibly annexed part of India by way of Afghanistan is conjecture, but certainly a very real possibility. This seems all the more likely given the collapse of the Ottoman empire.

In the first decades of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman empire remained as a large if extremely weak buffer between the Western

powers and Asia. Industrialization and the modernization of Turkish socio-political institutions had hardly begun, so that the empire was threatened from within and without. The loss of territory was gradual but virtually uninterrupted. Russian victories in a war that lasted from 1768 to 1774 resulted in the loss of the Balkans and the northern shores of the Black and Azov Seas. A second war fought between 1787 and 1791 put Russian armies on the doorstep of Constantinople and forced the Turks to cede additional territory to their powerful northern neighbor. Then, for reasons of mutual survival in the face of French expansionism, the Russian and Ottoman empires joined in a temporary alliance with Britain and Austria. Napoleon Bonaparte hoped to take and hold the Egyptian coast of North Africa, thereby denying Britain access to India. The French expeditionary force landed in Egypt during 1798 but experienced unexpectedly stiff opposition from the Egyptians. Thanks to the destruction of the French navy by Horatio Nelson, the French army was cut-off from supplies and reinforcements and left to its inevitable defeat.

A Turkish army, supported by the British fleet, engaged the French in July of 1799 near Alexandria. Within weeks, Napoleon Bonaparte was forced to make his escape through the British blockade and return to the European continent. His army remained to fight on and obtain a negotiated settlement. A year passed and General Kleber, the French commander, was murdered by a Moslem nationalist. His successor, General Menou, met then fled before a British force landed to the northeast of Alexandria in March of 1801. Late in March the British were reinforced by the Turks and later, supported by a British and Indian army, landed in Suez. Faced with the prospect of a devastating defeat, the French surrendered Cairo, then Alexandria, and were taken back to the continent by the British fleet. A small British force occupied Egypt and nominally restored the Turkish Sultan's authority. A period of anarchy ensued until Mehemet Ali (1769-1848),<sup>276</sup> arose as commander of an Albanian occupation force and—by a complex deception—divided and defeated the

Pasha and *beys* (i.e., native rulers) who had competed for control over Cairo. Reluctantly, but with virtually no power to do otherwise, the Turkish Sultan appointed Mehemet Ali as governor.

Egypt now had a national leader and an experienced army. Although Mehemet Ali was uneducated and illiterate, he understood how to use power. He built and trained a peasant army that in 1807 defeated a British force sent to return power to the Mameluke military caste. After executing the remaining Mamelukes, he created a highly centralized dictatorship and nationalized the land and productive resources of Egypt. One aspect of his reforms looked very much like the type of State Socialism adopted by the Soviets (and other Marxist-Leninist dominated societies) after their consolidation of power. Government officials “collected the entire produce of the peasants, deducted from it the rents and taxes, sold the produce through the State organisation, and then paid the peasant his share of the proceeds.”<sup>277</sup> On the positive side, order and a degree of stability appeared where none had existed. Within only a few years, for example, irrigation added more than a million acres to the land under cultivation. Coinage was introduced as the nation’s currency, which stabilized prices and stimulated foreign trade. Egypt under Mehemet Ali entered the beginning stage of becoming a modern State on the periphery of Eurasian power.

The Ottoman Turks, plagued by an ultra-conservative Church-State hierarchy and by internal corruption, had been terminally weakened by the wars against Russia. A small group of intellectuals surrounding the Sultan, Selim III, attempted to introduce limited military reforms, but conservative reactionaries forced Selim III to abdicate in 1808. He was murdered not long afterward. In the interim, hostilities against Russia once again erupted into warfare. The Turks received a devastating defeat in 1811 at Slobozia, on the left bank of the Danube River. Under the Treaty of Bucharest the following year, the Ottoman empire was further reduced by the loss of Bessarabia. An eight-year war between Persia and Russia also secured for the Russians control over Georgia and territory

on the western shore of the Caspian Sea. Indigenous tribesmen fought a guerilla war against Russian domination for many decades, but the Russian presence gradually intensified. Russian involvement in the war for Greek independence brought yet another war and victory over the Turks, who were forced to cede additional territory.

Observing from Cairo the decline of the Turks, Mehemet Ali accelerated his own plan to step into the void. He brought in French instructors and recruited an army of 90,000. With this force he conquered the Sudan, the island of Crete and extended Egyptian domination for a limited time over Syria and Arabia. He was determined to finally overthrow the Ottoman regime and forge a powerful modern State to resist further Eurasian encroachments. Had the Russians not threatened to intervene in 1833, the Egyptians would have likely occupied Constantinople and brought the Ottoman empire to an inglorious end. In 1838, with his army now swelled to a quarter of a million men, Mehemet Ali defeated another Turkish army. At this point, the British Foreign Secretary, Henry Temple Palmerston, moved to curtail the Egyptian leader's territorial ambitions and to bring what remained of the Ottoman empire under the guiding arm of a joint protectorate. Mehemet Ali, forced to pull his forces out of Syria, was also faced with a deteriorating economic situation at home—created largely because of his military adventurism.

Mehemet Ali's ambition had pulled far too many peasants off the land, reducing not only agricultural production but government revenue as well. Circumstances improved somewhat with the end of war, as his attention returned to the expansion of Egypt's infrastructure. Despite financial difficulties, the port of Alexandria was expanded and modernized, facilitating a tremendous increase in commercial activity. Cotton production was subsidized as were other infant industries viewed as essential to a powerful and independent nation. However, by granting supporters deeds to large, uncultivated tracts of land, Ali created a new class of foreign, rent-seeking landowners, who were alienated from the

Egyptian people and who contributed little or nothing to the production of goods and services vital to an expanding economy.

After Mehemet Ali's death in 1849, a reactionary and confused decade followed under the reigns of his two grandsons, Abbas and Said. Abbas, who had little interest in continuing the efforts to create a modern Egyptian state, was murdered by his own bodyguard after only five years in power. Said then took power. He expanded the distribution of private land deeds to include Turks, and the State system of marketing agricultural production was discarded. Tariffs against foreign goods were removed, but peasant farmers were faced with high rents and taxes, leaving them with almost no purchasing power. In order to pay their taxes, many peasants were forced to borrow from money lenders, putting their crops up as collateral at extremely low fixed prices. In the foreign policy arena, both Abbas and Said made concessions to the British, allowing them to land troops in Alexandria for overland transport on their way to India. By agreeing in 1854 to the construction of the Suez Canal, Said also put Egypt directly in harm's way of Eurasian competition in the Far East. Thousands of Egyptians, forced to work on the Canal under intolerable conditions, died of exposure and mistreatment.

Said's successor, Khedive Ismail (who reigned from 1863 to 1879), ended the system of forced labor but was pressured by the French to contribute additional, very scarce financial reserves to the project. A shortage of cotton in world markets after war erupted in 1861 between the *American* States created a temporary boom for the Egyptian economy. Foolishly, Ismail borrowed heavily and spent with great abandon. Railway lines were extended, a telegraph line constructed, new canals and bridges were built and Cairo provided with a permanent supply of fresh water. Even though the Suez Canal was completed in 1869, its full potential for carrying trade and generating revenue was slow to materialize, and Ismail's financial problems forced him to sell his interest in the Canal.

Over eighty percent of the traffic on the Canal involved British trade with India. Although the French held a majority interest in the Canal and were solicited by Ismail to purchase his remaining shares, the French government yielded to British protests over a French monopoly and declined to assist private French investors in raising the necessary finances. Benjamin Disraeli, the British Prime Minister, moved quickly to purchase the shares on behalf of the British government. With a loan provided by Baron Rothschild, the Suez Canal came under French-Anglo control. By 1876 the Egyptian government was near bankruptcy and had to postpone repayment of its foreign-held debt. Within three years, the dynasty of Albanian leadership ended when Ismail was deposed and forced into exile. Although Egypt had become the Moslem world's experiment in *laissez-faire liberalism*, the huge debt incurred in the process left Egyptians at the mercy of foreign creditors and for all practical purposes under the control of French and British interests.

If few British statesmen or industrialists initially recognized in Egypt the potential for a profitable commercial relationship, the case of India was just the opposite. The British went to great lengths to gain access to the riches of India. Thus, in the case of India, British empire-building followed the pursuit of profit; taking control of governmental institutions and building a modern infrastructure became necessary, if opportunistic, extensions of commercial activities. Egypt, on the other hand, was considered by British leaders primarily for its strategic position as a gateway to India. Construction of a railway between Alexandria and Suez was one example of how an improved Egyptian infrastructure facilitated Britain's economic objectives. Palmerston declared that although Britain's interest required the ability to travel through Egypt, and that trade between the two countries ought to be encouraged, he had no desire to take on the burden of governing the Egyptians. Fearful that the Suez Canal would upset this arrangement and threaten British interests in the Far East, Palmerston therefore fought against its completion. John

Stuart Mill, holding to the belief that British foreign policy ought to be consistently enlightened, thought Palmerston a reactionary.

Viewed in the context of the events of the early and mid-nineteenth century, British expansionism seems far more haphazard and opportunistic than the result of deliberate planning. Yet, beyond the obvious commercial and territorial interests, some of the British also carried with them a missionary zeal to bring *Western* practices to non-Western peoples. Trevelyan refers to “*the benevolent ideals...generally prevalent in Downing Street*” and the “[g]reat benefits conferred on a very large proportion of mankind”<sup>278</sup> resulting from a British presence. To a degree, their efforts were rewarded in the form of a global economic community characterized by a uniform system of commercial law and communication made possible by the spread of the English language. British reformers even accomplished what humanitarians in the United States could not. The slave trade had been brought to an end in 1807, and the emancipation of all people held in bondage within the British empire followed. Realizing that freedom without property condemned the descendants of Africans and other former slaves to lives of misery, the British government also committed financial resources to the betterment of their condition. In Africa, the British government took control of the colony of Sierra Leone on the western coast (established in 1787 as a result of pressure by reformers in Britain). Sierra Leone was to become the African destination for former slaves and those freed from captured slave ships.<sup>279</sup> By the early 1830s the population of the colony grew to over 30,000 and by the 1860s more than 130,000 Africans had been liberated and repatriated. For somewhat less altruistic reasons, the British government continued to subsidize the colony and established an important naval base at Freeport, its capital. Eventually, companies moved into Sierra Leone to exploit timber resources for export to European markets.

Anti-slavery reformers in the United States followed the British example by creation of the American Colonization Society, which in



1822 established a colony for African-Americans encouraged to leave the United States for an opportunity to create their own society. Adjacent to Sierra Leone, this colony became in 1847 the Republic of Liberia, with a form of government modeled on that of the United States and with problems of self-sufficiency very similar to those of its neighbor.

Among the other European powers, Portugal claimed titular control over two large territories on the African continent—Angola in the southwest and Mozambique in the southeast. The Dutch and Danes held small coastal fortresses in West Africa, and the French gained control of Algiers in 1830. Before long, French settlers migrated eastward into Tunisia. In 1845, the French and British combined in an attack on the main port of Madagascar, after which an indigenous regime was established—with Anglo-French support—to rule over the Malgache people. Despite these advances, European penetration in eastern Africa was as yet minimal; here, the coastal lands and the slave trade were controlled from Zanzibar by the Omani sultan, Sayyid Said. And, in western Africa, a number of powerful kingdoms (protected in part by European susceptibility to malaria) blocked European encroachment. Of these, the Ashanti held back the British for several decades and protected a rich storehouse of mineral wealth within their territory.

Meanwhile, the British embarked on an effort to consolidate their control over the southern tip of Africa. At the time of the British arrival to the Cape in 1795, the indigenous Hottentots had largely been driven off (or succumbed to smallpox) by earlier generations of Dutch farmers, the Boers. As occurs frequently when people of different races come together, there was some mixture of blood. Not only the Dutch, but men of Indian, Asian and other European heritage found their way to southern Africa and eventually fathered children with Hottentot women. A new race of people with mixed blood gradually appeared, but one living at the margin of a society wholly dominated by Europeans. By the early 1830s the European population of the colony had increased

from around twenty thousand to over sixty-five thousand, and the Boers were feeling the pressures of British rule, combined with a dwindling supply of open land for grazing their cattle. By an ordinance adopted in 1828, the descendants of the Hottentots were to be guaranteed equal protections under British law, a direct attack on Boer assertions of racial superiority and land monopoly. Boer resistance intensified, for reasons the British authorities seemed not to have anticipated or understood:

Anglicisation was not only ill-conceived, it was unsuccessful. The English were to discover, as the Spaniards had learnt in the sixteenth century, that no race has ever clung more tenaciously to its own culture and institutions than the Dutch, and the only result of the new policy...was to harden those differences of opinion, especially on the native question, which were already beginning to appear.<sup>280</sup>

The initial Boer response was to break free of British control by migrating. After moving east away from the Cape, the Boers managed to successfully push out most of the Bantu and subjugate those who remained. At the same time, the British established a small trading post further up the eastern coast at Port Natal and began trading with the Nguni and Sotho people in the interior. Frontiersmen who ventured into the interior returned with information of a vast, depopulated territory to the northeast. Encouraged by this news, many Boer families packed up their belongings and began a mass exodus into the interior. They defeated the Zulus and Ndebele in a series of battles lasting until 1838, after which the Zulus made peace and accepted the Boer presence. The Ndebele moved further north. The Boers then formed their own republic in Natal, ignoring British laws prohibiting slavery and setting the stage for a response from the British authorities.

