Abstract

By reintroducing the republic as the form of state, the French Revolution of 1848 also revived memories both joyful and terrifying of the First Republic (1792-1799). Despite its troublesome connotations, radical republicans enthusiastically seized upon the heritage of the Jacobin regime. Through a case study of the newspaper *Le Père Duchêne. Gazette de la Révolution*, this thesis studies the relationship of these radicals with the revolutionary past. Its findings suggest that the latter had three functions in radical republican discourse. First, given that *Le Père Duchêne* extensively invoked Jacobin ideology, rhetoric and symbolism, the past constituted a source of inspiration. Secondly, by proclaiming itself as heir to Robespierre and the likes, *Le Père Duchêne* deployed the past as a means of legitimacy. Since the traumatic memory of the Jacobin Reign of Terror seriously undermined the latter, the journal rewrote the narrative of the guillotine, presenting it as the necessary outcome of circumstances created by the adversaries of the Jacobins: the Gironde. Finally, it used this altered image of the past as an analogical frame projected onto the present. By equating the acts of contemporary moderates with the Girondists' purported treason in the past, *Le Père Duchêne* understood 1848 as the continuation and eventually culmination of the very same strife between malevolent bourgeois reaction and virtuous popular republicanism.

The Retrospect of Radical Republicanism

Le Père Duchêne of 1848 and the Revolutionary Past

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List of abbreviations

BNF	Bibliothèque nationale de France
LPD	*Le Père Duchêne. Gazette de la Révolution*

Introduction

> Do you know me? I am the tribune from which anger has burst in the past in an agitated Paris, like thunder in the midst of a tempest. My voice, tireless in pursuing the enemies of the revolution, one day fell silent, and… it was on the scaffold. (…) I have slept, for fifty-four years, the sleep of death.
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> – *Le Père Duchêne*, n° 1, 10 April 1848

When did the French Revolution end? Historians traditionally have maintained the year of 1799 as the death date of the revolutionary experiment in French politics and society.[1] Yet while it is true that the Napoleonic regime that came to power ten years after 1789 effectively declared the revolution past, the latter did not strictly *become* past. In fact, the revolutionary endeavour incessantly continued to occupy the hearts and minds of France's politically engaged. 'For the entire history of nineteenth-century France can be seen as a struggle between Revolution and Restoration', François Furet, one of the leading historians of the French Revolution during his lifetime, concluded.[2] This friction between progressive and conservative forces, between those who aspired to rerun the revolutionary experiment and those who were anxious to avoid its repetition, formed the backbone of political conflict in post-revolutionary France.

On several occasions during the nineteenth century, these tensions inherited from the French Revolution culminated into rebellion. It was the Revolution of 1848 that probably became the most famous and at the same time to many the most disappointing episode in French politics of the first half of the century. On 24 February that year, King Louis-Philippe

[1] Although more recently Howard Brown has argued that it was not until 1802 that the Revolution had really come to an end. H.G. Brown, *Ending the French Revolution: Violence, Justice, and Repression from the Terror to Napoleon* (Charlottesville 2006) 4.

[2] F. Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution* [transl. by E. Forster] (Cambridge 1981; originally Paris 1979) 4.

was forced to abdicate after a Paris banquet campaign had turned into a large-scale popular insurrection. When Louis-Philippe's desired successor, his grandson Philippe d'Orléans, proved to be unacceptable as crowds called for the creation of a republic, members of the opposition stepped in and proclaimed the Second Republic. Almost immediately the new Provisional Government issued a number of far-reaching democratic decrees. Civil rights were granted in the form of universal male suffrage, press liberty and freedom of association; the opening up of the National Guards to all adult men and the guarantee of 'the right to work' promised more social equality.[3]

It was, Jonathan Sperber writes in his study of the European revolutions of 1848, 'an astonishing event for contemporaries, bringing back great and terrifying days, still on the fringe of living memory.'[4] Great, for those who wished to re-enact the republican enterprise of the Great Revolution; terrifying, for those who believed republicanism could only result in war, anarchy, terror and dictatorship. It was the memory of this devastating, perhaps even traumatic outcome of the First Republic that constituted a major obstacle for the advocates and architects of the Second. How to avoid a repetition of the Terror?[5] 'The first revolution, and especially the First Republic, could neither be denied nor fully embraced,' James Livesey notices in his examination of the republicans' rhetorical failure in 1848. 'While the inspiration for republicanism came from the original republic, in their rhetoric the republicans worked hard to distance the new revolution from the old.'[6]

The Provisional Government expressed its utmost concern not to 'descend into unknown anarchies.'[7] Alphonse de Lamartine, the new minister of foreign affairs, reassured

[3] M. Traugott, *Armies of the Poor: Determinants of Working-Class Participation in the Parisian Insurrection of June 1848* (Princeton 1985) 15-18.
[4] J. Sperber, *The European Revolutions, 1848-1851* (Cambridge 1984) 116.
[5] R. Gildea, *The Past in French History* (New Haven 1994) 34.
[6] J. Livesey, 'Speaking the Nation: Radical Republicans and the Failure of Political Communication in 1848', *French Historical Studies* vol. 20 (1997) no. 3, 459-480, at 464.
[7] Proclamation of 16 March, cited by J. Harsin, *Barricades: the War of the Streets in Revolutionary Paris, 1830-1848* (New York 2002) 275-276.

the other European powers that, unlike its predecessor, the Second Republic had no military ambitions abroad.[8] Probably the most symbolic measure taken by the government to disassociate the new republic from its predecessor was the abolishment of the death penalty for political crimes, thereby assuring that 1848 would not experience a repetition of the Terror.[9] In sum, as Robert Gildea concludes in a study of French historical memory: 'The intellectuals who made the Second Republic in 1848, including Lamartine, certainly tried to make it as unlike 1793 as possible.'[10]

But already in February the republican camp was divided. In the first place, a division existed between so-called *républicains de la veille*, those who had been republicans before February, and *républicains du lendemain*, the majority who spoke in favour of the republic only after Louis-Philippe had been toppled.[11] Yet the 'real' republicans themselves were deeply divided too. Notwithstanding its remarkable versatility, republicanism in 1848 could be boiled down to two factions, one moderate and one radical, deadlocked in disagreement over what republic to build. Whereas the predominantly moderate government wished to consolidate the *political* revolution of February, radicals pushed for a further-reaching *social* revolution. Strikingly, this ideological dichotomy encompassed two significantly different attitudes toward the revolutionary past. While Lamartine modelled his republic to that of the Gironde, many radicals conceived of themselves as heirs to Robespierre and Saint-Just.[12]

This radical version of republicanism evokes numerous questions. How did radicals cope with the inherently troublesome heritage of their acclaimed predecessors? To what extent did they celebrate the Terror inextricably linked to the memory of Robespierre's reign? If radicals did not desire to redeploy the 'National Razor', then how did they seek to re-enact

[8] A. de Lamartine, *Manifeste à l'Europe* [Circulaire du ministre des Affaires étrangères aux agents diplomatiques de la République française] (Paris 1848) BNF, Gallica, NUMM-5609046, 4-5.
[9] P.M. Pilbeam, *Republicanism in Nineteenth-Century France, 1814-1871* (New York 1995) 188.
[10] Gildea, *The Past in French History*, 35.
[11] Pilbeam, *Republicanism in Nineteenth-Century France*, 208.
[12] R. Gildea, *Children of the Revolution. The French, 1799-1914* (Harvard 2008) 7.

the Jacobin republic? In other words, how did the revolutionary past shape radical politics in 1848?

From an ideological perspective, Gildea has presented the relationship between political thinkers of nineteenth-century France and the revolutionary past as a continuous dynamic process of reappraisal, in which men of each generation aspired to rerun the experiment, only 'this time without Terror and dictatorship.'[13] Sperber recognises this sense of reiteration in the radicals of 1848: 'The success of the Jacobins in mobilizing the masses of the capital city to overthrow or intimidate moderate governments and parliaments convinced 1848 leftists that they could do the same.'[14]

If radicals professed a reappraisal of Jacobin ideology, then their subjective representation of the past was determinative of their politics. It is here that radical retrospect enters the field of collective, or historical memory. In the past decades scholars have increasingly studied how (parts of) society understand their past and how they construct such collective memory through social interaction.[15] Any study in collective memory is likely to refer to the pioneering work of sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, who noticed that the past is conceived according to present needs. Collective memory, therefore, becomes highly politicised and consequently, but not always, contested. Different social and political groups struggle to make *their* story of the past the dominant narrative.[16] This would suggest that the image of the revolutionary past to which the radicals related themselves was the product of their collective interaction to shape a historical narrative that met their political wants.

Collective memory not only expresses itself in ideas about the past, but also in practices re-enacting that past. As Eugen Weber points out in a short essay, nineteenth-

[13] *Ibid*., 6.
[14] Sperber, *The European Revolutions*, 248.
[15] For a recent study of collective memory, see G. Cubitt, *History and Memory* (Manchester 2007).
[16] M. Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* [ed., transl., and with an introduction by L.A. Coser] (Chicago 1992) 34, 49-51.

century radicals acted in a revolutionary tradition. 'Participants in one revolution identify their situation and themselves in relation to their predecessors, one generation keeps quoting another, and the more self-conscious actually realize that they are repeating the words and the gestures of their great forerunners.'[17] Reviving the past, then, also contained a symbolic dimension.[18] Extensive reuse of imagery as well as names of newspapers and societies from the First Republic produced 'an orgy of symbolic references to the great events of 1793.'[19] Yet when speaking of such name recycling, Peter Amann has claimed that 'we tend to overemphasize the persistence of symbols borrowed from the Great Revolution.' In his splendid study of the political clubs of Paris in 1848, Amann has calculated that only five percent of the clubs consciously re-enacted names from the past. In the case of newspapers, one in ten did so – but almost all of these were ephemeral.[20]

There may be some merits in quantifying the presence of symbolic references to the 1790s in 1848, for it can provide an estimate of the extension of commitment among mid-nineteenth-century republicans to re-enacting the Jacobin republic. However, it tells us little about the *performative* role of the revolutionary past; that is, how it shaped left-wing discourse and political action. According to Jill Harsin, its function surpassed nostalgia: the radicals' symbolic recycling 'represented not an irrational, anachronistic attempt to relive the past, but rather a deliberate strategy based on their understanding of the world.' They consciously seized upon the familiarity and prestige deriving from the old symbols and names, she claims in her study of Montagnardism, and redeployed the romantic rhetoric of the Jacobins as strategic means.[21]

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[17] E. Weber, 'The Nineteenth-century Fallout' in: G. Best (ed.), *The Permanent Revolution: the French Revolution and its Legacy, 1789-1989* (London 1988) 155-182, at 156.

[18] For a study of republican symbolism in 1848, see Chapter 3 of M. Agulhon, *Marianne Into Battle: Republican Imagery and Symbolism in France, 1789-1880* [transl. by J. Lloyd] (Cambridge 1981; originally Paris 1979).

[19] Sperber, *The European Revolutions*, 192-193.

[20] Amann, *Revolution and Mass Democracy: The Paris Club Movement in 1848* (New Jersey 1975) 37-39.

