

Documents on The July Monarchy

1830: Une révolution libérale? / 1830: A Liberal Revolution? A decree concerning the working classes, August 1830

We, a Minister for the Government, [and] the Prefect of Police,
Considering that workers in great numbers have been, for some days, coming and going on the streets of the capital, under various pretexts;

That even if, faithful to the sentiments that stir the heroic population of Paris, they commit not a single act of violence, their more or less tumultuous meetings are themselves a very serious disorder; that they alarm the peaceful residents; that they tend to reduce the confidence that the French nation deserves from the government it has instituted; that these meetings cause a great loss of time and work to the workers at a time when public workshops are open to them; and that, finally, these gatherings may offer a means of creating disturbances that the malevolent among them would not hesitate to take advantage of;

That the maintenance of order and the public security which have been confided to us urgently requires that such a state of affairs cease.

Considering that, if the workers of Paris have well-founded claims to make, it is on an individual basis and in a legal manner that they should be presented to those authorities who, charged with providing the same, strive tirelessly to effect those measures which will bring about industrial prosperity.

[...] We therefore order the following:

Art 1: It is forbidden to anyone to form a meeting or a mass gathering in the public way, for any reason.

Art 2: In conformity with article 415 of the penal code, all workers are forbidden from gathering with the intention of preventing work within the workplace, or of preventing access to the workplace, or from gathering either before or after certain hours, and are forbidden in general from preventing, suspending, or raising the cost of labor.

Art 3: No request presented to us that seeks our intervention between supervisor and worker regarding the rate of wages, the length of the workday or the selection of workers will be allowed, since such demands are expressly forbidden by the laws which guarantee the principal of liberty and industry.

Art 4: The police chiefs, the head of the central police, the *officiers de la paix*, the employees of Police headquarters, the National Guard and the other military bodies will ensure, by all means at their disposal, the enforcement of this ordinance.

—The Prefect of Paris, Giroit de l'Ain (*Gazette des tribunaux*, 28 août 1830)

La question sociale

A socialist's view of the social order under Louis-Philippe

Does one hear talk of a violent revolution, which would destroy without transition all existing relationships, against the wishes of individuals? [...] It is precisely because we have seen the ineffectiveness of violent revolutions [that we must prepare] a new kind of revolution. [...]

Without even mentioning the evils directly caused by the great political commotions, does not the competitive system itself give birth to a source of calamity which is the equal of that spawned by the revolutions? Must not the industrial class [i.e., the working class] consider as terrible revolutions, continually reborn, the infinite evils which repeatedly beset it in so many circumstances? But the unfortunate ones who are the victims of this have hardly a voice for moaning, and they are themselves accustomed to considering these evils to be the inevitable work of destiny, without stopping to consider their true causes. [...] Each day they suffer the most cruel uncertainty concerning their subsistence and that of their family [...], each day they are turned away from the sanctuary of justice by the enormous burden of legal expenses or the absurdity of procedural rules, each day their children are taken away from them for the recurring butchery that is war [...], each day thousands are imprisoned, mutilated, executed, among the masses who are forced by society to become either purveyors of vice or criminals, and yet everyone watches silently, and almost without feeling, the continual display of the unfortunates among the class of those who create all of the wealth. And that is what people dare to call the social order! And it is to conserve such an order that the great scarecrow of political reform is brandished incessantly in front us!

—Joseph Rey, *The Rallying Cry of the Socialists*. (Paris: Librairie Phalansterienne, 1847. 17)

Translations are by Stephen Walton