In 1842 a British force was dispatched to take Port Natal from the Boers. The British successfully drove off a Boer attack, and by the following year were firmly in control of Natal. A second war erupted in

1847 in the eastern frontier territory, also ending in British occupation of the region. Land within the area settled by the Boers was set aside for the Bantu, and again the Boers moved further outside the reach of British authority, establishing the Orange Free State and the Transvaal (after 1853, renamed the South African Republic). In 1852 the British governor of the Cape Colony abandoned any claim to authority over the Boers in those regions. British concerns were by this time directed at improving the Cape's infrastructure and economic base. An export economy emerged—built initially around wines—that soon became dependent on the production of wool for English textile factories. A constitution was adopted in 1853 establishing a bicameral legislature and granting the vote to a large majority of the male population. Within the two Boer republics, all socio-political rights were reserved for themselves only; the inferiority of indigenous Africans was accepted as indisputable fact and their role defined as servant to the Boers. Boer settlers were also moving into the territory of the Basuto, which led to war in 1865, after which the Basuto sought British protection. Beyond the Transvaal, more than a quarter million Zulus lived peacefully until 1880, when a British invasion imposed external control.

The European statesmen had learned almost nothing from their imperialist experiences with less technologically advanced peoples. The costs in lives and financial reserves expended eventually reached a level where the citizens at home were becoming more deeply impoverished in order to defend the profits earned by a very few. Moreover, the French, German, Russian, British and other Eurasian governments struggled with the consequences of their policies, dealing harshly but inconsistently with dissidents whose ideas of what ought to replace existing hierarchies covered a broad range of philosophical thought and practical design.

## IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST Political Economists For And Against Laissez-Faire

As touched on in the previous chapter, the state of Eurasian affairs to which Alexis de Tocqueville returned after his sojourn in North America was one of great and subtle upheavals. British adventurers and landlords were leading the way to a new and complex era of Old World empire building. Tocqueville could look in his own country to French ambitions for the colonization of Algiers. He, in fact, wrote in favor of establishing commercial relations with the Berber and Arab tribes and of a limited occupation that left the indigenous peoples under self-government while allowing for French immigrants to develop the land not occupied. Even as the socio-political arrangements and institutions of the Eurasian states were being transported to other continents, reformers in Britain and elsewhere fought for a broadening participation in government and for *laissez-faire* policies in private arrangements. These social dynamics Tocqueville could see and feel, confirmed by his travels in the British Isles, and they brought him to reach very particular conclusions about the human condition:

If one examines what has happened in the world since the origin of societies, one will easily discover that equality exists only at the two extremes of civilization. Savages are equal among themselves because they are all equally weak and ignorant. Very civilized men may all become equal, because they all have at their disposal similar means of attaining material comforts and happiness. Between these two extremes we find inequality of conditions, the wealth, knowledge, and power of a few contrasting with the poverty, ignorance, and weakness of all the others.<sup>281</sup>

Andre Jardin sees in this effort and in the second part of Tocqueville's *Democracy* an influence from Rousseau not present in his earlier writing.<sup>282</sup> His notes for a second, unpublished part to his 1835

essay suggested the need for a redistribution of land to producers and predicted the formation of cooperatives of industrial workers. Yet, the overall tone of his *Democracy* as published in 1840 is less perceptive than one might have had reason to expect. For example, Tocqueville attributes to participatory democracy the achievement of generating and protecting a widespread distribution of wealth and of access to land. Democracy did not then and has not to this day prevented the concentration of control over land (as herein broadly defined) in virtually every society, because the structure of land tenure and systems of taxation have operated to the benefit of the few and at the expense of the many. Most *American* leaders of the early nineteenth century held views similar to those of Tocqueville, buoyed by the existence of the great, untamed North American frontier. A more sobering and, in any event, accurate picture was presented by a British observer, Thomas Hamilton:

At present the United States are perhaps more safe from revolutionary contention than any other country in the world. But this safety consists in one circumstance alone. The great majority of the people are possessed of property; they have what is called a stake in the hedge; and are therefore, by interest, opposed to all measures which may tend to its insecurity.<sup>283</sup>

The expanding presence of agrarian and industrial landlordism and a growing population were soon to alter this happy circumstance. Within two decades the mood of many *Americans* would darken. The United States experienced a number of severe economic panics, and some leaders were calling for a dramatic slowdown or even an end to immigration. "*Britain, France and Germany, which our extraordinary profits had impoverished, send out, attracted by the fame of our advantages, first their thousands, then their millions of poor people, to have the crop,*" observed Ralph Waldo Emerson in 1861. In the end, he continued, the result had been to destroy the happy equilibrium between the

supply of and demand for labor that had contributed to the high standard of well-being enjoyed by so many *Americans*. Population growth was rapidly absorbing the empty wilderness (or so it seemed), and the price of land was already beyond the means of a large number of immigrants who arrived nearly penniless and without marketable skills. Moreover, opportunistic politicians were gathering power for themselves by coalescing the vote of the immigrant poor against the established citizenry. And, as Emerson saw things, there seemed to be no way to prevent the rising incidence of poverty:

At first we employ them, and increase our prosperity; but in the artificial system of society and of protected labor, which we have also adopted and enlarged, there come presently checks and stoppages. Then we refuse to employ these poor men. But they will not be so answered. They go into the poor-rates, and though we refuse wages, we must now pay the same amount in the form of taxes.... We cannot get rid of these people, and we cannot get rid of their will to be supported.<sup>284</sup>

For some, conditions were deteriorating rapidly even during the decade after Tocqueville's visit to North America. Yet, even when one examines the state of affairs in the United States of the 1830s, no other conclusion is possible but that Tocqueville was making a case for participatory government by the use of abstractions not fully realized in the *American* experience. He was not alone. Many *Americans* were themselves either not interested in facts or based their conclusions on familiar surroundings. Francis Bowen (1811-1890), who taught political economy at Harvard University, is a good example. As late as 1856 he remained convinced that "[n]either theoretically nor practically, in this country, is there any obstacle to any individual's becoming rich, if he will, and almost to any amount that he will," other than natural limits to individual "health, strength, and the faculties of mind."<sup>285</sup> If Ricardo's law of wages operated at all, argued Bowen, the socio-political and economic institutions adopted by the *American* States were more powerful.

A more prominent American author, James Fenimore Cooper, expressed his opinion that in those States without slavery, “*there is to be found as much equality in every respect as comports with safety, civilization and the rights of property.*”<sup>286</sup> Each of these views, in its own way, ignores the darker side of reality for the unpropertied workers and their children employed by agrarian and industrial landlords in New England, and elsewhere.

Few were as yet concerned over the possible extinction of North America’s indigenous tribal peoples. What could have been worse than a society ostensibly constructed on *cooperative principles* using the police powers of the State to enslave millions of Africans and their descendants? Yet, the nation’s cup still seemed incredibly full, and among those eligible for rights of citizenship the poorest of the poor were first and second generation immigrants who—by and large—had neither the skills, the education nor the understanding of the *American System* to take advantage of what the continent had to offer. As Frederick Jackson Turner eventually conveyed in his writing, *Americans* of the early nineteenth century were rushing ahead into the era of agrarian and industrial landlordism with no hesitation and almost no reflection. Their socio-political institutions were established and largely accepted, and this was the time of the individual to stake a claim, to capture a share—to secure possession of the most fertile, best located sections of the continent before someone else got there. With a combination of hard work and good luck, the land would yield a personal fortune. Progress was occurring, unfettered by the type of Old World government intervention that prevented the poor from improving their station in life. *Laissez-faire* stimulated individual initiative, resulted in regional specialization and connected producers together into a nationwide market of unprecedented proportions:

The rise of an agricultural surplus was transforming the west and preparing a new influence in the nation. It was this surplus and the demand for markets that developed

the cities [of the interior]. As they grew, the price of land in their neighborhood increased; roads radiated into the surrounding country; and farmers, whose crops had been almost worthless from the lack of transportation facilities, now found it possible to market their surplus at a small profit. While the west was thus learning the advantages of a home market, the extension of cotton and sugar cultivation in the south and southwest gave it a new and valuable market. More and more, the planters came to rely upon the northwest for their food supplies and for the mules and horses for their fields.<sup>287</sup>

Opportunity, or at least the perception of opportunity, pulled hundreds of thousands of *Americans* from their roots in the established communities of the East, where free or inexpensive land was no longer available and where a growing number of workers competed with one another for subsistence wage jobs in factories. In the southern States, where slavery prevented a labor market from operating, those *Americans* who had no land or whose land lost its fertility after generations of farming also had little choice but to migrate to the frontier. Those forced by poverty to remain behind faced the deprivations imposed by a subsistence livelihood in the South's scattered factories or in the back country and mountain communities.

Politics made sure that the laws in virtually every State of *the Union* were designed to protect landlords from the organization of workers into associations or unions. Strikes were treated under law as criminal conspiracies. Despite these institutional barriers, the human spirit persevered; one example was that of the skilled craftsmen, who joined together in the 1820s to form trades unions and in Philadelphia organized the American Working Men's Party as a means to gain better working conditions, shorter work days and publicly-funded education. As early as 1834 more than a thousand young women walked out of the Lowell, Massachusetts factories in protest of working conditions and less-than subsistence wages. The urban and industrial population was still in the minority, but the conditions under which they were increasingly forced



to live and work stimulated a new activism and reform movement on behalf of the interests of workers. Not only had the promise of participatory democracy not been realized, but in the minds of many reformers that promise had been compromised from the very beginning. This was, for example, the message delivered in 1835 by Theophilus Fisk (1801-1867), a Universalist minister and editor of the *Boston Reformer*, to an audience of Boston mechanics:

The laws by which we are governed were not made by us although said to be—had they been, they would have been equal, equitable, and impartial—for the benefit and protection of the masses, the great whole of which society is composed. It is quite impossible for the laboring classes to make laws to rob one another; they cannot steal from themselves by partial legislation. What is for the interest of one is for the interest of all. But let the privileged few make the laws and what is the result? What has been the natural consequence in all past time? Why, that the many have been ground up to feed the nabobs. What has been, will be. Like causes produce like effects under similar circumstances.<sup>288</sup>

Fisk saw little difference between the living and working conditions of people in the North and the system of chattel slavery practiced in the South. Demanding protection of the worker from the industrial landlord, Fisk called for “*not mere justice to the animal body, but time to do justice to the heart and mind, time to grow in knowledge, and the practice of equity and virtue.*”<sup>289</sup> In short, what he agitated for was acknowledgment that each person possessed rights the origin of which was attached to fundamental needs, and therefore essential to a decent human existence. A contemporary of Fisk, a physician named John W. Vethake who held to Utilitarian values, warned that “[t]he monopoly principle has...been artfully and corruptly engrafted upon democratic institutions, and its weedy spread has so entirely covered up the Jeffersonian basis of the Constitution that all distinction has vanished between practical democracy and practical toryism.”<sup>290</sup> These were not messages that suggested

confidence in the future; rather, many thoughtful individuals foresaw even greater strife ahead as the pattern of agrarian and industrial landlordism invariably displaced the yeoman farmer, forcing the majority of the population into the cities and putting them at the mercy of urban and industrial landlords. Tocqueville, assessing the impact that industrial landlordism, broadly defined, was having on the British populace, thought that the demonstrated benefits outweighed the dangers, though real, to the future of participatory government and what he called *equality of conditions*:

I think that, generally speaking, the manufacturing aristocracy which we see rising before our eyes is one of the hardest that have appeared on earth. But at the same time, it is one of the most restrained and least dangerous.