[21] J. Harsin, *Barricades: the War of the Streets in Revolutionary Paris, 1830-1848* (New York 2002) 17.

The relationship of radicals in 1848 to the revolutionary past, then, appears to have been multifaceted – a complex practice of the past influencing the present and the present using the past. This thesis aims to contribute to our understanding of this historical reciprocity by conducting a case study into one important radical newspaper: *Le Père Duchêne. Gazette de la Révolution*. The obvious advantage of a case study lies in the fact that it allows one to research a complex phenomenon thoroughly by limiting the vast quantity of available source material to one more or less representative unit. It necessarily implies a justification for the selected case as well.

Evidently the press constitutes an invaluable source of information when studying radical republican discourse in 1848. Not only did ideology, symbolism and rhetoric coalesce in revolutionary newspapers, political journalism as such occupied a central role in public debate. Following the lift of censorship, Parisian streets were flooded with publications. In his examination of the workers' press, Rémi Gossez counted 171 newspapers appearing in the capital between February and June.[22] Notwithstanding the fact that the vast majority of these was ephemeral, print run rose spectacularly up to 400,000 copies – an eightfold increase – in just two months.[23] The sudden explosion in demand proved a challenge for paper suppliers, who rapidly ran out of stock. Not only did newspapers gain a significant role in the public sphere, several of their editors became important political figures too. Illustrative were Alexandre Ledru-Rollin and Armand Marrast, respectively the founder of *La Réforme* and the editor-in-chief of *Le National*, the two leading republican newspapers in February, who took seat in the Provisional Government.[24]

[22] R. Gossez, 'Presse parisienne à destination des ouvriers (1848-1851)' in: J. Godechot (ed.), *La Presse Ouvrière, 1819-1850, Angleterre, Etats-Unis, France, Belgique, Italie, Allemagne, Tchécoslovaquie, Hongrie* ([Nancy] 1966) 183.
[23] Sperber, *The European Revolutions*, 151-152.
[24] I. Collins, *The Government and the Newspaper Press in France, 1841-1881* (London 1959) 101.

As for the selection of the particular journal, *Le Père Duchêne* can be conceived as the very embodiment of radical republican retrospect in the Revolution of 1848. The journal was, in fact, part of a franchise of revolutionary journalism that originated from the First Revolution. In the 1790s numerous newspaper bearing titles similar to *Le Père Duchêne* had circulated in France, of which the edition created by Jacques-René Hébert became '[b]y far the best known and most celebrated' popular journal during the heyday of the Reign of Terror. Hébert's *Le Père Duchêne* regularly demanded executions of certain political figures in its columns and indeed, more often than not these politicians ended up on the scaffold. The notorious existence of the journal came to an end only when Hébert himself was decapitated by the very machine he had been celebrating.[25] The fascinating thing is that throughout the nineteenth century the formula of *Le Père Duchêne* was continuously revived, often simultaneously by different publishers. Variations of *Le Père Duchêne* made prominent appearances on the revolutionary scenes of 1830, 1848 and 1871, and its name even re-emerged as the title of a resistance paper during World War II.[26]

If a franchise, then what did its formula imply? The central character, the fictitious 'old man' Duchêne, originated from a widely popular theatre play called *Le Père Duchesne, ou La Mauvaise Habitude* dating back to early 1789. Duchêne became known as a rough, hard-swearing stove maker, but despite his crude manners he essentially was a kind and honest man.[27] In 1790 the character of Duchêne began to appear in multiple newspapers and was quickly to emerge as the one most frequently used. The style of 'his' journal owed much to his theatrical origins. Speaking directly to his readers, the *chef des sans-culottes* continuously displayed heavy emotions, predominantly his *grande colère*. Moreover, the blasphemous *langue poissarde* (literally: 'the language of fishwives') idiosyncratic to Père

[25] J.D. Popkin, *Revolutionary News: the Press in France, 1789-1799* (1990) 151-154.
[26] Between April 1942 and September 1943, *Le Père Duchesne: haine aux tyrans, la liberté ou la mort* was published.
[27] Popkin, *Revolutionary News*, 152.

Duchêne was incorporated by the newspapers too. For editors, the use of this imaginary character functioned as a means of camouflage against both the authorities and readers, creating the illusion for the latter of being one of them. By using the figure of Père Duchêne they wished to operate as spokesmen of the urban disadvantaged.[28]

Although seven editions appeared in 1848,[29] *Le Père Duchêne. Gazette de la Révolution* undoubtedly became the sole important one re-enacting the formula. Without exception contemporary commentators defined the journal as very 'red' and very militant. 'It was made without any kind of talent', one writer sneered in his account of the revolutionary press, 'but full of insinuations, lies and calumnies.'[30] Still, reservations about its demagogic fervour put aside, the paper was also recognised as a hugely successful enterprise. '*Le Père Duchêne* has achieved great successes… in the streets,' acknowledged the outspoken royalist Victor Bouton in his survey of the 'ultra-republican' journals, 'undoubtedly thanks to its title, its style and the iron lungs of its vendors.'[31] A very similar explanation for 'its vogue' was given in another contemporary account.[32]

Behind the façade of Père Duchêne stood two young men. The first was the 30-year-old Émile Thuillier, the so-called *gérant*, who founded the journal after he had been convicted of fraudulently bankrupting the iron foundry business he had taken over from his father.[33] Editor-in-chief was the 28-year-old Jean-Claude Colfavru. With a provincial background and

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[28] O. Elyada, 'L'Usage des Personnages Imaginaires dans la Presse et le Pamphlet Populaires Pendant la Revolution Française', *Revue d'Histoire Moderne & Contemporaine* vol. 44 (1997) no. 3, 484-503, at 484-495.

[29] The other titles were: *Le Père Duchêne. Ancien fabricant de fournaux. Gazette de la Révolution*; (*Le travailleur, par*) *La Mère Duchêne*; *Le vrai Père Duchêne de 1848*; *Les lunettes du Père Duchêne. Journal chantant*; *Le petit-fils du Père Duchêne*; *Le Perdu Chêne de la Révolution*.

[30] J.G. Wallon, *Revue Critique Des Journaux Publiés à Paris Depuis la Révolution de Février Jusqu'à la Fin de Décembre* (Paris 1849) International Institute for Social History (IISH) 119/57, 28.

[31] V. Bouton, *Les Journaux Rouges Histoire. Critique de Tous les Journaux Ultra-Républicains Publiés à Paris Depuis le 24 Février Jusqu'au 1er Octobre 1848. Avec des extraits-spécimens et une préf. par un Girondin* [= G. Delmas] (Paris 1848) International Institute for Social History (IISH) F 1091/40, 19.

[32] 'This sincerity or this excess has been, together with its title and the chanting of its hawkers, the principle cause of its vogue.' J. Thurot, *La Vie, la Mort et la Résurrection du Père Duchêne*: *Notice Historique* (Paris n.d.) BNF, Tolbiac, LC2-1773.

[33] Paris: Service historique de la Défense (SHD) à Vincennes, sous-série *insurgés de Juin*, Gr 6J 49: Dossier d'Émile Thuillier [Paris 1848].

an education in law, Colfavru was in many respects stereotypical of the mid-nineteenth-century journalist.[34] He was making a good living out of pleading and teaching when the revolution in early 1848 filled him with such 'exaltation', as a friend later recalled, that he became politically engaged at the editorial office of *Le Père Duchêne*.[35] Quickly he managed to become president of the editors' own political club, Club de l'Institut, as well as secretary and later president of the Club des Hommes Libres. 'Before February, I was nothing', he later wrote in regard to his sudden success.[36] Although Colfavru was responsible for the great majority of the journal's content, he and Thuillier could also count on irregular contributions of 'citizen' Gautier, member of the Luxembourg Commission, and of poet 'Jules Choux'.[37]

Due to a lack of official press figures, it is hard to verify whether the print run of 70,000 copies publicly claimed by the paper at the height of its popularity – which would have made it Paris' most-printed journal by the end of May – is reliable.[38] The editors had a tendency to exaggerate. Like that of many newly-found journals in the wake of February, the accountancy of *Le Père Duchêne* was rather amateurish. At least one (private) financial overview confiscated by the police at the editorial office referred to a printing order of 40,000 copies. Additionally, letters from vendors in cities such as Bourges, Tours and Lyon demonstrate that circulation was not confined to the capital.[39] Whatever the exact size of the paper's print run, '[c]irculation figures provide only a starting point for any estimate of how many people were reached by the montagnard newspapers.'[40] Journals, particularly those qualified as 'popular', were mostly read out loud in public, thereby reaching an audience

[34] Livesey, 'Speaking the Nation', 462.
[35] Paris: Service historique de la Défense (SHD) à Vincennes, sous-série *insurgés de Juin*, Gr 6J 15: Dossier de Jean-Claude Colfavru [Paris 1848], Letter of A. Carret.
[36] J.C. Colfavru, *Deux Mots au Public. Prétexte et vérité* (Paris 1851) BNF, Gallica, NUMM-5727487, 38.
[37] Unfortunately Gautier's first name remains unknown. 'Jules Choux' was the pseudonym of journalist Antonio Watripon. J. Maitron, *Le Maitron: Dictionnaire Biographique*, [maitron-en-ligne.univ-paris1.fr] (accessed on 3 June 2015).
[38] Amann, *Revolution and Mass Democracy*, 267.
[39] SHD, Gr 6J 49.
[40] J.M. Merriman, *The Agony of the Republic: the Repression of the Left in Revolutionary France, 1848-1851* (New Haven 1978) 28.

much wider than any sales numbers would suggest. The governmental decree suspending *Le Père Duchêne* in August testified of this practice by stating that the paper was 'widespread in profusion and often freely in the streets, on the squares, in the workshops and in the army.'[41]

Whom it were, then, that the journal was read by or read to? Certainly when speaking of 'the people' it meant city dwellers, not peasants. Its reported presence in the streets give it the impression of having been a poor workers' paper. One published reader's letter mentioned that, although too poor to buy *La Presse* or *Le Constitutionnel*, 'I can purchase your journal.'[42] The price of a single issue was 5 cent, that of a one-year subscription 8 franc, suggesting that the paper was affordable for most workers.[43] A similar subscription to *La Presse* or *Le Constitutionnel* would cost respectively 24 and 32 franc. Additionally, the single largest purchaser of tickets to the banquet it helped to organise in June was a club in the poor workers' neighbourhood of Belleville. Indeed, for as far as it can be studied, a substantial part of its readership defined itself as workers. A quantitative analysis of 200 readers who donated money for political prisoners in May and June shows that one-fifth of these donors explicitly defined themselves as workers.[44]

Furthermore, as mid-nineteenth-century republicanism tended to concentrate almost exclusively on men's affaires,[45] *Le Père Duchêne* was not particularly concerned with women. A published letter from a group of self-proclaimed *citoyennes démocrates* pointed this out: 'But the mistake we cannot forgive you, and which your illustrious forerunner would

[41] E. Cavaignac, *Arrêté suspendant la publication des journaux Le Représentant du Peuple, Le Père Duchêne, Le Lampion et La Vraie République, en date du 21 août 1848* (Paris 1848) BNF, Gallica, IFN-53017279.
[42] Letter from 'Cazote'. *LPD*, no. 13.
[43] In February 1848 the average wage of a Parisian male worker – if full-time employed throughout the year – was almost 4 franc a day. D.C. McKay, *The National Workshops: A Study in the French Revolution of 1848* (Cambridge, MA 1933) xv-xvi.
[44] Of the 550 donors, about 200 had their names either accompanied or replaced by a different denominator. 1 in 5 defined itself as worker, whereas only a few mentioned their craft. About half the donors used civic titles such as 'citizen' or 'democrat'.
[45] Harsin, *Barricades*, 10.

never have committed, is that of having waited so long before taking care of us other poor women.'[46]

Finally, there remains the question of defining *Le Père Duchêne* politically. Labels used by contemporaries all seem more or less applicable. The journal expressed a militant tone, its diatribes had a strongly demagogic subtext and its political outlooks, indeed very radical, showed clear signs of socialist influence. It then becomes a matter of preference, and the term '*montagnard*' perhaps is most appropriate. John Merriman uses Montagnardism as indicator of a broad leftist coalition of radicals and socialists.[47] Harsin, more precisely, coins it as 'a Paris-centered movement (largely working class but with bourgeois allies and spokesmen) that looked back to the Reign of Terror for inspiration.'[48] Notwithstanding a more equivocal stance on the guillotine than Harsin's definition suggests, *Le Père Duchêne* was in every sense a grand reappraisal of the Jacobin past and a self-proclaimed mouthpiece of the urban working class.