In any event, the friends of democracy should keep their eyes anxiously fixed in that direction. For if ever again permanent inequality of conditions and aristocracy make their way into the world, it will have been by that door that they entered.<sup>291</sup>

What had been true for thousands of years was that wealth and power based on fixed hierarchical relationships and a stagnant control of nature was balanced, in some sense, by stability and knowing one's place. That residue of mutual dependency was fast disappearing under the advance of landlordism. The demise of feudal arrangements had worried Edmund Burke, for one, who had warned against "*meddling with the subsistence of the people*"<sup>292</sup> and the weakening of traditions that for so long had directed governing and private relations. Echoing Burke more than a generation later, Benjamin Disraeli urged the British nation to protect the "*superiority of the landed classes*" as "*the most necessary element of political power and national civilization.*"<sup>293</sup> What Disraeli decried was not the condition of the masses so much as the diminution of landed, thoroughly nationalist, power among the wealthy in favor of a growing class of internationally-minded industrial landlords. These were decades characterized by incredible changes in

the modes of production and of advances in transportation and communication that connected people within a global economy as never before, of challenges to long-held beliefs and traditions and of deep societal upheaval. In the midst of the political debates and the competition for power between factions espousing conservative, liberal, radical and reactionary positions, political economy continued to emerge as an environment for both rational and rather emotional presentations of ideas focused on a synthesis of socio-political ideals and economic realities. Within the confines of political economy, individuals sought to scientifically explore the underlying relationships existing in society, following in the footsteps of Ricardo but often seeking to defend an existing set of socio-political arrangements or a particular philosophical point of view.

Two distinct approaches to political economy were emerging. At one extreme were those who looked at the unequal distribution of wealth as inevitable and as a consequence of the natural order of things; at the other end were those committed to improving the human condition and to utilizing the power of socio-political arrangements and institutions to stimulate changes they concluded were consistent with justice. Among the German-speaking intellectuals, the most powerful source of inspiration was the philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831). Hegel brought attention to himself with the publication in 1802 of a penetrating analysis of the weak and disunited German states. Young nationalists soon flocked to his side, agitating for the formation of a powerful state. Whether or not one is persuaded by Hegel's deterministic interpretation of history, the influence of his ideas in his era and afterward was enormous. The generation of intellectuals and activists that lived, wrote and agitated during the several decades following his death in 1831 were absorbed by his discourse and by the *dialectic* he set forth; that is, by his conclusion that all human progress comes out of the interaction of conflicting half-truths. What must be said of this moment in history is that few individuals engaged in the

philosophical or political debate looked to the socio-political philosophy of cooperative individualism as earlier presented by Thomas Paine. Paine's writings were largely ignored, his calls for reforms and the acknowledgment of individual rights overwhelmed by intense conflict between national groups. As a consequence, the opportunity to achieve true progress—toward socio-political arrangements and institutions that secured liberty and equality of opportunity—was tragically subverted. There were several important reasons why this occurred.

Overt and subtle pressures exerted on the political economists of John Stuart Mill's generation—by potent defenders of the existing institutions, by agents of the centralizing state, by the beneficiaries of *laissez-faire* and landlordism—achieved the almost universal abandonment of any serious dialogue concerning moral principles as the basis for societal interventions. Opponents of slavery might successfully appeal to the moral indignation of a supposedly enlightened generation, but it was also true that slavery was largely unnecessary and more costly than the simple reliance on population growth and immigration to keep the wages of the unskilled at a subsistence level. Strong competition for work—any kind of work—ensured that the unpropertied would accept terrible conditions without protest. The plantation owners of the southern region of the United States were not yet the beneficiaries of large-scale immigration and so clung desperately to justifications for the continuance of slavery. The society they had created was neither moral nor utilitarian; theirs was a society constructed specifically for the greatest good for the smallest number.

Despite the societal and institutional obstacles placed in their way, a small number of dissidents managed to find their way through the Utilitarian and Hegelian contradictions to rediscover and philosophically develop ideas associated with their moral sense of right and wrong. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, the principles of cooperative individualism were again gaining ground and would be expressed by the foolhardy and courageous from the wilderness.

Thankfully, the influence of Thomas Paine had not altogether disappeared. Gilbert Vale (1788-1866), for example, emigrated to the United States from England with a firm conviction that Paine had much to offer his generation. In a series of articles written on the science of political economy, Vale struggled to make the appropriate distinction between nature and wealth. He first defined wealth as "*the produce of Labor*"<sup>294</sup> but also attempted to explain the connection between intensive cultivation and the extent to which wealth was divided between rent and wages:

Land has been stated to be wealth, but all its value...is derived from cultivation, and if it yields large rent as in old countries, it does so by the superior state of its cultivation in comparison to that which merely yields a bare remuneration for labor.<sup>295</sup>

By value, he is speaking of exchange value; that is, how much of the production taken from the land a user would be willing to give up to the deed holder in return for access. Vale's difficulty arises because he fails to recognize that rent (when determined by market forces) depends not on existing cultivation but on what potential users believe can be produced. Agricultural land that has been cleared and plowed has, in fact, been improved and the person or persons who made such improvements would certainly not turn this land over to another user for the same remuneration as for uncleared land of equal fertility. The difference represents the value of labor saved and expended, as agreed upon by the buyer and seller.

Other writers, more interested than Vale in refining and completing the work of Ricardo, would look more closely into how markets actually function. Vale looked to the secrets of political economy as the means with which to persuade others of the need for particular reforms. His own vision of utopia was the self-sustaining community, which he believed presented the one great opportunity to materially improve the lives of the working poor. Other reform-minded individuals who

shared with Vale (and Paine) a healthy fear of the State argued the case for cooperative ownership of land but also for the maximum degree of self-government possible without jeopardizing the peaceful exercise of liberty. These proposals were at the heart of *communitarianism* and *mutualism*. Thomas Spence and William Ogilvie, writing in the eighteenth century, had called for an end to private property in land, to which William Godwin added a stinging attack on the very existence of the State as an instrument of oppression. Similar themes were advanced in France by Claude Henri de Rouvroy<sup>296</sup> (1760-1825) and Charles Francois Fourier (1772-1837).

A small cadre of these activist reformers and intellectual dissidents, educated in Europe and armed with their political experiences, eventually made their way to the United States. Over time, they had an important influence on the direction of reform taken by the *Americans*. One important example is Wilhelm Weitling (1808-1871), a sincere humanitarian and utopian who emigrated to the United States in 1848 after becoming disenchanted by the actions of European socialists and communists. Weitling founded what he called the Emancipation League and started a journal, *The Workers' Republic*, in 1850. Because of his anti-militarist and incremental thinking, he had fallen out with the hard line communists, particularly Karl Marx, and his emigration to the United States took him out of the main reform arena of the 1840s. He spent the remainder of his life in a number of failed attempts to establish utopian communities operated under communitarian principles. Weitling was followed in 1851 by Josef Weydemeyer, a strong supporter and friend to both Marx and Engels. Once in New York, Weydemeyer struggled to publish and distribute the works of his communist colleagues. He eventually made his way to the midwest and established a daily paper, the *People's Voice*, and later served with distinction in the northern army during the War Between the States. After the war, he assumed a leadership role in the recruiting of German-American workers for the International Workingmen's Association.

As opponents of the traditional forms of centralized government (or of centralized government itself), the activism of these individuals was viewed by defenders of *liberalism* as opening the door to anarchy. And yet, Tocqueville had legitimized by his writing the involvement of intellectuals in a public dialogue of focused dissent—even in Eurasian societies easily described as police states where the right to free speech and press were heavily suppressed. Tocqueville became such an important influence on the future because he opened the door to debate by offering a detailed comparison between the decentralist form of government in the United States and the militaristic states dominating post-Napoleonic Eurasia:

[T]here is not a country in Europe in which public administration has not become not only more centralized but also more inquisitive and minute. Everywhere it meddles more than of old in private affairs. It controls in its own fashion more actions and more of their details, and very increasingly takes its place beside and above the individual, helping, advising, and constraining him....

The central power not only fills the whole sphere of former authorities, extends, and goes beyond it, but also acts with greater speed, power, and independence than it had ever done.<sup>297</sup>

Tocqueville's overriding fear was that the people of Europe were abandoning the quest for participatory government in favor of the security and order promised by strong, central governments. A growing number of reformers seemed to accept this form of government as both inevitable and desirable, wanting merely to displace individual bureaucrats with members of their own particular party. As of yet, those contemplating something different—from communitarianism to anarchism—remained not merely at the fringe but at the edge of the fringe. They were advocating programs of radical change by incremental to violent means. Some hoped to create experimental communities detached as much as possible from the larger society. As

these communities succeeded and were replicated across the land, the State would, they foresaw, slowly wither away.

What also separated communitarians from other reformers was their emphasis on distributive justice. When Pierre Leroux, editor of the Saint-Simonian publication *Le Globe*, introduced the communitarian principle, “*from each according to his capacity; to each according to his work*,” he was in effect espousing a labor theory of property as a fundamental building block of this new form of societal organization. The Saint-Simonians were at least offering a means of overcoming the worst effects of agrarian and industrial landlordism, hoping at the same time to slow expansion of the imperial State. They were responding to the pessimism voiced by Tocqueville and offered a means by which self-governance could assure the kind of benefits that almost universal property in land (and land rent) had brought to *Americans* in North America.

Despite all that had occurred over the previous decades, few of Tocqueville’s mainstream contemporaries in France shared his pessimism or his vision of the form a democratic society must take. Although respected as an accomplished literary figure, Tocqueville had not formulated a complete philosophy around which a group of dedicated converts might converge. Nonetheless, John Stuart Mill applauds Tocqueville for approaching the political economy of the democratic system by “*a combination of deduction with induction*,”<sup>298</sup> and his review of *Democracy* and subsequent correspondence with Tocqueville praise the French writer for demonstrating that democracy is far more than a mechanistic system. Mill wholly agreed with Tocqueville’s observation that the more direct is the involvement of the citizen in government the greater will be the preservation of liberty and the enforcement of equality (of political rights). Mill and Tocqueville do not, however, share identical views of history. Bruce Mazlish suggests that Mill differs—at least by degree—from Tocqueville in that his assignment of “*causal weight seems to be placed on industrial progress bringing about*



democracy, rather than the other way.”<sup>299</sup> John Robson adds that another important difference was that they began “from opposite sides of the question, de Tocqueville from the aristocratic and Mill from the radical...”<sup>300</sup> These differences arose, I believe, out of their experiences. Tocqueville sought in politics his opportunity to shape the future of France, and his literary success provided the public recognition he needed to find favorable support for his policy recommendations. France remained dominated by reactionary and radical forces, held in check by personalities and compromises. Tocqueville hoped he could help bring to France a parliamentary system equal in its *liberal* (i.e., *laissez-faire*) posture to that of Britain, but he offered to the unpropertied only the hope of future political equality and the model of agrarian and industrial landlordism arising in Britain. Mill in 1840 had agreed with Tocqueville’s general conclusion that equality of condition was the gradual result of national prosperity under participatory government. “When a nation is advancing in prosperity—when its industry is expanding, and its capital rapidly augmenting—the number also of those who possess capital increases in at least as great a proportion,” wrote Mill, adding that, “though the distance between the two extremes of society may not be much diminished, there is a rapid multiplication of those who occupy the intermediate positions.”<sup>301</sup> Lifting the condition of those at the bottom would become a moral imperative for Mill, and an understanding of political economy the basis for the reforms he advanced. Born into a family environment committed to philosophical and intellectual pursuits, Mill’s reputation as a reformer were well-established early in life, even though all of his major philosophical and practical intellectual contributions were yet to come. Consistent with the British willingness to recognize an individual of such high reputation, Mill would eventually be called upon to serve in government, representing Westminster in Parliament from 1866-1868.<sup>302</sup>

Mill’s life-long commitment to moral principle and to incremental reform in the direction of just socio-political arrangements allowed

him to serve as a transitional figure during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. He became, as later described by William Gladstone, "*the Saint of Rationalism.*"<sup>303</sup> He stood in opposition to the relentless separation of people into opposing productive systems driven by nationalism. As Hegel had discovered from his study of history, the power of ethnic or national identity to subvert transnational values was extremely difficult to overcome. In times of crisis, even those with virtually no stake in preserving existing socio-political institutions stepped forward to fight and give their lives for the independence and integrity of the nation. Even in the previously unpopulated lands where societies were being built by people of differing Eurasian heritage, national identities had arisen and had grown stronger with each passing generation. This was certainly the case in the United States, even though many ethnic groups retained many aspects of their Old World cultures and settled in enclaves separated from one another.

Another argument advanced by Hegel that challenged conventional wisdom (and which was at the heart of Locke's politics) was that freedom "*must first be acquired and won...through an infinite process of the discipline of knowledge and will power.*"<sup>304</sup> Thus, liberty comes as a result of a particular societal framework absent in the state of nature. Even more specifically, liberty requires efficient administration and the organization of government under a libertarian constitution; that is, one "*so framed that the citizens have to obey as little as possible and the authorities are allowed to command as little as possible*" and where "*whatever authority is necessary should be determined and decided in large measure by the...will of the majority.*"<sup>305</sup> It follows that the greater the homogeneity within and between the members of society, the more united will they move forward in their perceived national interest under the direction of the State.

Hegel convinced a generation of German liberals (including many political economists) that widespread participatory government was, though desirable, not critical to a realization of individual liberty.

Hegel's death in 1831 at age 61 was tragic, in the sense that his own thinking—and his influence—might have taken a different turn had he experienced the oppressive nature of the militaristic State strengthened by the productive output of industrial landlordism. The new generation of political economists, university trained in neo-Ricardian analysis and caring little for protracted debates over moral philosophy and distributive justice, were quickly recruited as agents of the State and put to work on problems related to the maximization of production and the allocation of scarce resources. What was happening to the science of political economy is captured in a statement by the English economist John Elliott Cairnes (1824-1875), an early disciple of Mill who taught at Trinity College in Dublin, Queen's College in Galway and, finally, University College in London, who described his science as having "*no more connection with our present industrial system than the science of mechanics has with our present system of railways.*"<sup>306</sup>

The gradual absorption of political economists into the institutional structure of the State was well underway. In France, Jean Baptiste Say (1767-1832) had already been appointed the first professor of political economy at the College of France in Paris. German professors of political economy, such as Friedrich von Hermann (1795-1868), would train a new generation of economists charged by the State with the task of using their knowledge in the building of a modern military-industrial complex. Acceptance of this set of responsibilities and objectives became the cornerstone of the doctrines advanced by Frederick List<sup>307</sup> in his *National System of Political Economy* (1841) and adopted by Bismarck thirty odd years later.

With notable exceptions, the practitioners of political economy ceased to question the moral basis of existing socio-political arrangements, nor were they among the vanguard who suggested that society ought to intervene in the interest of justice to alter what was accepted as the natural distribution of wealth. With the same few exceptions, they were incrementalists who would never countenance violence as a

means to affect change. Among the leaders of the activists, the Swiss political economist Jean Simonde de Sismondi was one of the rare few who challenged the doctrine of *laissez-faire* on moral grounds. He believed that only intervention by the State could “prevent men from being sacrificed to the progress of an opulence which profits them nothing.”<sup>308</sup> Britain served as the model—for those for or against *laissez-faire*; and, although French industrial landlordism advanced at a pace considerably slower than in Britain, Sismondi was certain this process would bring renewed civil strife:

When large-scale farming replaces small-scale farming more capital is perhaps absorbed by the land and reproduced by it, and more capital than before may be divided among the whole farming population. But the consumption of one family of rich farmers plus that of fifty families of miserable day-laborers is not as valuable to the nation as the consumption of fifty peasant families in moderate circumstances. Likewise, in the towns the consumption of a hundred less wealthy masters each of whom employ only ten workers who are much less poor....

The concentration of fortunes in the hands of a few men narrows the domestic market, and industry is more and more reduced to seek an outlet in foreign markets, where it is threatened with the greatest convulsions.<sup>309</sup>

Sismondi struggled, unable to think of a solution to these problems. He was skeptical but sympathetic to Owen and other reformers who advanced cooperative production as a central answer. He urged that legislation be adopted to promote a type of industrial democracy characterized by profit sharing, long-term (perhaps lifetime) employment and a commitment to decent working conditions. His proposals languished, however, awaiting the moment when political activism would reach a point of critical mass.

Among the small community of transnationals, social commentary and criticism of *laissez-faire liberalism* expanded in volume and intensity during the 1830s. French followers of Rouvroy (Saint-Simon) made

contact with Thomas Carlyle after the publication of his essay *Sign of the Times* in 1829. A decade later, Carlyle contributed to the public dialogue a powerful essay on *Chartism*, which boldly pointed to the socio-political origins of the distress then plaguing the people of the British Isles. “*Chartism*,” he warned, “*means the bitter discontent grown fierce and mad, the wrong condition therefore or the wrong disposition of the Working Classes of England.*”<sup>310</sup> And, why, Carlyle wondered was there such an apparent absence of concern or attention among the Members of Parliament, even the among the Radicals supposedly chosen because of their deep concern for the people’s rights. Carlyle argued the case for the *rights of man* and their incorporation into law. Knowing just how far there was to travel provided a sobering dose of reality for his readers:

[T]he rights of man...are little worth ascertaining in comparison to the **mights** of man,—to what portion of his rights he has any chance of being able to make good! The accurate final rights of man lie in the far deeps of the Ideal...The ascertainable temporary rights are known to depend much on what a man’s convictions of them are.<sup>311</sup>

In order to move his own society, or any society, in the direction of just socio-political arrangements, Carlyle called for a new standard to be established by which to measure a government just and good. The bench mark he proposed is deceptively simple and one that continues to trouble the conscience of thoughtful individuals today. For, as Carlyle writes, “*The condition of the great body of people in a country is the condition of the country itself: this you would say is a truism in all times; a truism rather pressing to get recognised as a truth now, and be acted upon, in these times.*”<sup>312</sup> And, when one observed great disparities between a relative few possessing great personal fortunes while the overwhelming majority possessed not a thing, this was reason enough to mobilize government in the interest of justice. Forced transport or large-scale migration to new lands might mitigate the outward signs of systemic failures,

but Carlyle challenged his contemporaries (and challenges us today) to commit to the defense of human rights:

To believe practically that the poor and luckless are here only as a nuisance to be abraded and abated, and in some permissible manner made away with, and swept out of sight, is not an amiable faith. That the arrangements of good and ill success in this perplexed scramble of a world, which a blind goddess was always thought to preside over, are in fact the work of a seeing goddess or god, and require only not to be meddled with: what stretch of heroic faculty or inspiration of genius was needed to teach one that?<sup>313</sup>

Social anomalies are things to be defended, things to be amended; and in all places and things...there is some admixture of worth and good....And yet when the general result has come to the length of perennial starvation, argument, extenuating logic, pity and patience on that subject may be considered as drawing to a close. It may be considered that such arrangements of things will have to terminate.<sup>314</sup>

It is the feeling of injustice that is insupportable to all men....No man can bear it, or ought to bear it. A deeper law than any parchment-law whatsoever, a law written direct by the hand of God in the inmost being of man, incessantly protests against it...<sup>315</sup>

Minimal and democratic government might serve the interests of justice in societies blessed by "*boundless soil*" with "*every man being able to find work and recompense for himself*,"<sup>316</sup> but elsewhere history and contemporary experience suggested the need for "*government by the wisest*."<sup>317</sup> John Stuart Mill wrote to Carlyle in strong agreement with the essential message of this work. A young Frederick Engels (1820-1895), son of an English mill owner, was also attracted to the cause of the Chartists. Karl Marx, twenty years of age in 1838 and a law student at the University of Berlin, was already thoroughly immersed in Hegelian philosophy, but had not yet looked upon the condition of his fellow human beings with much critical concern. Within Britain, however, another group of reformers driven by what they understood to be

the true nature of Christianity were forging a new movement, eventually to be called *Christian Socialism*. One of its founders, Charles Kingsley (1819-1875), carried Carlyle's humanitarian concerns into the world of the English worker, preaching nonviolent agitation for reform. For his own part, Carlyle remained perplexed by the enormity of the challenges that seemed to surround the impetus toward positive change, while at the same time writing of the inevitable coming of the just society.

Another English reformer, the Benthamite and Chartist leader Francis Place, thought he recognized the differences between the 1830s and earlier periods of upheaval. In a letter to John Wade he remarked that earlier generations of the working classes "*all got drunk....None then excepting literary men read much....Few saved money, certainly not one then for fifty now, all were improvident, gross, dirty, slovenly, negligent to a great extent.*"<sup>318</sup> Five years later he added:

This is a new feature in society produced by the increased intelligence of the working people. This is the first time that desire for reform has been moved by them and carried upwards. Until now it has always proceeded downwards and expired when abandoned, as it always has been, by their gentlemen leaders. It will not again expire but will go on continually, sometimes with more sometimes with less rapidity, but on it will go.<sup>319</sup>

A crucial change was, as Place realized, working its way through society after society. The lower classes had a new generation of leaders who, though of little or no material means, met the rigors of acquiring a formal education and of embarking on a trade. Louis Blanc (1811-1882), for example, attained the status of scholar while experiencing years of difficult financial circumstances. Blanc took up the pen to oppose the monarchy of Louis Philippe and argue for a decentralized form of democracy. After a brief role in the post-revolutionary government of 1848, Blanc was then accused of conspiring to overthrow the National

Assembly; he fled to Belgium, and then to England, where he met and won over Mill, and eventually completed his *History of the French Revolution*.

Also arising in France from the obscurity of poverty to challenge the status quo was Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865). After graduating from the College of Besancon in 1827, Proudhon entered the printing trade as a proofreader and compositor. Recession a few years later left him unemployed and without resources, and Proudhon yielded to the urgings of a friend to come to Paris. Here, Proudhon saw first-hand the deplorable conditions under which the majority was forced to live. As he applied himself to discover the source or sources of the problem, he found he could not accept the solutions put forth by Rouvroy, Fourier or Blanc. History suggested to him that utopian forms of communitarian or communist societies were doomed because of human nature. And yet, relying on the State to take charge of production and make decisions about the distribution of wealth opened the door to oppression and a new form of despotic rule. Returning in 1832 to his native region of France, he once more renewed his vocation as a printer. This was a period of deep reflection and study for Proudhon, from which he emerged as architect of a socio-political philosophy that placed natural law squarely at the center of just arrangements.

Seven years later Proudhon arrived back in Paris, aided by a scholarship awarded him by the *Academie* in Besancon. His first important contribution to transnational thought had appeared only months before in the form of an essay on Moses, who, he suggests, came to the commandments out a process of observation and deduction. Because of the atheistic implications of this essay, sale of the work was banned in Paris; and, although once more without any sustained income Proudhon began writing a book that would challenge the very justifications of existing socio-political arrangements and institutions. Excited and worried by the task he now accepted as his destiny, Proudhon wrote:



I cannot work, yet work I do to avoid dying of despair, knowing that, having only hard and unhappy truths to communicate, my work will earn me only hatred and curses.... What I have set myself to do is to fight a duel to the death against inequality and property. Either I deceive myself, or they will never recover from the blow I am about to deal them.<sup>320</sup>

In 1840, Proudhon completed and, with great difficulty, found a publisher for *What is Property?*, an attack so bold on conventional wisdom and the status quo—using the methodology of the scientific investigator—that he was assured a place in the history of political economy and social thought, as well as the animosity of those whose privileges he attacked. Proudhon takes great pain in this treatise to distinguish between possession of something and the law that creates a legal right to such possession. Justice, Proudhon argued, demanded limitations on the legal rights to property, so that those more naturally endowed with talent could not accumulate vast personal estates. He also challenged the notion of private rights in nature on the grounds that equal access to nature is indispensable to life. By the same logic he destroys the claim of geo-political sovereignty to any part of the earth by any nation or people. Proudhon then goes on to argue that although each individual engaged in production is entitled to a wage high enough on which to live decently, there is no real moral basis for rewarding some individuals more highly than others when the production of wealth occurs out of collective labor and the intensive use of capital goods. Under noncoercive conditions, no one would agree to an exchange of labor for labor—or labor for goods—that provided unequal benefit to one party or the other. Thus, although the employment of capital goods seems to yield greater productive output the true source of the added production is due to the efficiencies associated with individual labor aggregated in cooperative effort. Without such cooperative effort on the part of labor, capital goods could neither come into existence nor, once created, yield a return. Only the replacement of individual rights to capital goods by

collective ownership assured a just distribution of wealth. Then, somewhat remarkably given the times, to make certain that such an egalitarian arrangement was maintained, Proudhon called for the elimination of the state. Proudhon was enough of an historian to realize the state would not simply wither away. Even a meaningful reduction in the powers of the state would require concerted, deliberate and ongoing effort.

His book was initially ignored, then strongly attacked. The *Academie* threatened to retract his scholarship but, after giving Proudhon an opportunity to defend his writing, a close vote came out in his favor. Not long thereafter Proudhon's *Warning to the Proprietors* appeared, which was ordered confiscated and the author put on trial. Four charges were brought against him: "attack on the constitutional right of property; incitement to hatred of the government; incitement to hatred of several classes of citizens; offence to religion."<sup>321</sup> Proudhon defended himself by declaring that he was merely the instrument for giving voice to widely understood truths. His arguments confused and entertained the court, and he was acquitted.