This thesis will analyse the relationship of *Le Père Duchêne* with the revolutionary past chronologically, since its development was strongly related to political events. The relatively short existence of the journal between April 10 and August 22 – which included a publication silence between June 23 and August 13 – will be divided into three parts. Naturally, every division of a historical period (especially one of such short duration) is bound to be more or less arbitrary, though I believe I do have a strong case when discerning three distinct phases in journalist activity of *Le Père Duchêne*. Unsurprisingly, these centre around the three decisive junctions of the revolution after February: the election of the Constituent Assembly, the demonstration of 15 May and the June Days. This thesis will

[46] *LPD*, no. 29. The analysis of the donors suggests that about 1 in 8 was female.
[47] Merriman, *The Agony of the Republic*, xx.
[48] Harsin, *Barricades*, 6.

conclude by locating its findings in a wider context, in order to reflect on the role of the revolutionary past in radical republican discourse.

Chapter I: Between moderation and excess

Between 10 April and 4 May, the day on which the newly-elected Constituent Assembly sat for the first time, *Le Père Duchêne* made its appearance on the revolutionary scene. Proclaiming to have been awoken by 'the voice of the people, the *Marseillaise*, the cry a thousand and thousand times repeated: Long live the Republic!',[1] the old man's journal set out to save what it understood as the people's revolution from the hands of a supposedly malevolent reaction. But while promising revolutionary vigour, its title also yearned for clarification in regard to the bloodlust of its predecessor. Meanwhile, elections were approaching, and their outcome was sure to determine the direction in which the republic, still young and undecided, would proceed.

A new Père Duchêne awakes

It must have been a gratifying experience to some, a chilling one to others, when on the Tuesday morning of 10 April newspaper hawkers in the streets of Paris proclaimed the return of the Père Duchêne. Folded in their hands was the first issue of Thuillier's and Colfavru's edition. Twice a week the double-sided pamphlet on octavo format would appear, though soon a third issue was added. Its reference to the revolutionary past, obvious one might think, was nevertheless not immediately recognised by all. 'Before its appearance, a lot of people did not know that a dirty pamphlet bearing its name had been sold during the Terror', one contemporary observed. 'Little by little, the workers, the people, if you wish, came to know of or remembered the existence of the ancient *Père Duchêne*, but very vaguely.'[2]

The new *Père Duchêne* owed much, if not all, to its predecessor and given that its title evoked associations with the Terror, its first concern was to define its relationship to the past.

[1] *LPD*, no. 1.
[2] Thurot, *La Vie, la Mort et la Résurrection du Père Duchêne*.

In the first place, it promised continuity. 'I will be who I was in the past,' it stated, 'and in that the imitation honours me.' If one thing the new *Père Duchêne* imitated of its ancestor, it was the mission to unmask the supposedly false intentions of the conservative forces in politics and, at the same time, to champion the principles of a virtuous republic. 'See there the work the Père Duchêne has once done, see there the work he will do today.'[3] The journal, then, took on the role of a sort of watchman intending to alert the people. In retrospect, Colfavru noted: 'I made a pamphlet in the time when I feared to see popular vigilance falling asleep.'[4]

However, from the outset *Le Père Duchêne* was anxious to emphasise discontinuity too. Expecting that in its rebirth some would see a return of the guillotine, it explicitly denied any intentions to revive the violence of the Reign of Terror. 'The century has moved on,' it reassured readers in its first issue, 'manners have softened; circumstances are no longer the same.'[5] These last words reveal a belief which had become current among republicans before February; that the Terror had been an unfortunate but necessary outcome of circumstances, that is, of civil and foreign war.[6] 'The times are no more, and will not return, the Père Duchêne hopes, in which the revolution needed some bloodstains on its feet in order to walk.'[7]

If circumstances are an external component, demeanour is not, and the notion of softened manners seems remarkably valid for *Le Père Duchêne* itself. The use of '*foutre*' and '*bougre*', two swearwords quintessential to Hébert's pamphlet,[8] was absent in the new edition. It is true that these words grew unfashionable during the nineteenth century and

[3] *LPD*, no. 6.
[4] Colfavru, *Deux Mots au Public*, 38.
[5] *LPD*, no. 1.
[6] Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution*, 61.
[7] *LPD*, no. 4.
[8] Elyada, 'L'Usage des Personnages Imaginaires dans la Presse', 497.

perhaps they had been replaced by different curses such as '*viédase*' and '*mordieu*'.[9] But contrasted with the almost compulsive frequency at which the ancient *Père Duchêne* swore, their sporadic use in 1848 reveals a sense of moderation. 'In order not to overly frighten you at the very start', the new edition explained, 'I swallowed at the point of making an insinuating remark to you.'[10] Nonetheless, subsequent use of swearwords was never to match the intensity of Hébert's journal.

Equally, the rhetoric of the new *Père Duchêne* broke with the extreme militancy of Hébert, who had wholeheartedly encouraged the Terror. 'Do you believe that every day in my paper you shall have a list of proscriptions to read,' the paper rhetorically asked, 'and that my issues will be numbered by the heads I shall have nominated for I don't know what expiations?'[11] It could respond fiercely to allegations of terrorist intents. When, for instance, the legitimist paper *Le Corsaire* called it 'the veteran of the Terror, voltigeur of the guillotine',[12] *Le Père Duchêne* reprimanded the journal never to speak of it like that – followed by a violent though not lethal threat. This attitude became to characterise the militancy of the new *Père Duchêne*; a recurrent threatening of its adversaries with (popular) violence, but never explicitly with death. It kept its word when it assured *Le Corsaire*: 'I do not want anybody's head, you hear?'[13]

These divergences from the original edition were evidence of how Colfavru and Thuillier altered Hébert's *Père Duchêne* ideologically. The new edition 'had moved with the times', Colfavru later wrote, 'and had retained nothing of the old tradition.'[14] In the 1790s, the *chef des sans-culottes* had advocated a political philosophy surpassing that of Robespierre and

[9] The word '*foutre*' had lost much of its sexual meaning by the end of the nineteenth century, '*bougre*' in earlier decades. D.A. Miller, 'Foutre! Bougre! Ecriture!', *The Yale Journal of Criticism* vol. 14 (2001) no. 2, 503-511, at 508.
[10] *LPD*, no. 6.
[11] *Ibid*.
[12] *Le Corsaire* (17 April 1848) BNF, Richelieu (Arts du spectacle), 8-RJ-62.
[13] *LPD*, no. 3.
[14] Colfavru, *Deux Mots au Public*, 38.

other Jacobins in radicalism and militancy. Tensions between Hébertists and the Committee of Public Safety, dominated by Robespierre, grew in the autumn of 1793. The following spring the Jacobin regime arrested Hébert, put him on trial and had him executed for 'treason'.[15] Instead of worshipping Hébert's martyrdom, as one might expect, *Le Père Duchêne* of 1848 venerated the memory of those who put him to death. The old man's journal, then, was ideologically transformed from a Hébertist into a Montagnard paper.

As a consequence, the enterprise of the new *Père Duchêne* became one of navigating a difficult course. Illustratively, it used the words of Robespierre to justify this: 'We have to wander between two pitfalls: feebleness and recklessness, moderation and excess. (…) Both extremes lead to the same point.'[16] Excess undoubtedly in the form of a repeated Terror and the extremism of Robespierre's rival and its own forefather: Jacques-René Hébert. Moderation in the sense of too weak a protection of republican principles, which according to *Le Père Duchêne* required firm defence, violent if necessary.

Drawing its inspiration from the Jacobin past, the journal invoked its historical heroes in numerous ways. First, it had Jean-Paul Marat write fictitious letters to itself, in which the old Jacobin praised its work and urged it to continue unabatedly. In this way, *Le Père Duchêne* legitimised itself through the representation of its claimed ancestors. A similar parallel between Jacobin past and radical present was drawn in a story of the old man visiting a political club. Making a short trip down memory lane on his way to the venue, the Père Duchêne recalled the performances of the 'great figures of Danton, Camille Desmoulins, Saint-Just, Robespierre and so many others' in the 1790s club scene. 'Where do I have to go to see a real club of the republic?', he asked a bystander following a disappointing experience in the club, to which the man responded: 'The Montagne.'[17]

[15] L. Jacob, *Hébert, Le Père Duchesne, Chef des Sans-culottes* (Paris 1960) 326-328.
[16] *LPD*, no. 2.
[17] *Ibid*. In Paris, there were actually three Clubs de la Montagne. An affiliate of the journal, Benjamin Larroque, was the president of the one in Montmartre.

Besides legitimacy, the ancient Jacobins also offered *Le Père Duchêne* ideological content, albeit less explicitly. Its first issue, for example, cited from a speech of Robespierre in 1794 in order to promote a republic based on virtue. Curiously, the name of Robespierre was not mentioned, but the quotation marks at least revealed the unoriginal nature of the words.[18] Such was not the case in the second issue, when once again *Le Père Duchêne* cited a speech of Robespierre, this time extensively, covering multiple columns, to elaborate its vision of a good republic. Almost literally but latently, it mimicked Robespierre. Yet while some minor parts had been left out for obvious reasons,[19] other more subtle adjustments in the text reveal a slight moderation. For instance, whereas the original words read that the revolutionary government 'should [inflict] on the enemies of the people only death', *Le Père Duchêne* mitigated this line by replacing 'death' with 'severe punishments.'[20]

If the editors desired a republic that would radically reshape society into some sort of virtuous workers' state, they had not much to be optimistic about in April 1848. For one thing, many state officials who had served under Louis-Philippe remained in office; while the regime change had substantial impact on the governmental administration, the intended 'republicanisation' of France by purging royalists was far from complete.[21] For another, radical influence had already started to decline by the end of March.[22] The Luxembourg Commission, the representative body of all crafts led by the socialist Louis Blanc aiming for far-reaching social change, proved powerless.[23] Besides, mobilising support among the Parisian workers became more challenging as members of the National Workshops, the massive state-sponsored work programs for the unemployed in Paris, and of the National and

[18] It cited from a speech given in the Convention on 5 February 1794.
[19] Paragraphs that spoke of contemporary affairs were left out.
[20] *LPD*, no. 2; the original speech can be found in 'Rapport sur les principes du gouvernement révolutionnaire, fait par Robespierre au nom du comité de salut public' in: G. Lallement, *Choix de Rapports, Opinions et Discours Prononcés à la Tribune Nationale Depuis 1789 Jusqu'à ce Jour; Recueillis Dans un Ordre Chronologique et Historique*, xiii (Paris 1820) 157-168.
[21] Sperber, *The European Revolutions*, 139.
[22] Traugott, *Armies of the Poor*, 19.
[23] G. Duveau, *1848: The Making of a Revolution* (Cambridge, MA 1985) 70.