Early in 1843 Proudhon's livelihood became more assured by a position offered to him in the Lyon office of Gauthier Freres, a transportation business owned by the family of his friend and supporter, Antoine Gauthier. Here, in Lyon, he was drawn to the secret worker association of Mutualists forming in this center of French industrial landlordism. Travel to Paris brought him into contact with Joseph Garnier, who had reviewed *What is Property?* with some sympathy; from this association Proudhon was invited to write an essay on the competition between water transportation and the railways for the *Journal des Economistes*. By this time he had become a key intellectual figure within the broadly socialist groups who sought, peacefully or through force, to take over government as a means of ending aristocratic rule, reforming industrial landlordism into worker capitalism, and adopting a new body of positive law that enforced equality of result in wealth distribution.

Proudhon was rather uncomfortable in his new role and the status he had achieved; more importantly, he was extremely uncomfortable with the proposals advanced by the socialist and communist activists. Before long, he would break away on his own.

### **The Struggle For Universal Principles Among Socialist Transnationals**

Whatever semblance of academic freedom there had been in German universities ended with the ascension of Frederick Wilhelm IV to the throne. He was determined to rid the University of Berlin of Hegelian influence. Eduard Gans, the only Hegelian on the law school faculty, died in 1839. Recognizing that a new era of suppressed academic freedom had arrived, Karl Marx was urged by his friend and fellow Hegelian, Bruno Bauer, to finish his doctorate at Bonn. However, Bauer himself lost his own position at Bonn because of his atheistic views and political activism on behalf of constitutional government. In desperation, Marx delivered his dissertation to the University of Jena, where he was awarded his doctorate. He was now being drawn deeper and deeper into direct political activism. He completed an essay denouncing the Prussian State,<sup>322</sup> and he began writing for a journal whose financial backers sought the dismantling of all remnants of feudalism and the unification of the German principalities but were far from sympathetic to socialist programs. Taking over as editor in October of 1842, Marx printed investigative articles on English *Chartism* as well as on the ideas of the French *Socialists* and *Communists*. Within months, however, an article attacking Russian influence appeared that triggered a decisive governmental reaction and the paper was closed down.

The periodical under Marx's editorship was only one of numerous cases where the opposition press fell victim to the police powers of Frederick Wilhelm IV's Prussian State. One by one they all were shut

down. Out of this experience, Marx came to accept that force would be required to dislodge the old hierarchical structure. The first step toward the revolution would be to leave Germany and try to reach the masses with a new periodical written and published from France, recognized by the Germans as the center of Eurasian revolutionary thought. Arriving in Paris early in 1844, Marx made contact with a group of German emigrant workers who had formed the secret League of the Just and also contacted leaders within the numerous factions of French Socialism. From the first, Marx found the French (whose collective experience centered on a half century of domestic and external blood-letting) less than receptive to a program the foundation of which was based on the violent overthrow of existing socio-political and economic institutions. Among the French, Proudhon was one of those who was greatly dismayed by the prospect of society forced to its knees in order to carve out a Socialist future. The two men were to have frequent contact with one another while both were in Paris, carrying on long discussions over philosophy and strategy. Neither was able to change the direction of the other's thinking, and Proudhon was already embarked on a very different course from that taken by Marx.

Although failing to interest any of the French transnationals in the project, Arnold Ruge and Marx launched *The German-French Year-Books* from Paris, a short-lived adventure in radical journalism initiated by a very diverse group of German expatriates. They were joined in this project by the Russian, Michael Bakunin, and by the Englishman, Friedrich Engels.

Marx by now also rejected Hegel's contention that the State was the necessary precursor of society. History and his own observations of the real world told him otherwise, and his instincts were substantiated by Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872), whose *Introductory Theses to the Reform of Philosophy* (1843) "had...thrown the whole philosophy of Hegel on to the scrapheap,"<sup>323</sup> at least where nature and religion were

concerned. In this way, Feuerbach stimulated Marx to seriously re-examine Hegel's philosophy of law and the State.

This was a period of searching by these transnationals; they were, each in their own way, in need of philosophical principles from which to build a program of activism, and Hegelianism failed to provide much practical guidance in the real world. Of their circumstance, Marx wrote:

General anarchy has broken out amongst the reformers, and all of them would be compelled to admit that they have no exact ideas about the future. However, it is just the great advantage of the new movement that we do not seek to anticipate the new world dogmatically, but rather to discover it in the criticism of the old. Up to now the philosophers have always had the solution of the riddle lying ready in their writing desks, and all the stupid exoteric world had to do was to close its eyes and open its mouth to receive the ready-baked cake of absolute science....It is certainly not our task to build up the future in advance and to settle all problems for all time, but it is just as certainly our task to criticize the existing world ruthlessly. I mean ruthlessly in the sense that we must not be afraid of our own conclusions and equally unafraid of coming into conflict with the prevailing powers.<sup>324</sup>

He went on to call for action, for involvement in politics and for an intense effort to raise the consciousness of the masses to their plight. Events suggested to him that the moment of critical mass was as yet a long way into the future. An uprising by Silesian weavers in 1844 at first aroused and then dismayed him when, instead of taking over the mills, the workers merely destroyed the machines they saw as the source of their poverty and misery. Marx himself had reached an important point of departure in his life. As described by Boris Nicolaievsky and Otto Maenchen-Helfen, "*Marx threw all his energy into the study of political economy. He read and made excerpts from the French [and] English economists...He studied history.*"<sup>325</sup> Within a year, his journalistic activity brought action against him by the government of Louis Philippe and he was forced to depart for Brussels, arriving in Belgium early in 1845. At

about this same time, Proudhon was building a strong friendship with another German emigrant, Karl Grun, whose ideas appealed to Proudhon's hope that the State could be made obsolete.

Grun was one of the founding fathers of German incrementalism, self-described as *True Socialism*, but rejected by Marx, Engels and those committed to more radical change by revolutionary means. The problem with Grun, writes Franz Mehring, was that "he was causing hopeless confusion amongst the workers [in Paris] and had won a disastrous influence over Proudhon."<sup>326</sup> Early in 1845, Grun had called on Proudhon in Paris, and during that first meeting "they talked of Hegel, Feuerbach, Adam Smith, Say, Blanqui, Wolowski, Fourier, Considerant, of List and the Zollverein, of Heine and Karl Marx."<sup>327</sup> The very fact that Proudhon's thinking paralleled that of Grun in so many ways spelled doom for any long-term cooperative effort between Proudhon and Marx. What concerned Proudhon most was the danger of ending up with "a new intolerance" and "a new religion"<sup>328</sup> that oppressed the very people Marx was supposedly attempting to liberate. What Proudhon had taken from history was an appreciation of the power inherent in the ownership of land and capital goods. He was intent on achieving progress in the living conditions of the unpropertied by pushing and pulling society toward an economic system based on mutual ownership of land and capital goods and a political system based on decentralized, participatory democracy. Further, he argued against free trade on the grounds the poor would merely be oppressed by foreign monopolists as well as those of their own nationality. In response to Marx, he wrote that resort to violence and revolution was nothing more than "an appeal to force, to arbitrariness, in short a contradiction."<sup>329</sup> Franz Mehring, in turn, faults Proudhon for being a "victim of limited class consciousness" unable to "grasp what [Marx] was driving at."<sup>330</sup>

Proudhon's subsequent writing on the subject of political economy, *The System of Economic Contradictions*, brought on an attack by Marx in a book titled *The Poverty of Philosophy*. Proudhon believed that

productive labor was what gave us our sense of worth and strengthened our moral character. To the extent that agrarian and industrial landlordism destroyed the dignity obtained by the peasant or crafts person through the products of labor, this was the ultimate form of oppression to be overturned. Even so, Proudhon recognized the necessity for each individual to dedicate himself or herself to moral thinking and right action. An integral part of these values was a strong attachment to the traditional family and a disdain for what today we would call alternative lifestyles. What Marx raises as a challenge of the first order, however, is Proudhon's acceptance of the immutable laws of political economy as formalized by Ricardo. Marx had already concluded that these principles were but "*the dogmas of the economists*"<sup>331</sup> and roughly treats Proudhon's effort as a failed attempt to reconcile the Hegelian dialectic of thesis, antithesis and synthesis in matters outside the range of philosophy. Missing from Proudhon's analysis, Marx argues, is an appreciation that "[s]ocial forces are intimately bound up with productive forces."<sup>332</sup> Socio-political arrangements and institutions are, to Marx, constantly evolving in response to stimuli generated by new modes of production. This dynamic, the basis for continuous class struggle—of conflict between those who would be rulers and those they coercively attempted to rule—was, Marx observed, too easily ignored by the earlier generations of political economists in their eagerness to champion *laissez-faire* liberalism:

The more this antagonistic character comes to light, the more the economists, the scientific representatives of bourgeois production, fall out with their own theory and different schools are formed.

We have the *fatalist* economists who are as indifferent in their theory to what they call the drawbacks of bourgeois production as the bourgeois themselves are in practice to the sufferings of the proletarians who help them acquire wealth. Classicists like Adam Smith and Ricardo represent a bourgeoisie which, still struggling with the remnants of feudal society, works only to purify economic relationships of feudal

blemishes, to increase productive forces, and to give industry and commerce a new scope. The proletariat participating in this struggle and absorbed in this feverish labor undergoes only passing, accidental sufferings and itself regards them as passing and accidental. Economists like Adam Smith and Ricardo, who are the historians of this epoch, have no other mission than to show how wealth is acquired in the relationships of bourgeois production, to formulate these relationships in categories and laws, and to show how superior these laws and categories are to those of feudal society for the production of wealth. In their eyes poverty is merely the pang that accompanies every childbirth, in nature as well as in industry.<sup>333</sup>

Marx has here identified what are clearly the glaring weaknesses in the contributions to socio-political and economic thought made by Smith, Ricardo and their contemporaries. These are much the same conclusions reached by Paine. Nor does Proudhon have any quarrel with Marx on these points. Where Marx and Proudhon diverge dramatically is on the path to be taken to rid their world of poverty. Each disagreed vehemently with the other's assessment of the outcome to be achieved by their respective programs for change. Marx wondered how Proudhon could possibly believe that we could return to a quasi-feudal state of socio-political organization, of rural self-sufficiency and small scale industry, when the signs were everywhere that industrialization was rapidly globalizing the production of manufactures and agricultural commodities.

Proudhon's response to Marx's fatalism, to the unrelenting force of materialistic determinism, was to suggest that improvement first required a more complete understanding of human motivations. Proudhon acknowledges the power of a conscious free will driving human actions. He condemns the Creator for what equates to a *laissez-faire* level of involvement in the formation of human thought—for permitting us to exhibit a pattern of thinking flawed by imperfect reasoning the consequences of which are (in the aggregate) to threaten our long-term survival. Proudhon's own reasoning power therefore brings



him to conclude that human misery is caused by a failure to think and act in accord with natural law. What could be more obvious, he argued, than that the central element to the natural law of human behavior involved the family unit, the foundation of human society. From this observation arose in Proudhon's mind the principle that socio-political arrangements and institutions must foster and protect the family and work to bring all families together as a society. In his mind, of course, the definition of *family* was traditional; the long string of failed experiments in communal living by individuals not related by blood supported his conclusion.

To those who espoused equality of rewards as a societal objective, Proudhon warned this type of wealth redistribution would destroy the family. Justice, he believed, demanded that each individual be entitled to the fruits of his or her labor. A family, working together, produces wealth that may legally belong to the patriarch of the family, but morally belongs to all who labored and contributed to the cooperative enterprise by which the family is defined. Thus, for others to confiscate such property and prevent its transfer by inheritance to the spouse and sons and daughters is to commit a grave injustice. Proudhon had many other specific ideas of how to incrementally move toward a mutualist society built on voluntary association. His own and competing ideas would be handed a window of opportunity early in 1848, when much of continental Europe arose against the reigning oligarchies, against open and widespread corruption and against a deep and prolonged economic downturn.