Mobile Guards, the units of armed civilians, tended to support consolidation rather than radicalisation of the revolution.[24]

Le Père Duchêne expressed its fears that once again the revolution would slip out of the hands of the people. Stagnation of revolutionary progress, it argued, could only result in reversal. As much as the revolutionary past constituted a source of inspiration, it functioned as a warning too. The people had never consolidated their victory, the journal stressed, because the enemies had always remained. A successful revolution, then, required vigour, so history taught: 'No half measures! or the three revolutions that we have made will need to be redone.' Monarchists would not turn into republicans overnight, the paper reminded its readers. It therefore urged their complete removal from government. 'In the time of the first revolution, it was necessary to replace all administrators, all military chefs, all members of courts and tribunals', it claimed, and hence 'the republic triumphed.'[25]

Nevertheless, *Le Père Duchêne* supported the Provisional Government, and it had vested special trust in its two leading radicals Ledru-Rollin and Blanc. 'At first *Le Père Duchêne* was a governmental paper', one historian wrote forty years later.[26] Indeed, the paper took upon itself the task to defend the Provisional Government, as it criticised the more conservative press for blaming the new statesmen of abusing their power.[27] The old man applauded resolute action, arguing that 'our government must be revolutionary and keep it that way until the constitution [is established].' Such an idea of a revolutionary vanguard ruling France evidently stemmed from the Jacobin example; the journal explicitly

[24] Traugott, *Armies of the Poor*, 22.
[25] *LPD*, no. 1.
[26] A. Coutance, 'Histoire d'un Journal. Le Père Duchêne de 1790 à 1887', *Revue de Bretagne et de Vendée* vol. 32 (1888) no. 4, 98-110, 192-203, at 106.
[27] For an example of such allegations, see *Le Constitutionnel. Journal du commerce, politique et littéraire*, no. 113 (22 April 1848) BNF, Gallica, NUMP-3206.

underscored 'the necessity of using a somewhat dictatorial power in the exceptional circumstances in which we are.'[28]

The elections of the Constituent Assembly

For the establishment of a constitution, elections were planned to a Constituent Assembly. Initially the Provisional Government had these scheduled for the 9th of April, but following objections of radicals including Louis Auguste Blanqui, the famous revolutionary conspirator, it decided to postpone the elections by two weeks.[29] Still it left radical republicans with little time to formulate a joint program and to organise a campaign to spread their message. This would constitute a challenge, since the great majority of voters would go to the polls for the first time. 'Educating' these men in politics, deemed necessary by Blanqui and the likes, required time which they did not get. '[I]n February 1848 the historical memory of the Terror and hostility to anything which smacked of dictatorship', Pamela Pilbeam observes, '(…) persuaded the provisional government to hold elections as soon as possible.'[30]

First published only two weeks before the day of the elections, *Le Père Duchêne* recognised its little span of time. It expressed particular concerns about mounting popular indifference, 'like if, stupefied by slavery, you do not understand that a question of life and death is contained in this word: *Elections*.' The journal maintained a strong belief that reactionaries were aspiring to restore – 'as usual' – the old status quo, an alarming prospect which could be averted provided that all people fulfilled their 'duty', which was to vote. 'Then, and only then we shall have the right to cry: Victory!'[31] But if it had expected an electoral triumph for the *républicains de la veille* and in particular for the radicals, the outcome of the ballot completely smashed such anticipation. In part the radicals could blame

[28] *LPD*, no. 2.
[29] Gildea, *Children of the Revolution*, 55.
[30] Pilbeam, *Republicanism in Nineteenth-Century France*, 194.
[31] *LPD*, no. 1.

themselves; their clubs had not been able to agree upon a united list of candidates until the day before the elections,[32] and as a consequence each craft proposed its own list of obscure candidates.[33] With too many lists already circulating, *Le Père Duchêne* announced that it would not present one itself.[34]

The subsequent election results were an embarrassing defeat, with only 55 out of 851 elected deputies being radicals and hardly a third *républicains de la veille*.[35] Ironically, those who had advocated universal suffrage suffered most from it.[36] Given a turnout of 84 per cent, it was not the popular inaction feared by *Le Père Duchêne* that had caused a conservative victory. Rather, it was due to the great majority of the French people, the peasants, who besides their traditional conservatism had been alienated from the new regime by the infamous land tax of 45 cents. 'The yoke of ignorance, heritage of the previous regime,' *Le Père Duchêne* remarked on the countryside, 'still weighs upon it.'[37] Yet even Paris voted quite conservatively.[38]

Following the electoral victory of those probably least concerned with democracy, radicals faced a dilemma. They understood political power as an imperative mandate, which gave the people the right of revolt whenever they felt their mandate violated by the ruling government. At the same time, the principle of majority rule was essential to the radicals' struggle for democracy, and the elections now legitimised the power of a conservative majority. If this government were to violate the principles of the republic, had the people the right to revolt?[39]

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[32] Harsin, *Barricades*, 283.
[33] Sperber, *The European Revolutions*, 145.
[34] *LPD*, no. 4.
[35] Harsin, *Barricades*, 284.
[36] Sperber, *The European Revolutions*, 144-145.
[37] *LPD*, no. 3.
[38] Traugott, *Armies of the Poor*, 23.
[39] R.R. Aminzade, *Ballots and Barricades: Class Formation and Republican Politics in France, 1830-1871* (Princeton, NJ 1993) 46.

Already a week before the ballot *Le Père Duchêne* addressed this question. 'There are people who pretend that, whatever the spirit of the Constituent Assembly, we must maintain it and respect it', Gautier noted, adding that if the people should have mistaken, 'then they would have to use the power of their sovereignty to dissolve the Assembly and proclaim new elections.'[40] This was 'a true principle', Alexis de Tocqueville perceptively noted in his memoirs of 1848, 'from which the false conclusion was drawn that the Paris workmen were the French people.'[41] Popular sovereignty, as understood by *Le Père Duchêne,* meant the will of Paris. 'If these elections were to be hostile against the Republic,' Colfavru reportedly stated during a club meeting, 'we, citizens of Paris, conquerors of the liberty enjoyed by France, we shall claim the exercise of this right that we hold from the revolution.'[42]

But following the elections *Le Père Duchêne* hesitated to promote rebellion. 'You are the majority, and yet you succumb to the counting of votes', *Le Père Duchêne* pointed out to the people, yet immediately discouraged insurrection.[43] Inextricably, this ambiguity on the question of political violence was linked to the memory of the historical precedent, the Terror. And in fact, now that the issue resurfaced after the electoral defeat of the radicals, allegations of terrorism were uttered against the latter.[44] If *Le Père Duchêne* wanted to uphold the legitimacy of the people's right to revolt, it required a new understanding of the past, one in which the Terror figured not as the historical crime of Jacobinism.

> Do you know which men inaugurated the regime of the terror, of which you say the Père Duchêne is the new apostle? It was the men who wanted to patch up the new society with

[40] *LPD*, no. 2.
[41] A. de Tocqueville, *The Recollections of Alexis de Tocqueville* [Paris 1850-1851; transl. by A. Texeira de Mattos] (New York 1949) BNF, Tolbiac, 8-LA39-31 (bis) 125.
[42] *LPD*, no. 3.
[43] *LPD*, no. 7.
[44] For an example of such accusations, see *Le Constitutionnel*, no. 116 (25 April 1848).

> the tinsel used by the old regime; it were the men who, not yet being ready for liberty, whose immensity terrified them, wanted to make a republican monarchy.[45]

Le Père Duchêne turned the narrative upside-down. It had been not the Jacobins but the Girondists 'who alone drenched the France of '93 in blood,' it claimed, 'because it is not men but rather principles that command and execute these grand sacrifices one encounters in history.'[46] By violating the principles of the republic, the Girondists had created the 'circumstances' which in the editors' view had necessitated the Terror. 'Severe laws, terrible measures were necessary to stop the progresses of reaction,' *Le Père Duchêne* stressed, 'and every man of heart, each good patriot shall acknowledge that, to strike then, was to do justice.'[47] According to this line of argument, the Gironde had provoked the political violence required to save the republic and, therefore, had been guilty of the Terror.

This narrative was used by *Le Père Duchêne* as an analogical frame; that is to say that it projected the story of the past onto the contemporary situation of 1848. 'By stifling Liberty,' it said of the conservatives of its day, 'have they not made it necessary for the country to renew all its sacrifices?' History was repeating itself, the journal was implying, and by undermining the foundations of the new republic the conservative forces of 1848 seemed to provoke another civil war. 'See there the men who have blamed us and who blame us still, us republicans of '93, of having displayed injustice and cruelty!'[48] This analogy, in which the conflict of 1848 was understood in terms of the revolutionary past, became an important element in the rhetoric of *Le Père Duchêne*.

[45] *LPD*, no. 6.
[46] *Ibid*.
[47] *LPD*, no. 7.
[48] *Ibid*.

Chapter II: Popular clemency, bourgeois brutality

The day of 4 May marked a definite change in the attitude of *Le Père Duchêne* towards the government. In the following weeks, the journal evolved into a voice of the opposition, now that it understood the Constituent Assembly as the embodiment of a moderate reaction aspiring to smother revolutionary progress. To defy the rightward shift of the republic, it elaborated extensively on the image of the moderates as instigators of violence. The suppressed revolt in Rouen figured as the first example of what it later would call bourgeois terror directed against the people. A series of repressive state measures ushered in by the failed coup d'état of 15 May definitely confirmed the paper's frame of a reaction not only capable of necessitating political violence but also willing to commit terror itself.

Opposing a moderate reaction

Urgency overtook impatience when *Le Père Duchêne* witnessed the final days of the temporary regime approaching. 'Members of the Provisional Government, you have not a moment to lose,' a final urge read on the morning of May 2, 'benefit from the last moments of this power which soon will slip away from you.'[1] But its expectations were not met. Two days later, the eleven men who had governed France since the end of February transferred their power to the 851 representatives elected to the Constituent Assembly. 'From the 8th issue (4 May),' Coutance noted on *Le Père Duchêne*, 'it slams the provisional government.'[2] Indeed, making a 180-degree turn, it suddenly denounced the latter: 'Guilty men, what have you done since the 24th of February?'[3]

[1] *LPD*, no. 7.
[2] Coutance, 'Histoire d'un Journal', 106.
[3] *LPD*, no. 8.

One by one, its members were blamed for the country's mischiefs. Most remarkable, or perhaps illustrative of *Le Père Duchêne*'s disaffiliation from the Provisional Government was its attack on Blanc, its closest ally. 'You, citizen Louis Blanc, where are you with your sterile utopias?', it addressed the president of the Luxembourg Commission, 'disorganising labour, without reconstructing anything, you have preached in the desert.'[4] Rhetorically, the Provisional Government transformed from a beacon of hope into one of failure. 'Resign your powers, and retire, feeble or guilty men who have squandered the future of the country!'[5]

The slight confidence it had kept until the very last day in the Provisional Government it did not cherish for the Constituent Assembly, and as a result *Le Père Duchêne* increasingly grew bitter, frustrated and angry. From the deputies, 'among whom one can hardly count two hundred good patriots', a five-headed Executive Commission was elected, with Ledru-Rollin included as the only radical. By no means did the new government comply with the journal's ideal of virtuous leadership. 'In one word, will you bring us back to the time of miracles?', the paper rhetorically asked. 'Alas! Three times alas!'[6] Instead of virtue, it ascertained, egoism and greed dominated the hearts and minds of the majority elected in the 'Thermidorian elections' – a scoffing reference to the coup d'état of 1794 that had toppled Robespierre.

Indeed, *Le Père Duchêne* insinuated that a similar discarding of republican principles was taking place in 1848. As part of the opposition, the journal emphasised the existence of a chasm between the people's interest and the government. If the Assembly's majority did not represent the will of the people but conspired against it, it claimed, the political clubs, 'this other representation which is more of the people', still did.[7] Yet the elections had deprived the clubs of their legitimacy as source of popular sovereignty, an inconvenient consequence of

[4] In the following issue, the journal reassured that it still 'loved' Blanc, despite his mistakes.
[5] *LPD*, no. 8.
[6] *LPD*, no. 9.
[7] *Ibid*.

democracy which the clubs were rather reluctant to accept.[8] In reaction to such persistent claims of legitimacy by radicals, conservatives reproached them with factionalism, the struggle to secure the interests of a minority rather than accepting the will of the majority. But since *Le Père Duchêne* considered itself as the true representative of the people, and the government as an instrument of a bourgeois elite, it asserted that it were in fact the moderates who were the *factieux*, the men inimical to the public interest.

In this struggle for popular legitimacy, the journal seized upon the suppressed revolt in Rouen on 28 April to reinforce its frame of a government hostile to the people's will. Following the outcome of the elections, a riot had broken out in the Norman town that was subsequently put down by the local National Guard with rifle and cannon shots, killing 34 people. 'Insensible,' *Le Père Duchêne* reprimanded the '*messieurs les bourgeois*' of Rouen two weeks later, 'you would dare to shoot at the people!'[9] The news of this 'new Saint-Bartholomew', a phrase which it borrowed from the leading radical Armand Barbès, kindled a storm of protest in the clubs. In Rouen, *Le Père Duchêne* saw the manifestation of a new elite in power that 'shoots in the name of the Republic at the republican people (…) who generously have spared it yesterday after having vanquished it.'[10]

This image of the conflict was essential: on the one side the ruthless performance of the National Guard in Rouen, on the other side the forgivingness of the people in February. 'They burnt fewer powder bags, dispersed less grapeshot in the two revolutions of July 1830 and February 1848', *Le Père Duchêne* ascertained, than the bourgeoisie in Rouen.[11] In the same spirit, Gautier noticed:

[8] Amann, *Revolution and Mass Democracy*, 199-200.
[9] *LPD*, no. 10.
[10] *LPD*, no. 7.
[11] *Ibid*.

> The cries of death have only been and still are only uttered by the party of the so-called moderates. It is the moderates who have cried: death to Cabet, death to the communists. Recently, a moderate said to me: the national guard must finish with the exaggerated republicans, it must *exterminate them all*.

Contrasted with 'us, who preach fraternity', Gautier ascribed very little clemency and peacefulness to the moderates. Yet 'it is us whom they accuse of *exaggeration*!', Gautier aggrievedly stated. 'It is us whom they want to *exterminate*!'[12]

In his words lies an interesting alteration of the historical narrative. The '*républicains exagérés*' had been another name for the Hébertists, who in 1793 had pleaded for a continuation of the Terror. The concept of 'exaggeration' was therefore inherently linked to political violence. In the view of the moderate cited by Gautier the *exagérés* of 1848 were radicals, socialists like Étienne Cabet. But *Le Père Duchêne* tied the notion of exaggeration to those claiming to want to exterminate it: the moderates. So as it framed the Girondists as the instigators of the Terror, it presented the moderates of its day as those actually guilty of 'exaggeration' and violence. Rouen was but one example.

If the stigma of violence was attached to the radicals, Rouen reallocated it to the moderates – at least in the eyes of the Montagnards. By severely suppressing popular challenges to its power, the latter claimed, the moderate reaction not only revealed its violent malevolence against the people but also reinforced the image of itself as instigator of civil war, as the one whose liberticidal measures might necessitate rebellion. The clemency and fraternity displayed by the people in February, *Le Père Duchêne* stressed, should therefore not be unconditional.

[12] *LPD*, no. 8.

> Yet if, despite your sacred example, they do not want to listen to fraternity… if they try to wipe out this new Republic that God has entrusted to us all…. oh! then, strike, strike without mercy, and the freedom that you will have given to the world will be your vengeance![13]

What it portrayed as reaction governing France, then, constituted a potential source of legitimisation for popular resistance, as the Gironde had been in 1793.

The demonstration of 15 May

This idea of antagonism between the people, sincere and clement, and the elite, selfish and violent, would be reaffirmed by the events of 15 May, the day of the Polish manifestation. In the aftermath of the electoral disappointment, the republican opposition including *Le Père Duchêne* seized upon the question of Poland to mobilise support and to defy the government. At a time when domestic issues proved fruitlessly divisive, a strive for national liberation abroad was capable of rallying broad-based support. The initial agents of the campaign for Poland were the Polish *émigrés*. Some 6,000 had been living in France since 1831, and when in late March a revolt broke out in Poznań many of them headed back to help their compatriots. Exiles who stayed in France successfully strove to put Poland on the public agenda, primarily by sending bulletins to the press.[14]

In the view of *Le Père Duchêne*, the Polish uprising indicated that 'the old Europe trembles, and the great tyrannies absolute or aristocrat, Russia, Prussia, Austria, England, are menaced by a radical revolution.' Started off by 'the electric spark' in France, the political unrest throughout Europe was thus presented as a united struggle of the peoples against

[13] *LPD*, no. 10.

[14] To be sure, Poland as a state did not exist at the time. Its (previous) territory had been divided between Russia, Prussia and Austria. E.J. Kisluk, *Brothers from the North: The Polish Democratic Society and the European Revolutions of 1848-1849* (New York 2005) 73-75.

'tyranny'. 'We are on the verge of an immense war,' it proclaimed, 'where two principles will engage in a fight to the death.' France, then, as the vanguard of popular emancipation, had 'a grand duty to fulfil' in this combat.[15]

Such rhetoric was by no means new or exceptional. The idea of a just war had traditionally been one of the cornerstones of French republicanism. The republic of 1792 had recognised the sovereignty of other peoples, which implicitly obliged it to help these whenever it was called upon to do so. War as such had been moralised by Robespierre as a contest between right and wrong, between the republic and the tyrant.[16] Indeed, 'hate of tyranny' had constituted a central element of republican virtue and continued to do so in the republicanism of the post-revolutionary generations.[17] In the 1830s, French republicans both radical and moderate understood their strife in terms of war against tyranny, waged not solely in France but internationally. Such ideas materialised when they sent arms and men to freedom struggles elsewhere in Europe, notably Belgium and Italy.[18] So if not exclusively, the enthusiasm for military intervention in Poland was partly rooted in a traditional republican concept of war.[19]

The government, nonetheless, did not sustain the call to arms. Already in March, Lamartine – until 11 May minister of foreign affairs – had reassured the other European powers that France had no military ambitions abroad. 'War, then, is not the principle of the French Republic,' Lamartine declared, 'as it became the fatal and glorious necessity of it in

[15] *LPD*, no. 8.
[16] A. Forrest, *The Legacy of the French Revolutionary Wars* (Cambridge 2009) 13-14.
[17] S. Hazareesingh, K. Nabulsi, 'Héritage Jacobin et Bonapartisme Entre Robespierre et Napoléon: les paradoxes de la mémoire républicaine sous la monarchie de Juillet', *Annales: Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* vol. 65 (2010) no. 5, 1225-1247, at 1225-1227.
[18] K. Nabulsi, ''La Guerre Sainte': Debates about Just War among Republicans in the Nineteenth Century' in: S. Hazareesingh (ed.), *The Jacobin Legacy in Modern France: Essays in Honour of Vincent Wright* (Oxford 2002) 21-44, at 26, 33-35.
[19] Besides, support of the Polish nation had traditionally been a respective cause among French revolutionaries. Amann, *Revolution and Mass Democracy*, 205.

1792.'[20] He did not fully reject the principle of republican war, but understood it rather as a philosophical struggle than a military one.[21] If, however, the European powers obstructed the internal development of oppressed nationalities in Europe, Lamartine warned with explicit reference to the Italians and the Swiss, 'the French Republic would feel entitled to arm itself to protect these legitimate movements of the growth and nationality of the peoples.'[22]

It was these last words that *Le Père Duchêne* seized upon to confront Lamartine when the issue of Poland arose. 'The Manifesto of citizen Lamartine to the foreign powers has presented her as the dedicated protectress of all liberties', the paper noted about France. 'Will this protection be nothing but a promise?'[23] Liberating the peoples of the world, it reminded the minister, by exporting its principles, was essential to the republic. It should therefore stand up to its name, 'no longer by brilliant manifestoes, speciality of citizen Lamartine, but by deeds.' *Le Père Duchêne* called upon military intervention: 'To arms! because you swore it!'[24]

To support 'these French of the North', the clubs scheduled a large demonstration on the day of 15 May. The plan was to march upon the Palais Bourbon where the Assembly was seated to hand in a petition in favour of aiding Poland. Despite rumours of a plot and concerns about public safety, *Le Père Duchêne* reassured that a manifestation for Poland would not lead to disturbances: 'this *entente cordiale* of the people and the patriotic bourgeoisie, this fusion of classes, is the best guarantee of public order.'[25]

But during the demonstration, at which some 30,000 people showed up unarmed, protest turned into rebellion as the crowd forced itself into the Assembly. As an elected deputy, Tocqueville witnessed club leaders carrying 'various emblems of the Terror' trying in

[20] Lamartine, *Manifeste à l'Europe*, 4-8.
[21] Revolutionary expansion in the form of proselytising, not conquest. Livesey, 'Speaking the Nation', 465.
[22] Lamartine, *Manifeste à l'Europe*, 12-13.
[23] *LPD*, no. 8.
[24] *LPD*, no. 10.
[25] *LPD*, no. 12.

vain to have their speeches heard, when in the midst of confusion one man proclaimed the Assembly dissolved. The call to arms of the National Guard had just resounded and in response, the (significantly smaller) crowd moved up towards the Hôtel de Ville to install a new Provisional Government, exactly like it had done three months earlier. 'It was a parody of the 24th of February,' Tocqueville remarked, 'just as the 24th of February was a parody of other revolutionary scenes.'[26] Unarmed, however, the revolutionaries stood little chance against the forces of the National Guard; within hours the militias had the order restored and the rebels arrested.