A wave of dissent emanated outward from Paris. Louis Blanc, leader of the Democratic Socialist Party, and many of the more radical Chartists in Britain were in frequent contact with Engels and Marx and other communists, exiled in Brussels. As Franz Mehring notes, "*Engels had his hands full with the job of keeping the [workers] in Paris away from the influence of Proudhon and Weitling...*"<sup>334</sup> The communists engaged in a propaganda war against the incrementalists and the utopians in an

effort to capture the workers as their instrument of change. In the summer of 1847 Engels attended the congress of the League of the Just, and in September an international meeting occurred in Brussels to establish the Democratic Association for the Unification of all Countries. Two months later the Association met to celebrate the anniversary of the Polish Revolution. In a keynote speech, the German communist Stephan Born boldly declared their hope and reason for being:

Old Poland has disappeared and we should be the last to wish its resurgence. However, not only old Poland, but old Germany, old France and old England, in fact, the whole old society is lost. However, the loss of the old society is no loss for those who have nothing to lose in it, and to-day this is the situation for the great majority of the people in all countries.<sup>335</sup>

Also in November, Marx and Engels journeyed to England to participate in a meeting of the Communist League. Upon their return to Brussels, Marx was pressed upon to draft a public manifesto that would spell out the principles of communism. Early in 1848 he took on the question of free trade versus protectionism in a speech before the Democratic Association, arguing for free and open trade because this would hasten the demise of bourgeois capitalism. And, in a series of lectures to the German Workers Association, he made his case against the harmony of interest between the workers and business owners. Throughout the winter months of 1847-48, Marx and Engels worked on the document that would become *The Communist Manifesto*, completing their assignment just as Paris erupted in political turmoil and chaos.

The communists were troubled over the influence of Proudhon, Grun and the socialists over the workers. Now they faced another opponent in the person of Michael Bakunin, who arrived in Brussels late in

1847, having been expelled from Paris after urging Polish refugees to rise up against the tsarist government that dominated Poland.

The earliest shock to the status quo in Europe occurred in Switzerland, when in November of 1847 the Federal Council decided to expel the Jesuits. Catholic-led governments in Austria, Prussia, France and Russia all threatened to intervene. The Swiss, for their part, responded with a counter-threat against Lombardy. The European powers, though agitated, sat back while Swiss radicals defeated the Catholic cantons and set up a new federal State with a constitution modeled on that of the United States.

Uprisings occurred all over Europe, spreading from Lombardy to Naples, Turin and Florence. Existing governments were overturned and new constitutions adopted. Governments in the larger Eurasian states increased their surveillance of foreign nationals and native citizens known to hold radical and subversive views. All eyes and ears were on Paris; for, as Nicolaievsky and Maenchen-Helfen reflect on the times, *“everybody knew that the revolution could only conquer after it had conquered in Paris. Everybody waited for the crowing of the Gallic cock.”*<sup>336</sup>

French reformers, prohibited by law from assembling for political purposes, tested the government’s resolve by holding a series of banquets across the country where speakers denounced Louis Philippe and his minister, Francois Guizot. In February of 1848 the government banned what had been planned as a major banquet in Paris, sparking the uprising that drove Louis Philippe into exile and the creation of France’s Second Republic. Louis Blanc became a secretary to the new government and functioned as an unofficial minister of Labor, and a new Constituent Assembly (elected to office by France’s first vote under universal suffrage) was democratically established. Proudhon, hoping beyond hope to prevent the new government from usurping even greater powers for the State, stood for election as well.

The fervor for revolution spread from Paris to Brussels, to the Rhineland, to Vienna, Berlin, Milan and Venice. The Belgian government

successfully thwarted efforts by radicals (including the community of German exiles in Brussels) to bring down the monarchy. Marx was ordered to leave Brussels, and in March departed for Paris with full authority from the Communist League to establish its headquarters. After being temporarily detained by the Belgian police, Marx was escorted to the frontier and reached Paris the same day. There, Marx found German and other foreign nationals actively working to form themselves into military legions that would take the revolution into the rest of Europe. Marx used his influence to dissuade the German exiles from what he knew would be a disastrous exercise. He then broke from the militants to form the German Workers' Union and wait for the Parisian proletariat to rise up against the new government. Bakunin also returned to Paris, moved on to Berlin and was there arrested, eventually being released to attend the Pan-Slav Congress in Prague where he delivered a speech celebrating what he defined as the anarchist cause, namely "*the overthrow of society*."<sup>337</sup> The German communists also departed Paris, returning one-by-one to Germany to organize the workers in the struggle to come. Marx, accompanied by Engels, made his way to Cologne, arriving on April 10—in time to be present at the formation of a new Workers' Union to educate and represent the interest of the workers against the propertied classes. Marx and Engels fought against isolating themselves from the mainstream of political change in Germany and formed a separate Democratic Union in Cologne. They then set about establishing a newspaper, the mission of which was to bring the events of revolution into the daily consciousness of the German people. Their objective was to fully support the bourgeoisie ascendancy until all vestiges of the hereditary monarchy and aristocracy were purged, then the communists would enlist the proletariat in the next phase of the struggle against the bourgeoisie itself. Events in France were pulling the efforts of revolutionaries and reformers in an altogether different direction.

During the French uprising, Proudhon used his pen to attack both the government and the revolutionaries for ignoring the fundamental

need to reorder economic relations on Mutualist principles. History had proven to him that the nature of government was to be, at best, inept, and almost nearly always oppressive and corrupt. He urged the people to bring down the government and dissolve the institutions that had for so long prevented them from living productive and free lives. Louis Blanc and other socialists among the revolutionary leaders demanded, on the other hand, that government become overtly interventionist on behalf of workers. Proudhon expressed his chagrin:

As nobody today is in doubt about his own solution, we shall go from experiment to experiment. It will be very costly. Once again the opposition's fault is enormous, incalculable; the sequel will prove it. What could and should have been done by work and study, will henceforth be demanded of the State at the expense of the Budget. What miscalculations! What follies!...They have made a revolution without an idea.<sup>338</sup>

Blanc and others advanced the socialist agenda of nationalizing industry, while Proudhon argued for the creation of a People's Bank that would allow Mutualist cooperatives to acquire ownership and control of individual industries. Both were fearful that Auguste Blanqui would successfully mobilize the unemployed and unpropertied millions to demand yet another form of despotic tyranny. Blanqui did make an aborted attempt to forcefully take control of the government, and in the process drove almost all the moderates from the socialist program. Demands by the unemployed for work were rejected and ignored; a system of temporary welfare was established to soften the dual threats of mass starvation and violence. Inadequate and reaching only a small minority, these government actions provoked the first fundamentally class struggle to erupt in Paris. The new Minister for War, General Cavaignac, was appointed Dictator and given free reign to put down the insurrection. A month of executions and transportations brought calm, and Cavaignac returned control of the government to the Constituent

Assembly, although he was elected to the Chair of the Council of Ministers.

Proudhon's position in the Assembly was now more tenuous than ever, and his proposals for financial reform<sup>339</sup> and stimulation of the economy based on a massive redistribution of wealth were rejected virtually without consideration. The French people would not, directed from above, move in the direction of a society built on voluntary association and guided by free and fair exchange. Among the workers and the unemployed, however, Proudhon's prestige—and the circulation of the anarchist-inspired newspapers, *La Representant du Peuple* and its successor *Le Peuple*, spread throughout the general population. At the same time, the proponents of state-socialism, led by Louis Blanc, advanced a program of sweeping government intervention and control:

The measures proposed included nationalization of the railways, mines, Bank of France and insurance companies; the setting up of national warehouses under state management which would receive, store, and distribute all manufactured goods, paying for them in receipts based on an expert valuation of the goods, which receipts would be negotiable as currency. Profits from these operations remaining after the subtraction of interest and amortization costs, would accrue to the workers in the form of capital to finance industrial cooperatives and agricultural colonies. These, by accumulating their own capital out of profits, would emancipate the workers by putting the means of production, distribution and exchange into their hands.<sup>340</sup>

Proudhon opposed this entire program because of his intense fear of government, on the one hand, and his absolute confidence in the justice of the market (with ownership *mutalist* and the driving force cooperation), on the other. More specifically than Paine, Proudhon translated his faith into the language of political economy. The side of him that held to moral principles postulated a labor theory of property, while his powers of observation and reasoning brought him to a demand theory of value. For reasons related to conventional wisdom and self-interest,

Blanc's proposals fell on deaf ears in the Constituent Assembly. Then, after the astonishing election of Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte to the Presidency, the government turned reactionary. Blanc and other Socialists left France for safer harbors.

Proudhon and other mutualists writing for *Le Peuple* urged the nation's workers to withdraw from the bourgeois state, to come together to form industrial associations and to passively resist the directives of the State. Enthusiastic supporters provided some twenty thousand francs with which Proudhon established early in 1849 his cherished People's Bank. Circulation of the Bank's notes among members would, Proudhon fully expected, isolate and protect them from the monopolistic grip of industrial landlords. The government responded by bringing Proudhon to trial on charges of stirring up hatred against the government, provoking civil war and attacking both the Constitution and the institution of private property. He was sentenced to three years imprisonment. With his conviction, he would no longer be able to direct the People's Bank, which closed down and distributed all assets to the subscribers. Proudhon went into hiding and word spread that he had escaped from France. Then, from his hiding place in Paris, Proudhon continued to attack the government and called upon citizens to adopt a responsive strategy of civil disobedience—to hold back the payment of taxes, to escape from military service and to ignore other governmental directives. Despite his fugitive status and a now total disdain for the central government, he was nominated and re-elected in May of 1849 to the Constituent Assembly. Not long thereafter, he was discovered and arrested.

The Socialist cause gathered momentum after Bonaparte ignored a resolution passed by the Constituent Assembly against military intervention in the Papal States and dispatched an army to fight against Giuseppe Mazzini's republican force. Confusion within both the militant and moderate Socialist factions produced an ill-conceived and largely spontaneous worker march against the Chamber of Deputies.

Bonaparte led his troops against this mob and the insurrection dissolved. Proudhon, held under quite favorable conditions by the Paris Prefecture of Police (who admired his intellectual spirit), continued his campaigns from the sanctuary of police protection until, finally, Bonaparte and his ministers had had enough of his written attacks. He was brought to trial on additional charges, but once again acquitted. Even so, heavy fines brought the collapse of his newspaper. From confinement at Sainte-Pelagie, he wrote two books—*Confessions of a Revolutionary* completed in 1850, followed in 1851 by his *General Idea of the Revolution in the 19th Century*. In these works he does his best to make the case for *mutualist* contracts between individuals as the legitimate basis for a just society, exposing Rousseau's idea of the *social contract* to the tests of history and contemporary experience. In no sense, he concluded, was a social contract the basis for existing socio-political arrangements.

On December 2, 1851, Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte moved to take direct control of the government. By plebiscite he would become Napoleon III, emperor. Those few who resisted—mostly socialists and anarchists—were either executed or sent into exile to Algeria. Proudhon saw this usurpation of power as an inevitable, if traumatic, step along the road to a more humane socio-political structure. He even went so far as to prepare a pamphlet explaining that the revolution of 1848 had failed because the people were misguided by those who had nothing to offer but the replacement of one form of tyranny with another. Although released from prison in the spring of 1852, Proudhon was prevented by the French authorities from taking up the pen against the new regime. For five years he wandered in the wilderness. He was not alone. Bakunin's fate, for example, was considerably harsher.

After the Pan-Slav conference and the failure of the Prague insurrection, Bakunin returned to Berlin, spending most of his time moving from place to place to avoid the authorities. He retreated to the mountains, then made his way to Leipzig, Prague and Dresden. In early May



the Dresden revolutionaries were defeated by Prussian troops and many of their leaders executed. Bakunin, who had fought with them in the streets, escaped to Freiberg, in Saxony, where he was arrested on May 10 and eventually imprisoned at Konigstein, a maximum-security fortress in Saxony. After a brief trial in January, 1850, he was sentenced to death. Then, in June he was unceremoniously handed over to Austrian authorities. After languishing in prison another year more he was tried and found guilty of high treason against the Austrian empire. Again, the sentence was death, but the Austrians had decided to turn Bakunin over to the Russians. On May 17, 1851 he was delivered to the Russian police at the border and dispatched to St. Petersburg. After two months of isolation, Bakunin was visited by Count Orlov, the principal adviser to Nicholas I, who requested he detail his revolutionary activities in writing. What had been his intentions? In the context of the times, they sound like the ravings of a madman:

In Bohemia I wanted a decisive radical revolution which would overthrow everything and turn everything upside down, so that after our victory the Austrian Government would not find anything in its old place....I wanted to expel the whole nobility, the whole of the hostile clergy, after confiscating without exception all landed estates. I wanted to distribute part of these among the landless peasants in order to incite them to revolution, and to use the rest as a source of additional financing for the revolution. I wanted to destroy all castles, to burn all files of documents in all of Bohemia without exception, including all administrative, legal and governmental papers, and to proclaim all mortgages paid, as well as all other debts not exceeding a certain sum, e.g., one or two thousand gulden. In short, the revolution I planned was terrible and unprecedented, although directed more against things than against people.