The *journée* of 15 May reinforced *Le Père Duchêne*'s frame of a government not only hostile to but also violent against the people. What began as a 'beautiful' manifestation of a grossly exaggerated 200,000 protesters in favour of Poland, it pointed out, ended in repression and intimidation on behalf of the moderates. Like Rouen, it portrayed the events of 15 May in dichotomous terms. On the one hand had stood the people, 'without arms, without anger, having in its mouth only these words: democratic Republic!' Gracious as they supposedly were, 'they did not demand anybody's head.' The dissolution of the Assembly, it claimed, had merely been an isolated act of one foolish individual. On the other hand had stood reaction which, by means of its instrument of force the National Guard, once more had shown its true colours. 'Barbès and our other friends [have] fallen into the hands of the moderates', *Le Père Duchêne* mourned, ruthlessly arrested and put into custody. But even more appalling it found the cries of the National Guard: 'Death to Barbès! death to Raspail! death to Cabet! they should shoot them tonight, the rogues! the brigands! the communists!'[27]

Originally founded during the French Revolution as a more or less spontaneous people's army defending the nation, the National Guard still enjoyed some of its revolutionary allure half a century later, if only symbolically. By 1848, the National Guard was two-faced;

[26] Tocqueville, *Recollections*, 128, 139.
[27] *LPD*, no. 14.

it had transformed into a rather conservative force over the decades. The opening-up of its ranks to all male adults became a source of tension within, and since mostly deployed by the government as a force of order and suppression, the National Guard rapidly lost its legitimacy with the populace after February.[28] To be sure, Colfavru himself was the second lieutenant of a company, but on 15 May he had not showed up at his unit until late in the afternoon and subsequently resigned from his leadership position after being reproached by his fellow guardsmen with his absence.[29] Highly critical of the National Guard, his journal blamed the latter for being merely an instrument of reaction.

The arrests made by the National Guard on 15 May underscored the newspaper's juxtaposition of the people and the reaction. The contrast was clearly outlined by one published letter. On February 25, the day after the people's victory, 'the prisons were free from vanquished; (…) it was a day of clemency. On 15 May of the same year, the *canaille* is repulsed, the bourgeoisie triumphant, and suddenly the prisons are filled up.'[30] Rhetorically, this division had gained a socio-economic dimension, that is, the qualification of a class conflict. 'Bourgeois' had become synonymous for reaction.

So by the end of May radical spirit was crestfallen, the *échec* of the 15th symbolising a change from revolutionary stagnation to retrogression – a turn from bad to worse. This sentiment of decline was uttered in *Le Père Duchêne*'s reporting on two national feasts. On 7 May, it looked back on the Feast of Fraternity held on 20 April with immense joy. 'May this feast forever be memorable in the glorious annals of the Republic of 1848.' Like in 1790, it claimed, rumour had had it that a national feast would culminate in disorder, and like then, the crowds in the street had proved these false. 'Do you not find terrible lessons in the past?'[31]

[28] Forrest, *The Legacy of the French Revolutionary Wars*, 101-103.
[29] One witness in the police files of Colfavru stated to have seen him on 15 May together with Barbès and Blanqui. SHD, Gr 6J 15,Testimony of Jacques Girardot.
[30] Letter from A. Bougeard. *LPD*, no. 15.
[31] *LPD*, no. 9.

How differently sounded its commentary on the Feast of Concord held on 21 May. 'A feast now! I cried to myself, it is sad, it is wrong.' At a time of repression in Poland and suffering in France, celebration to *Le Père Duchêne* seemed nothing but an act of hypocrisy. 'They should name it the Feast of the *Reaction*', it sneered. Ostentatiously, the 'old man' fled Paris on the day of the festivities to visit the Château de Vincennes, where the arrested leaders of 15 May were detained.[32]

In both accounts a sense of nostalgia resided, but differently. On 7 May *Le Père Duchêne* confidently spoke: 'Citizens, your solemnity recalls those great assemblies of the Champ-de-Mars and Mai.'[33] Two weeks later, the only similarity it noticed between the past and the present was the sun, which had shone 'equally at the feasts of our first Republic, more beautiful than this one.'

[32] *LPD*, no. 16.

[33] The paper referred to the Feast of the Federation and to the Assembly of the Champ-de-Mai in 1814.

Chapter III: The culmination of the revolutionary past

In response to the restrictions and repressions that followed the 15th of May, *Le Père Duchêne* assigned itself a more constructive and activist role to fulfil in order to mobilise people for what it understood as the salvation of the republic. Old Jacobin principle it mingled with the new ideology of socialism so to give its readers a moral basis on which to rely and on which to act. As the prospect of civil war loomed, the question of political violence re-emerged to the forefront, constituting a dilemma for *Le Père Duchêne* on which it was still undecided when the uprising broke out. To the paper, the subsequent bloodbath known as the June Days signified the tragic culmination of a fifty-nine years' struggle for a people's republic.

Repression, socialism and activism

If 15 May had been an outright failure in itself, having caused neither change in foreign policy nor the dissolution of the government, its aftermath impaired the radicals even more. Some of its finest leaders had been locked away: François-Vincent Raspail, editor of *L'Ami du Peuple*,[1] Barbès, according to Tocqueville 'by far the most formidable of our adversaries,'[2] and Blanqui, got arrested. Blanc and Ledru-Rollin both avoided indictment, but were distrusted. Moreover, Blanc's Luxembourg Commission, a gnawing source of contention, was abolished. This way, the government more or less beheaded the radical left – albeit without the guillotine. On the meso-level, it aimed to tackle the organisation of the militant left by closing down some of its clubs. Due to the disturbances of the demonstration such measures could be more easily justified; it certainly helped when enforcing its decision of 13 May to

[1] Like *Le Père Duchêne* its title was burrowed from the 1790s; the original had been edited by Marat.
[2] Tocqueville, *Recollections*, 131.

admit no new men to the National Workshops.[3] On a street-level, finally, the government prohibited public gatherings of armed civilians and built up its garrisons in and around Paris.

'Words of violence and contempt, have become acts', *Le Père Duchêne* gloomily concluded.[4] It conceived of the government's set of repressive and restrictive measures, which it labelled *la terreur bourgeoise*, as the work of 'an anti-democratic majority, which has so fatally recovered since the 15th of May.'[5] Throughout June the paper anxiously anticipated a further abrogation of civil rights, in particular the right most essential to itself, press freedom. If such *terreur bourgeoise* was designed to smother the most radical elements of the left, *Le Père Duchêne* assured that in the end it would backfire on the government itself. 'They reopen the prisons today, tomorrow they will restore the scaffold,' it foretold, 'and once they shall have made the first step, they will slip rapidly on the blooded slope, to lose themselves in the chasm of the revolutions.'[6]

Perhaps this was less of a viable prospect than a warning to the government not to step up its repressions. More important, in response to these governmental restrictions the journal urged its readers to know their rights as well as the principles of republicanism. For this purpose, it demanded readers to learn Robespierre's version of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen by heart. 'You must be able to recite it like the *Pater noster*.'[7] Given that as a placard the Declaration was no longer tolerated on Parisian walls,[8] *Le Père Duchêne* decided to publish the full document in its columns in three successive parts. This action was more than symbolic. Since without a constitution the Republic had no foundation, the paper considered Robespierre's Declaration as the touchstone of republican principles on which the republic was to be defended. When, for instance, conservative delegates demanded further-

[3] Pilbeam, *Republicanism in Nineteenth-Century France*, 212.
[4] *LPD*, no. 20.
[5] *LPD*, no. 23.
[6] *LPD*, no. 22.
[7] *LPD*, no. 17.
[8] Following 15 May several laws of the former regime on public order were restored, including a ban on posting placards. Amann, *Revolution and Mass Democracy*, 241.

reaching restrictions in the Assembly, it urged: 'It is there that I expect you, my clerks! Remember the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen of Robespierre.'[9]

So in a time of republican crisis, *Le Père Duchêne* invoked Robespierre for moral guidance. But the ideology professed by the newspaper was not all retrospect, as it suddenly displayed a very explicit affiliation with socialism. To be sure, radicals had highlighted the 'social question' from the outset, but following 15 May it gained more urgency in left-wing discourse than before as political and social grievances increasingly merged.[10] Probably the single most important catalyst of this process were the National Workshops. Their persistence had led to an alarming budget deficit, thereby constituting a pressing problem for the government. 'It was felt that we could not live if they were kept on,' Tocqueville outlined the dilemma, 'and it was feared that we should perish if we tried to dismiss them.'[11] Anxiety had been growing among the workers employed in the state's program and the removal of its chef Émile Thomas on 26 May started off public agitation. Heretofore a source of order, the workshops now transformed into a potential powder keg.[12] 'The burning question of the national workshops, which was to lead to the bloody days of June,' Coutance observed, 'became the warhorse of *Le Père Duchêne*.'[13]

Unsurprisingly, then, its socialism revolved around the right to work – the *raison d'être* of the workshops – and although its wish to 'abolish the proletariat, this last transfiguration of slavery' reminds of Marxist philosophy, the paper by no means spoke of ending capitalism or wage labour.[14] In fact, more sentiment than theory, its socialism figured as the ideology of fraternity – the third arm of the revolutionary triad. It was, Colfavru later

[9] *LPD*, no. 25.
[10] P. McPhee, 'The Crisis of Radical Republicanism in the French Revolution of 1848', *Historical Studies* vol. 16 (1974) no. 62, 71-88, at 76.
[11] Tocqueville, *Recollections*, 145.
[12] Sperber, *The European Revolutions*, 199.
[13] Coutance, 'Histoire d'un Journal', 106.
[14] *LPD*, no. 28.

wrote, 'the new political religion.'[15] Indeed, Montagnard socialism contained very visible religious elements. Radicals promoted the social republic as the materialisation of the original Christian message of fraternity and equality. Likewise, they paralleled their mission and leaders to the gospel tale.[16] 'Friend Blanc, rejoice!', *Le Père Duchêne* heartened its ally, 'your crown misses the branch of thorns that tore the forehead of Christ.'[17] Such equation between Blanc and Christ was telling, for Blanc himself had labelled Robespierre as a prophet, 'a new Christ.' In his eyes, Robespierre had embodied the principle of fraternity, but had been repudiated by an individualistic bourgeoisie.[18] In turn, *Le Père Duchêne* recognised in Blanc the self-sacrifice of Christ for the cause of fraternity.

This synthesis between Jacobin republicanism and fraternal socialism, if perhaps pre-existent, explicitly became the ideological backbone of *Le Père Duchêne* after 15 May. In this light, the journal ventured in its most ambitious project: the People's Banquet. Since February middle-class guardsmen had frequently organised banquets, social feasts too expensive for an average worker. To foster class solidarity among the Parisian workers, *Le Père Duchêne* helped organising a poor men's banquet at the price of only 25 cents. 'For the first time, thanks *to fraternity*,' it joyfully stated, 'one can say that in the great city not a single person shall go to bed without having taken food.'[19] Lower-class Parisians seemed highly susceptible to the idea. In the words of Amann, who elaborately studied the episode, the banquet soon became 'the talk of the town.'[20] A massive turnout was expected; *Le Père Duchêne* aimed for at least 200,000 people.[21]

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[15] Colfavru, *Deux Mots au Public*, 38.
[16] E. Berenson, *Populist Religion and Left-wing Politics in France, 1830-1852* (Princeton 1984) 101-102, 204-206.
[17] *LPD*, no. 22.
[18] J.F. Jacouty, 'Robespierre Selon Louis Blanc: Le Prophète Christique de la Révolution Française', *Annales Historique de la Révolution Française* vol. 331 (2003) no. 1, 103-125, at 104.
[19] *LPD*, no. 27.
[20] Amann, *Revolution and Mass Democracy*, 273.
[21] *LPD*, no. 21. In the end, about 30,000 tickets were sold.

But it also became a source of friction. The more conservative in the capital feared disturbances and indeed the analogy with February, when a banquet campaign had ushered in the revolution, was hard to deny. *Le Constitutionnel*, for instance, viewed the banquet as yet another 'anarchist' plot to mislead the crowd into rebellion, like presumably had happened on 15 May. It expressed particular concerns about the fact that the banquet was held 'very close to Vincennes' and was organised by 'the plagiarists who have the anger of *Père Duchêne* shouted every day in the streets.'[22] *Le Père Duchêne*, in turn, tried to depoliticise the banquet by highlighting fraternity as its sole cause. Watchful of 'the provocative agents of the reaction', fearing the latter would gratefully seize upon any unrest to legitimise further repression, it nonetheless rested assured: 'Our wives, our children will be with us; with these guests we will not march to civil war.'[23]

Reluctance was also expressed within the leftist movement. Initially enthusiastic, an increasing number of clubs began to oppose the project, or at least press for its postponement as they feared for a repetition of 15 May.[24] Following the convocation of the club delegates on 10 June and the arrests of two organisers the following night, it was agreed to reschedule the banquet for 14 July. The June Days two weeks later would nonetheless prevent it from ever taking place.[25]

Political violence and the June Days

Even though the banquet did not materialise, it may be understood as the prelude to the uprising of June 23 which would keep Paris in its grip for four days.[26] Indeed, the whole period between late May and the June Days, Tocqueville recalled, 'was filled with the anxiety

[22] *Le Constitutionnel*, no. 159 (7 June 1848).
[23] *LPD*, no. 22.
[24] Amann, *Revolution and Mass Democracy*, 274.
[25] P. Amann, 'Prelude to Insurrection: The Banquet of the People', *French Historical Studies* vol. 1 (1960) no. 4, 436-444, at 441-443.
[26] Amann, 'Prelude to Insurrection', 436.

caused by the approach of these latter days.'[27] *Le Père Duchêne* certainly anticipated a confrontation and by consequence, the question of political violence resurfaced in its columns.

An ideological dilemma faced radicals in June. For one thing, they acknowledge the right to revolt whenever a government violated principles of popular sovereignty. But given the absence of a constitution, a codified foundation upon which insurrection could be justified was lacking. Moreover, since the legitimacy of popular sovereignty was now located in the democratically elected government, could rebellion ever be just? The stance of *La Réforme*, the radical journal founded by Ledru-Rollin, was ambiguous; 'sympathising with the grievances of the workers but condemning the resort to the barricades, loathing the reactionary myopia of the Assembly, yet recognising its inviolability.' During the June Days, almost all editors sided with the government.[28]

A similar ambiguity troubled *Le Père Duchêne*. It was not, however, the concept of majority rule that obstructed its support of rebellion, as its rhetoric had already revealed during the April elections. Rather, its reservations were of a more strategic, perhaps even pragmatic nature, as it feared that a 'premature' blow would fatally backfire on the insurgents. 'Are you capable of giving battle today?', it asked its readers. 'No, thousand thunders.'[29] But at the same time, the newspaper clung to Jacobin principles of republicanism. Article 29 of Robespierre's Declaration stipulated that 'When the Government violates the right of the people, insurrection is the most sacred of rights and the most indispensable of duties.'[30] If the people were not only entitled but also obliged to revolt, to what extent did strategic considerations matter? Deliberating between sticking to principles and averting a likely

[27] Tocqueville, *Recollections*, 144-145.
[28] McPhee, 'The Crisis of Radical Republicanism', 80-83.
[29] *LPD*, no. 26.
[30] *LPD*, no. 22.

bloodbath, *Le Père Duchêne* somewhat undecidedly concluded: 'Your cause shall triumph, but without useless violence, without premature storm.'[31]

So when *was* violence useful, when *was* the right time to strike? Above all, *Le Père Duchêne* advocated patience. 'So stay calm! await the hour… do not spill your blood nor that of your blind brothers, only when cruel *necessities* shall have demanded it.'[32] Necessities, it emphasised, the same cause that purportedly had compelled the Jacobins to impose their Reign of Terror in 1793 after having been spurred by the moderate Gironde. The analogy with the past was appropriate, for *Le Père Duchêne* expected the conservative majority in the government to necessitate rebellion at some point. 'You see, comrades,' it proclaimed following a proposal in the Chamber to extent the ban on public gatherings to unarmed citizens, 'that we shall be obliged to retake our rifles one of these days and to rebuild some barricades.' Illustratively, it cited article 9 of Robespierre's Declaration to underpin this statement.[33]

In fact, *Le Père Duchêne* never came to the point of encouraging revolt; it persisted in promoting patience and calmness instead. 'We have arrived at this point, where a gunshot fired in the street now would make us lose all the fruits of our last victory.'[34] Civil war, it feared, would benefit reaction. 'Dictatorships come as a result of anarchy', it concluded from the past. The historical analogy was indeed hard to overlook, with the nephew of Napoleon I making his entrance on the political scene. 'Napoleon was a genius, but he was a traitor! France owes him forty-eight years of slavery and baseness.'[35] Aware of the historical precedent, then, *Le Père Duchêne* was rather reticent to resort to violence.

[31] *LPD*, no. 18.
[32] *Ibid*.
[33] *LPD*, no. 24.
[34] *LPD*, no. 26.
[35] *Ibid*.

Moreover, its call for composure fitted in its narrative of political violence, and even reinforced it. If its adversaries had considered it 'an old miserable, a terrorist, an instigator of anarchy, a furious fool of the regime of '93', the paper asserted, its reserved rhetoric must disappoint them.[36] It blamed the moderate reaction instead for inciting civil war.

> You say that we are, we honest republicans, men of the terror and the scaffold. God will that we shall not follow in the future the example you give us today! The terror! but it is you who have made it; the scaffold! but is it you who seek to raise it.[37]

In sum, *Le Père Duchêne* still was rather unenthusiastic about rebellion when on the morning of June 23 the revolt broke out in the streets of Paris. Some 40,000 people joined the uprising, building more than a thousand barricades and of whom as much as 10 percent was killed.[38] The government immediately proclaimed the state of emergency, making its war minister Eugène Cavaignac chief executive of state power. Almost four days it took him to restore Paris under governmental control.

Contemporary speculations about the role of *Le Père Duchêne* in the uprising were rather judgmental. It had been 'one of the most active agents of the June insurrection', Jean Wallon wrote in his study of Parisian journals. 'Its *sly* editors had pressed for revolt while preaching calmness and patience.'[39] Likewise, another observer claimed that 'this journal had enough influence to make us accuse it of having been one of the most stimulating causes of the insurrection.'[40] Bouton, finally, asserted that one of its two editors had been killed on the

[36] *LPD*, no. 21.
[37] *LPD*, no. 20.
[38] Traugott, *Armies of the Poor*, 28-30.
[39] Wallon, *Revue Critique Des Journaux Publiés À Paris*, 28.
[40] H. Izambard, *La Presse Parisienne: Statistique Bibliographique et Alphabétique de Tous les Journaux, Revues et Canards Périodiques Nés, Morts, Ressuscités ou Métamorphosés à Paris Depuis le 22 Février 1848 Jusqu'à l'Empire* (Paris 1853) BNF, Gallica, NUMM-5485678.

barricades.[41] Yet there is no evidence of the journal's involvement in the making of the June Days, nor of the participation of Colfavru and Thuillier (as shall be elaborated below). But if not directly, the ardent rhetoric of their newspaper might have spurred the disturbances more implicitly. For instance, the Club de la Montagne of Belleville, which had been the single largest purchaser of banquet tickets and had proposed *Le Père Duchêne* as candidate during by-elections in early June, played a central role in the insurrection.[42]

In any case, Cavaignac blamed the left-wing press for the June Days and he temporarily prohibited the publication of eleven newspapers, including *Le Père Duchêne*.[43] Additionally, both its editors were arrested in July. Accused of participating in the insurrection, Colfavru was able to produce a declaration of his presence with the National Guard on the second and third day, signed by his fellow guardsmen.[44] 'For me, withheld, monitored by my company,' he would legitimise his behaviour in June three years later, '(…) I was constrained to stay, menaced by the royalists who were there.'[45] He was nonetheless convicted, likely for his work at *Le Père Duchêne*, and deported to Brest in September.[46] Thuillier's role in June remains more of a mystery. He was arrested on July 4 and detained without charges until transported to Algeria two months later, again, most likely for editing *Le Père Duchêne*.[47]

The June Days became a decisive watershed in the history of the Second Republic. Their significance to *Le Père Duchêne* is revealed in its final issues. Once the publication ban had been lifted, Colfavru and Thuillier, even though both imprisoned, resumed their editing.

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[41] Bouton, *Les Journaux Rouges*, 19.
[42] P. Amann, 'Du neuf on the "Banquet of the People," June, 1848', *French Historical Studies* vol. 5 (1968) no. 3, 344-350, at 348; *LPD*, no. 20.
[43] Collins, *The Government and the Newspaper Press in France*, 105.
[44] SHD, Gr 6J 15.
[45] Colfavru, *Deux Mots au Public*, 41.
[46] Agulhon and Amann agree that Colfavru was convicted falsely. M. Agulhon, *Le XIXe siècle et la Révolution française* (Paris 1992) 131; Amann, *Revolution and Mass Democracy*, 306.
[47] In his dossier at Vincennes no police records exist regarding his arrest. On August 13, *Le Père Duchêne* asked Cavaignac why he was imprisoned, 'since not a single charge weighs upon him.' *LPD*, no. 31.

Another five issues appeared that month, before Cavaignac indefinitely banned *Le Père Duchêne* along with three other journals for being 'instruments of civil war and not of liberty.'[48]

If the paper had been hesitant to call for rebellion, it vigorously defied the government's incrimination of June's insurgents afterwards. Violent protest, it argued, constituted the means through which the people achieve their fortunes. 'History is there to attest that words obtain nothing without revolutions.' The insurrection, if an unfortunate event, had been a legitimate outcry of popular grievances against a malevolent reaction. 'If they had listened to our popular voice, the civil war would not have bloodied our walls.'[49] *Le Père Duchêne* thus blamed the government for provoking the civil war.