But my plans did not stop there. I wanted to transform all Bohemia into a revolutionary camp, to create a force there capable not only of defending the revolution within the country, but also of taking the offensive outside Bohemia.<sup>341</sup>

Although Nicholas I was taken by Bakunin's candor (and anti-German sentiment), the Tsar was not about to release such a dangerous individual. Bakunin remained imprisoned and fell into a deep depression. After several years of tireless efforts on the part of his mother, and only following the death of Nicholas I, the new Tsar, Alexander II, finally agreed to consider a direct petition from Bakunin. This time, the revolutionary anarchist humbled himself to the authority of the Tsar and was granted banishment to Siberia. After a brief visit with his family, he was escorted in early Spring of 1857 to western Siberia, where he formed a unique bond with other exiles and even married. Yet he was overwhelmed by his isolation in Siberia and in 1861 made his escape to Yokohama, San Francisco, Panama, New York and then to London. Bakunin had emerged from the wilderness but to a world greatly changed.

Looking back on the revolutionary period of 1848-1850, Engels assessed the nature of the opportunity for change that had been presented and lost:

History has proved us, and all who thought like us, wrong. It has made it clear that the state of economic development on the Continent at that time was not, by a long way, ripe for the removal of capitalist production; it has proved this by the economic revolution which, since 1848, has seized the whole of the Continent, has really caused big industry for the first time to take root in France, Austria, Hungary, Poland and recently, in Russia, while it has made Germany positively an industrial country of the first rank—all on a capitalist basis, which in the year 1848, therefore, still had great capacity for expansion....

A bourgeoisie split into two monarchist sections adhering to two dynasties, a bourgeoisie, however, which demanded, above all, peace and security for its financial operations, faced with a proletariat vanquished, indeed, but still a constant menace, a proletariat round which petty bourgeois and peasants grouped themselves more and more—the continual threat of a violent outbreak, which nevertheless, offered no

prospect of a final solution—such was the situation, as if created for the *coup d'etat* of the third, the pseudo-democratic pretender, Louis Bonaparte....

The imperial reaction of 1851 gave a new proof of the unripeness of the proletarian aspirations of that time. But it was itself to create the conditions under which they were bound to ripen. Internal tranquility ensured the full development of the new industrial boom; the necessity of keeping the army occupied and of diverting the revolutionary currents outwards produced wars, in which Bonaparte, under the pretext of asserting "the principle of nationality," sought to sneak annexations for France. His imitator, Bismarck, adopted the same policy for Prussia;...<sup>342</sup>

Revolutionary zeal had taken a back seat to nationalism during the turbulent decade that began with the uprisings of 1848. Even the moderate and democratic reform movements in Austria and the German states collapsed under the weight of authoritarian force. The military occupied Cologne and in Berlin the Prussian National Assembly was forcibly dispersed. Marx continued at this time to call for a continued alliance with the democrats, holding to his belief that communism would succeed only in the displacement of bourgeois capitalism. The first task, Marx argued, was to overturn the ancient regimes and rid society of the remnants of feudal privilege; only then would the proletariat be in a position to succeed the bourgeoisie and institute a communist system. Less than a year later, in April of 1849, however, he abandoned the democrats and rejoined the Communist League. New bourgeois-worker uprisings occurred in Dresden and other parts of the Rhineland and were put down with great force. Prussian authorities then ordered Marx out of the country in mid-May, and he made his way to Paris—where the spread of cholera rivaled politics as the scourge of the people. Engels remained behind, to fight in the Baden uprising against the Prussians and then escape into Switzerland. French authorities eventually learned of Marx's presence in Paris, and in July he and his family were ordered to leave. The only safe haven open to Marx and his fellow political refugees was England, where he was essentially

unknown to authorities. Marx arrived in London in late August, his family joined him in September, and many others followed, including Engels. Marx now saw in England the ripening conditions for his worker revolution:

...Here in England an extremely important movement is developing at the present time. On the one hand, we have the agitation carried on by the protectionists, based on the fanaticism of the rural population—the results of free trade in corn are beginning to be felt exactly as I predicted several years ago. On the other hand, the free-traders are drawing further political and economic conclusions from their system, playing the part of financial and parliamentary reformers in domestic politics, and acting as the party of peace—in foreign affairs. And, lastly, there are the Chartists, who are working together with the bourgeoisie against the aristocracy, but at the same time have resumed their own party movement against the bourgeoisie, with increased energy.<sup>343</sup>

Indeed, the impact of agrarian and industrial landlordism in Britain presented Marx with an opportunity to test his theory of history, if only he and Engels could build a viable communist movement among the British workers. If nationalism on the continent was an obstacle, within mid-nineteenth century Britain, love of nation was becoming nearly a religion.

## **SOCIAL-DARWINISM And The Defense of Landlordism**

The conditions Marx expected would catapult Britain into the final stages of capitalist decline did not materialize. Britain had experienced a financial panic in 1847, caused in part by an anti-speculation Bank Charter Act passed in 1844 that prohibited the Bank of England from issuing notes not fully backed by gold reserves. Then, in 1846 the potato

crop failed in Ireland, pulling an already desperately poor population into actual famine. In the same year, wheat also suffered a significant failure, sending the price of grains far higher than many of the poor could afford to pay. These conditions prompted Chartists, such as Feargus O'Connor, to campaign against the oppression of absentee agrarian landlordism in Ireland and industrial landlordism throughout the rest of Britain. All these factors seemed to be pulling the British Isles toward an uprising similar to those occurring throughout much of the continent. In London, Chartists orchestrated the signing of a petition to the House of Commons by more than a million people. The government mobilized the police and military—and the Chartists backed down. Hunger, more than anything else, prevented the Irish from putting together an effective uprising in protest of their condition.

The financial circumstance of the British government in 1849 was, as always, rather desperate. Without the revenue obtained from duties on imports and with little sentiment among the Members of Parliament for taxing themselves or other landlords, this British government depended as in decades past on what taxes could be squeezed from the business owners and workers, with shortfalls made up by borrowing from the world's financiers. In the Fall of 1847, a financial panic rocked the British economy. Banks in droves closed their doors, and the availability of credit virtually disappeared. In desperation, the government granted the Bank of England the power to self-create credit by once again permitting the bank to issue a greater quantity of notes than the quantity of coinage and bullion held justified.

The coalition forged by Robert Peel as prime minister had, a year earlier, fallen apart. Robert Blake writes of Peel that he "*achieved what would today be called a 'consensus' of moderate men of property from all classes banded against revolution but ready to accept cautious change.*"<sup>344</sup> Trevelyan agrees, but also points out what was a crucial distinction between Britain and many of its Eurasian rivals:

...the Victorian era succeeded in avoiding the sharp battle of classes which had seemed to threaten in the days of Chartism [1838] and of Robert Owen's Grand National Trade Union [1833]. Class war in some form would not have been avoided if steady improvement had not been going on in conditions of life, at any rate outside the purely rural districts. The salvation of society was due not only to the efforts and the good sense of various sections of the community, but to the improved trade and prosperity that set in during the 'forties.<sup>345</sup>

Although the traditional landed class still controlled Parliament and the government, the fortunes of many in this rather small group were becoming increasingly interwoven with the industrialists and financiers. There was by this juncture no means of turning back from Britain's headlong advance into the global arena as an industrial and commercial nation. Peel and many others in the Conservative ranks understood this and reluctantly gave support to Richard Cobden and the free traders who clamored for repeal of the Corn Laws. Disraeli, on the other hand, greatly misconstrued where British strength rested; he looked to the past and to those socio-political arrangements that were familiar and comfortable. And yet, he did anticipate the basis upon which Marx and Engels were to turn hopefully toward Britain as the nurturing ground for a revolutionary proletariat. Speaking against the government's repeal of the Corn Laws, Disraeli got to the heart of the matter:

...I must confess my deep mortification that in an age of political regeneration when all social evils are ascribed to the operation of class interests, it should be suggested that we are to be reduced from the alleged power of one class only to sink under the avowed dominion of another....<sup>346</sup>

In the face of crisis, with literally hundreds of thousands of Irish and British tenant farmers and unemployed workers facing starvation, repeal of the Corn Laws was about the only course of action open to the

government. Food prices had to come down and come down quickly. The British Isles desperately needed to import corn and grains from the Americas. Failure to at least mitigate the problems of those at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder meant social and political turmoil. Here, in the war of words over free trade and *laissez-faire liberalism*, we find not only such political agitators as Cobden but a young Herbert Spencer, who in 1848 had come to the movement's primary journalistic organ, *The Economist*, as a junior editor. Peel was faced with the hard realities of a national economic crisis that threatened to embroil his country in a struggle for political power. He was being pulled in a direction where the waters were uncharted. Yet he had few alternatives; either the Conservative party would act decisively (and, in the process, suffer disunity) or the British constitution might not survive the ensuing upheaval.

Cobden and others had already observed that because of the expansion of industrial landlordism in Britain, class interests were not so clearly drawn as they would show themselves to be in France, Austria or Germany. A large percentage of agrarian landlords were already dependent upon export markets and had moved away from producing food crops as a primary activity. Others controlled coal-bearing lands and wanted no interference from the government or reformers. What free trade really meant was the beginning of the end of the existing social order; or, more specifically, the displacement of one loosely-knit coalition of conservative interests by a new generation of almost equally conservative landlords engaged in complex business activities. The strategy for taking over leadership of Britain's socio-political institutions had developed over several decades, and had been summarized in 1839 by John Stuart Mill, who advised the Radicals to "*combine to agitate, not against the Corn Laws, but against the source of the Corn Laws, as well as of every other grievance—the vicious constitution of the legislature.*"<sup>347</sup> Disraeli argued with great passion (although with less philosophical conviction than had Burke) that the structure of British society was the

source of its global power and internal stability. These cornerstones were under attack, and the consequences were both dangerous and unclear. Despite the opposition, however, Peel received nearly unanimous support of the Whig and Radical minorities, and the Corn Laws were repealed. This coalition fell apart when the government attempted to deal with the famine-driven unrest in Ireland by proposing what amounted to marshal law. Disraeli and other Conservative opponents of Peel joined with the Whigs, Radicals and Irish to vote against the bill. The government fell, and the Conservatives split into two distinct factions, one essentially loyal to Peel and the other to protectionism. A new government was formed under John Russell. Elections held during June of 1846 returned a slight Conservative majority; however, two-thirds of the Conservatives belonged to the protectionist faction. From this point on until his death in 1850, Peel would remain outside the political struggle. Those loyal to his principles would continue in opposition to that form of conservatism advanced by Edward Stanley (the fourteenth Earl of Derby) in the House of Lords and by Benjamin Disraeli in the House of Commons.

For his part, Disraeli accepted the ascendancy of free trade policies and was ready to see what they would produce. And yet, he came under the influence of the political economist Henry Drummond, a former banker awarded Oxford University's first chair in political economy. Among other things, Drummond was both a staunch royalist and protectionist. Disraeli willingly became the political champion for Drummond's two most compelling recommendations to the government:

[F]irst the... 'equalization of taxation,' ie reducing the burdens on land by putting the rates, or part of them, on the Consolidated Fund to be raised by general instead of local taxes; secondly,...the creation of a large surplus on the budget to be used to establish a sinking fund for the liquidation of the National Debt.<sup>348</sup>



Reducing the national debt would not only improve access by business to credit, but have an almost certain downward effect on the fees charged on borrowed funds. Shifting taxes from the land to the incomes of capitalists and workers would, all things being equal, result in the capitalization of the lower carrying costs of land into higher land costs. After a confrontation with Stanley and opposition from those men of influence whose tax burden might actually increase, Disraeli was forced to back down.

Before long, Russell's coalition government fell apart and Stanley was asked by the Queen to form yet another new government, an effort that failed in large part because of Stanley's ongoing commitment to reversing the policies of free trade. Instead, Russell was returned to office. Another crisis occurred near the end of 1851 when Temple (Lord Palmerston) was removed as Foreign Secretary for committing Britain to support Louis Bonaparte's bid for power in France. Temple then worked to bring down Russell's government by orchestrating the defeat of a bill presented to the House of Commons. Stanley was once again called upon by the Queen, and this time he abandoned the protectionist Conservatives. Disraeli became Chancellor of the Exchequer. From this new cabinet office, Disraeli was now prepared to argue the case for free trade with the same degree of zeal with which he had earlier stood in opposition.

Monitoring the intrigues and the course of events in British politics from deep obscurity, Karl Marx nurtured for awhile the hope that "*a real revolutionary movement*"<sup>349</sup> might commence after the fall of Russell. Marx was spending almost all of his time at research or in giving a series of lectures in political economy at the Communist Workers' Educational Union hall. In other speeches on the communist movement, Marx argued the case for creating an independent political party and the reliance on education to reach the proletariat masses. By late 1850, in fact, the largely impotent Communist League had split, with the Blanquist faction eager to provoke insurrection while the even

smaller group of Marxists were fading into the wilderness. Engels, still hopeful that an economic crisis might re-ignite the Chartist fires, summarized conditions in Britain to support his hopes:

The free-trade measures of the British, following one another in rapid succession, with the subsequent opening up of the Dutch colonies, the lowering of tariffs in Spain, Sardinia, etc., and the drop in the price of cotton...are supporting prosperity longer than could have been previously expected. But the condition of the Indian and, in part, the American markets...does not give one any reason to believe that it will last much longer.<sup>350</sup>

There were other valid reasons for Engels to question how long the policies of *laissez-faire liberalism* could sustain economic prosperity and, hence, political stability. Disraeli inherited the finances of a government deeply in debt, so much so that more than half the revenue raised during the prior decade had been used solely to maintain interest payments on the national debt. A supply-side effect had resulted from lower tariffs on imported goods, so that the amount of revenue raised had actually increased. Influenced by reformers concerned about public health, Charles Wood (Disraeli's predecessor as Chancellor of the Exchequer) had abolished the tax on windows in favor of a house tax. Disraeli now moved to increase the tax rate on houses. After presenting his budget to the House of Commons in early December, Disraeli encountered a storm of protest. Only the farmers and other rural property owners seemed to benefit from his plan. Disraeli sought out the support of the free traders, in the person of John Bright, who recorded for posterity that Disraeli seemed unattached to any set of principles relating to taxation or political economy. In the House, Disraeli was effectively opposed by Gladstone, who presented "*a well-reasoned indictment of the whole budget, displaying that mastery of financial detail which was to make him by far the greatest Chancellor of the Exchequer in his own, and perhaps any other, time.*"<sup>351</sup> The budget bill

was defeated, narrowly, and Stanley submitted his resignation. The British ship of state now turned fully into Cobden's wind. Gladstone succeeded Disraeli as Chancellor of the Exchequer in a new coalition government headed by George Hamilton Gordon (the fourth Earl of Aberdeen). From the wilderness, Engels anxiously observed in these maneuvers the makings of another period of upheaval:

The present prosperity...cannot last beyond autumn. In the meantime, the third British cabinet in the course of a single year is now making a fool of itself—and this is the last possible cabinet without the direct intervention of the radical bourgeoisie. The Whigs, the Tories, the coalitionists are all suffering defeat in turn, not because of a tax deficit, but because of surplus. This characterizes the whole policy as well as the extreme impotence of the old parties. If the present ministers fall, Britain cannot be governed without a considerable extension of the electorate; in all likelihood this will coincide with the onset of the crisis.<sup>352</sup>

None of the socio-political strife nor economic hardships had been sufficiently powerful to bring about an upheaval in the institutional structures in those nations where the socialists, mutualists, anarchists or communists had been active. Humankind reached the middle of the nineteenth century still very much under the domination of landed oligarchy and edging toward *agrarian, industrial and urban landlordism*. Surveying the world in which he lived, John Stuart Mill recorded in a dairy kept during the first part of 1854, the following observation of how far the Eurasian world had come and just how far remained to be traveled by transnationals eager to build societies that respected human rights and adhered to universal principles of justice:

In this age a far better ideal of human society can be formed, and by some persons both here and in France has been formed, than at any former time. But to discern the road to it—the series of transitions by which it must be reached, and what can be done, either under existing institutions or by a wise modification of them, to bring it

nearer—is a problem no nearer being resolved than formerly. The only means of which the efficacy and the necessity are evident, is universal Education: and who will educate the educators?<sup>353</sup>

To the great misfortune of Mill's generation, Paine, the architect of cooperative individualism, had been discarded and largely forgotten. Proudhon, who most nearly in the Old World rediscovered the principles Paine espoused, had but a brief window of opportunity in which to redirect the impact of agrarian and industrial landlordism. *The Democracy* of which Tocqueville wrote so eloquently and descriptively continued to survive among the United States, although a new generation of native sons observed and warned of disturbing problems. There was evident to certain sensitive observers a troubling dichotomy developing between unbridled individual freedom and the peaceful, cooperative operation of society. Long before Frederick Jackson Turner came forth with his frontier hypothesis, Ralph Waldo Emerson demonstrated a clear understanding of the conflict unfolding:

The theory of politics which has possessed the mind of men, and which they have expressed the best they could in their laws and in their revolutions, considers persons and property as the two objects for whose protection government exists. Of persons, all have equal rights, in virtue of being identical in nature. This interest of course with its whole power demands a democracy. Whilst the rights of all as persons are equal in virtue of their access to reason, their rights in property are very unequal. One man owns his clothes, and another owns a county. This accident, depending primarily on the skill and virtue of the parties, of which there is every degree, and secondarily on patrimony, falls unequally, and its rights of course are unequal. Personal rights, universally the same, demand a government framed on the ratio of the census; property demands a government framed on the ratio of owners and of owning....

In the earliest society the proprietors made their own wealth, and so long as it comes to the owners in the direct way, no other opinion would arise in any equitable

community than that property should make the law for property, and persons the law for persons.

But property passes through donation or inheritance to those who do not create it. Gift, in one case, makes it as really the new owner's, as labor made it the first owner's: in the other case, of patrimony, the law makes an ownership which will be valid in each man's view according to the estimate which he sets on the public tranquility.

It was not, however, found easy to embody the readily admitted principle that property should make law for property, and persons for persons; since persons and property mixed themselves in every transaction. At last it seemed settled that the rightful distinction was that the proprietors should have more elective franchise than non-proprietors, on the Spartan principle of "calling that which is just, equal; not that which is equal, just."

That principle no longer looks so self-evident as it appeared in former times, partly because doubts have arisen whether too much weight had not been allowed in the laws to property, and such a structure given to our usages as allowed the rich to encroach on the poor, and to keep them poor; but mainly because there is an instinctive sense, however obscure and yet inarticulate, that the whole constitution of property, on its present tenures, is injurious, and its influence on persons deteriorating and degrading; that truly the only interest for the consideration of the State is persons; that property will always follow persons; that the highest end of government is the culture of men; and that if men can be educated, the institutions will share their improvement and the moral sentiment will write the law of the land.<sup>354</sup>

Neither Emerson, Marx, Engels, Proudhon, the Chartists nor any of the various socialists succeeded in offering solutions to socio-political problems that fully satisfied the test of moral principles. Paine's work had escaped their attention, yet all seemed to recognize the benefits inherent in participatory government and widespread access to land. Only Proudhon understood history well enough to fear any form of centralized government; a tyranny of the majority was still tyranny, and a despotic legislature was just as capable of oppression as an aristocracy or a monarchy. One of a very few among all those writing on

political economy at the time, the Scot, Patrick Edward Dove (1815-1873), saw clearly the root causes of human misery and reasoned thoroughly the means by which these evils could be eradicated. In 1850 his principle work, *The Theory of Human Progression*, was published in Britain. He, more than any other writer of this period, espoused a program for change Paine would have recognized as championing the principles of cooperative individualism. He rejected socialism and communism as being based on the fallacious sentiment that political relations are relations of fraternity; rather, such relations must be based on justice and equity. From history, Dove advised, were to be found the lessons necessary to direct the actions of individuals in the struggle for true liberty. One such lesson involved the source and use of power by the few over the many:

The objects of a despotic government must necessarily be distinguished from its means. The objects are wealth and power; the means, tyranny and superstition. Tyranny is power without right, and superstition is credence without evidence....

In the first place, he must have more wealth; and, as he cannot have it by his own honest industry he must have it by the industry of others, or by the monopoly of those natural objects which other men must possess as the conditions of their existence.

Land is the great source of wealth; forests and fisheries are also tolerable; mines and minerals are capable of yielding a revenue; and, in addition to these, comes the taxation of labor.

These sources of wealth, therefore, must be turned to account, and the governor of course does not neglect them. Wealth is power for the ruler, as knowledge is power for the people; and the more wealth the ruler has, the more power has he for taking advantage of his subjects.<sup>355</sup>

A society might judge the degree of justice protected by its socio-political institutions on the basis of fixed principles, recognizing that the advance toward justice proceeded only as fast as an understanding of moral principles became widespread. "*The progress of political*

*society is a progress in which...unjust powers have been gradually curtailed and abolished,"* writes Dove, "*in proportion as the nation has progressed from ignorance and superstition, and advanced towards knowledge.*"<sup>356</sup> Of the utmost and particular importance is the knowledge gained from the science of political economy, the end purpose of which he argues is human welfare. Therefore, the political economist is distinguished from the economist by a far greater concern over questions of wealth distribution than wealth production. In this concern to discover the laws of distribution, Dove foresees an eventual opening of the human mind and spirit:

The great truth which political economy will ultimately teach is this, "That God has constituted nature aright; that it is man's interest to take advantage of the arrangements of nature according to the laws which God has established in the world; that all human laws originating in man are prejudicial arrangements, which interfere with the course of nature; that all such laws ought universally to be abolished, so that man may have free scope to extract the maximum of benefit from the earth."<sup>357</sup>

Had he stopped here, one would find in Dove a strongly libertarian, almost anarchistic, strain. Unlike most of his contemporaries, however, he recognized what the proper role of government ought to be in the realm of property:

Social arrangements for the benefit of all are not laws—they are adaptations of the laws of nature. These are requisite for society; and to these arrangements, legislation, in its economical aspect, ought to be exclusively confined.<sup>358</sup>

For the people of Britain, the movement from being merely a nation of laws to a nation governed under just socio-political arrangements demanded fundamental changes. The heart of the matter rested, for Dove, on reversing "*the alienation of the soil from the state, and the consequent taxation of the industry of the country.*"<sup>359</sup> In short, the

powerful had managed to monopolize the bounty provided by nature without just compensation to their society; and, as a consequence, the burden of paying for government fell on those who actually produced wealth for a living. Producers were forced to turn over a portion of their goods (or services) to both the landed and the State before anything could be consumed or applied to the production of more wealth. Where any individual is denied the right to an equal share of the earth bounty, Dove seeks a mechanistic solution to the problem of equitable distribution. He comes to the much the same proposal Paine advanced in *Agrarian Justice*:

By the division of its annual value or rent; that is, by making the rent of the soil the common property of the nation. That is (as the taxation is the common property of the state), by taking the whole of the taxes out of the rents of the soil, and thereby abolishing all other kinds of taxation whatever. And thus all industry would be absolutely emancipated from every burden, and every man would reap such natural reward as his skill, industry, or enterprise rendered legitimately his, according to the natural law of free competition.<sup>360</sup>

We are told in the introduction to Dove's noble work that although he received great praise from Thomas Carlyle and William Hamilton, among his contemporaries, the philosophical ideas he espoused failed to take root. Perhaps a copy found its way into the hands of Herbert Spencer, whose own book, *Social Statics*, was first published later the same year and shared much in common with Dove's work. Spencer alludes to the nationalization of all land under a "joint-stock ownership of the public" with the result that "[s]tewards would be public officials instead of private ones, and tenancy the only land tenure."<sup>361</sup> Spencer follows Dove all the way, concluding that "[a] state of things so ordered would be in perfect harmony with the moral law."<sup>362</sup> *Social Statics* achieved a moderate success, and Spencer's activism brought him at a relatively young age into contact with individuals such as Thomas



Huxley and John Stuart Mill. Yet, as Albert Jay Noch observes, “[i]t had no effect, or very little, on checking the riotous progress of Statism in England; still less in staying the calamitous consequences of that progress.”<sup>363</sup>

The tumultuous period of revolutionary fervor and repeated citizen unrest flowed into a period of deceptive tranquility. Centralized power was restored throughout the Eurasian societies, although the balance of power orchestrated after the fall of Napoleon Bonaparte was rapidly dissolving. France, Britain and Austria would soon take up arms against Russia in the Crimea in a territorial war over the disintegrating Ottoman empire. In the United States, *Americans* and European immigrants were relentlessly moving westward at the expense of the indigenous tribes. A conflict over slavery was brewing, and in 1848 a coalition of Democrats and Whigs formed the antislavery Free Soil Party. Zachary Taylor, hero of the war against Mexico, became President in 1849. Tens of thousands of people from all over the globe found their way to California to search for gold. Within a few short years a civil war of profound consequence, largely unanticipated yet inevitable, served to hasten the advance of agrarian and industrial landlordism in North America. At its conclusion would begin the greatest migration of peoples in human history in a rush to populate the northern hemisphere of the American continent. In both the Old and New Worlds the pressures for reform of traditional socio-political arrangements and institutions would accelerate. Victories would come to some who struggled for incremental change and, in other cases, to those who resorted to violent means. Reactionary forces would not, of course, simply step aside. The most violent one hundred years in recorded history had begun.