The June Days, then, fitted within its repetitive frame of revolutionary conflict; of 1793, of Rouen and of 15 May. It was Gautier who one year later would formulate this analogy most clearly. On one side he positioned the moderates, men who had persecuted the advocates of humanity, conspired with the foreign enemies in 1793, subjugated the revolution of 1830 to Louis-Philippe and who in June 1848 had 'provoked this terrible catastrophe.' Opposite of them stood the so-called red republicans, men who had championed the rights of the oppressed, liberated French territory from foreign occupation in 1793 and advocated the right to work in 1848.[50] Not only did his words imply a complete turnover of the historical narrative, they also blurred the boundaries between past and present, between 1793 and 1848.

If the same strife was continuously repeated, the June Days figured as its nadir. *Le Père Duchêne* stated:

[48] Cavaignac, *Arrêté suspendant la publication des journaux.*
[49] *LPD*, no. 31.
[50] *Le Délégué du Luxembourg*, no. 1 (May 1849) BNF, Tolbiac, FOL-LC2-2047.

> I have seen '93, I have attended, all the dramas of this terrible age, I have become in a way familiarised with all the political cruelties; and well! one must say, nothing of what I have seen in the past comes close to what I see today.[51]

In every sense, then, *Le Père Duchêne* depicted the June Days as the tragic culmination of a fifty-five years' struggle between the republic and the monarchy, virtue and egoism, the people against the political elite.

This strife persisted for another three years. While his and Thuillier's deportation may have marked the end of *Le Père Duchêne*, Colfavru continued his fight against reaction. After two years of exile and imprisonment, he was elected to the National Assembly in 1850, sitting among the most radical of the Montagne. He resisted the coup d'état of Napoleon the following year, in vain, and was exiled once more.[52] In a way, Colfavru became an embodiment of the radical republican failure and defeat in the mid-nineteenth century.

[51] *LPD*, no. 34.
[52] E. Charavay, *Jean-Claude Colfavru. Notice* ([Paris] 1891) BNF, Tolbiac, 4-LN27-51641, 3-5.

Conclusion

The starting point of this thesis has been to understand the reciprocal relationship of the radical republicans in 1848 with the revolutionary past; how the latter influenced their politics and how they, in turn, used the memory of the past. By concentrating on the case of *Le Père Duchêne*, this study has aimed to gain thorough insights into this question. Its findings suggest that there existed primarily three purposes to which the journal invoked the revolutionary past: inspiration, legitimisation and analogy.

It is evident that the radicals were greatly inspired by the Jacobins of the past. Believing they acted in a revolutionary tradition, they re-enacted the names and symbols of the old revolutionaries, of which *Le Père Duchêne* was but one example. The journal invoked the rhetoric of Robespierre to promote its ideal, a social republic based on virtue, demonstrating how much the paper depended on Jacobinism. Its ideology, nonetheless, was not a one-out-one copy, for it mingled Robespierrist thought with new ideas of socialism. Besides these ideological implications, the newspaper also seized upon its historical idols as a force of legitimacy. By claiming to have witnessed the 1790s and to re-enact the revolutionary principles of that age, *Le Père Duchêne* pretended, like other Montagnard institutes in 1848, to be the legitimate heir to the Jacobin legacy.

Yet it was the collective trauma of the Terror that constituted the great challenge to this legitimacy of radical republicanism. For if the latter relied upon the historical example of Jacobinism, a disconnection between Montagnard ideology and revolutionary terror was required. This thesis has shown that *Le Père Duchêne* tried to detach the stigma of political violence from the radicals of 1848 by disconnecting it from their claimed ancestors, the Jacobins. It presented the Terror as the tragic outcome of extraordinary circumstances rather than an intrinsic element of Jacobin philosophy, which suggests that Montagnardism in 1848

did not so much signify a reappraisal of political terror as an acceptance of the historical tragedy. Even more, by arguing that these compelling circumstances had been created by the Gironde, the journal shifted the blame for the bloodshed from the Jacobins to those who had been collectively perceived as its victims, the Girondists. This overhaul of the historical narrative was not only designed to save the radicals' legitimacy, but also to discredit moderate republican claims of a republic without terror.

Moreover, *Le Père Duchêne* in itself constituted a modification of the revolutionary past as it had been collectively perceived. By redeploying Hébert's journal, a very symbol of the Terror, and changing it into a less militant, less extremist entity, the editors implicitly altered the historical narrative. If 1848 figured as the repetition or continuation of the First Revolution, the new *Père Duchêne* signalled both change and iteration; it was the same *Père Duchêne* and yet a different one. In other words, 1848 was the performance of the same play as before, but the plot had been rewritten.

Its altered narrative of the past not only functioned as a means to reinforce the legitimacy of radical republicanism when it professed a revival of Jacobin principles, but also as an analogical frame. *Le Père Duchêne* projected its image of the revolutionary past on the political situation of 1848. Rhetorically, it put the moderates of its day on the same line of those of the past, as if being the very same people. If the Girondists had been guilty of provoking the Terror, the set of repressive measurements taken by contemporary moderates, dubbed *la terreur bourgeoise*, constituted a very similar practice according to *Le Père Duchêne*. Indeed, the paper saw the incidents of Rouen, 15 May and eventually the June Days confirm its argument that if any political faction was culpable of committing or provoking violence, it was not the radicals but the moderates. It contrasted such purported recklessness of the bourgeoisie with itself and the people whom it claimed to represent, peaceful and sincere, whose violent acts had been and still were only *necessitated* by reactionary

aggression and provocation. In essence, this analogical framing constituted a circular argument, with the image of the past confirming the frame of the present and vice versa.

The case of *Le Père Duchêne*, then, demonstrates that the revolutionary past, if a dubious heritage, did not constitute an ideological obstacle insurmountable for the radicals in 1848. While embracing Jacobinism, they did not reappraise terrorism because they considered that they did not have to. In fact, the newspaper found itself able to use the memory of the Terror as a rhetorical means against its political adversaries.

But despite this self-convincing alteration of 'their' history, the radicals' relationship with the past proved not to be untroubled, for unintendedly, the reappraisal of Jacobinism harboured difficulties too. If the radicals aspired to re-enact the revolutionary enterprise of the early 1790s, the one element they did *not* want to import from the past was civil war. Yet the repressions and restrictions following 15 May seemed increasingly to necessitate a retaking of arms as stipulated by the principles of Robespierre. This put Montagnards in a predicament. If radicals of 1848 differed profoundly from their claimed ancestors in one respect, it was their hindsight knowledge of the outcome of the First Revolution. It had made them wary of reactionary or Napoleonic plots to seize upon disorder and civil war to re-establish a non-democratic reign, even the crown. Torn between Jacobin principle and fear of rebellion backfiring on themselves, most radicals in June were hesitant. In the end, they faced an indecisiveness to which even the past could offer little resolve.

If unsuccessfully in 1848, the memory of the French Revolution and the Jacobins continued to inspire subsequent generations of leftist radicals, and eventually members of the Résistance. French politics persisted in maintaining a close relationship with its revolutionary past. And in times of national crisis in France, be it 1871 or 1942, when men seized upon the past to make a better present, they also awoke the Père Duchêne, asleep but always with one eye open.

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Appendix: original French citations

Introduction

p. 4 ‘Me connaissez-vous ? Je suis le tribun dont la colère éclatait autrefois dans Paris agité, de même que le tonnerre au milieu de la tempête. Ma voix, infatigable à poursuivre les ennemis de la révolution, s’éteignit un jour, et… ce fut sur l’échafaud. (…) J’ai dormi, cinquante-quatre ans, du sommeil de la mort.’

p. 11 ‘Il était fait sans aucune espèce de talent, mais remplis d’insinuations, de mensonges et de calomnies.’

‘Le *Père Duchêne* a obtenu de grands succès…. dans la rue, il le doit sans doute à son titre, à son style et aux poumons d’acier de ses vendeurs.’

p. 11n ‘Cette sincérité ou cet excès a été, avec son titre et la psalmodie de ses crieurs, la principale cause de sa vogue.’

p. 12 ‘Avant février, je n’étais rien.’

p. 13 ‘répandues à profusion et souvent gratuitement dans les rues, sur les places, dans les ateliers et dans l’armée’

‘il m’est possible d’acheter ton journal’

p. 13-14 ‘Mais un oubli que nous ne saurions te pardonner, et que n’aurait jamais commis ton illustre devancier, c’est d’avoir tardé si longtemps à prendre souci de nous autres pauvres femmes.’

Chapter I

p. 16 ‘la voix du peuple, la *Marseillaise*, le cri mille et mille fois répété de : Vive la République !’

‘bien des gens ignoraient avant son apparition, qu’un sale pamphlet portant ce nom eût été débité pendant la Terreur. De proche en proche, les ouvriers, le peuple, si l’on veut, a connu ou s’est rappelé l’existence de l’ancien *Père Duchêne*, mais très vaguement’

p. 17 ‘je serai que j’étais par le passé, et en cela l’imitation m’honore’

‘voilà l’œuvre à laquelle travaillait jadis le Père Duchêne, voilà l’œuvre à laquelle il travaillera aujourdhui [*sic*]’

‘je fis un pamphlet à l’époque où je craignais de voir s’endormir la vigilance populaire’

‘le siècle a marché ; les mœurs se sont adoucies ; les circonstances ne sont plus les mêmes’

‘Le temps n’est plus, et il ne reviendra plus, le Père Duchêne l’espère, où la révolution avait besoin pour marcher d’avoir aux pieds quelques taches de sang’

p. 18 ‘pour ne pas trop vous effaroucher de prime-abord me ravalais au point de vous faire un exorde insinuant’

‘Vous croyez que dans ma feuille vous aurez à lire chaque jour une liste de proscriptions, et que mes numéros se compteront par les têtes que j’aurai désignées à je ne sais quelles expiations ?’

‘Le vétéran de la Terreur, voltigeur de la guillotine’

‘je ne veux la tête de personne, entends-tu ?’

‘était de son temps et n’avait rien retenu de la vieille tradition’

p. 19 ‘Il doit voguer entre deux écueils : la faiblesse et la témérité, le modérantisme et l’excès. (…) Les deux extrêmes aboutissent au même point.’

‘grandes figures de Danton, de Camille Desmoulins, de Saint-Just, de Robespierre et de tant d’autres’

‘Où faut-il que j’aille pour voir un vrai club de la république ?’

p. 20 ‘il ne doit aux ennemis du peuple que châtimens [*sic*] sévères’

p. 21 ‘Pas de demi-mesures ! ou les trois révolutions que nous avons faites seront à refaire.’

‘A l’époque de la première révolution, il fallut bien remplacer tous les administrateurs, tous les chefs militaires, tous les membres des cours et des tribunaux’

‘la république a triomphé’

‘Le *Père Duchêne* fut tout d’abord une feuille gouvernementale’

‘Notre gouvernement doit être révolutionnaire et sa maintenir tel jusqu’à la constitution.’

p. 22 ‘la nécessité d’user d’un pouvoir en quelque sorte dictatorial dans les circonstances exceptionnelles où nous sommes placés’

‘comme si, abrutis par l’esclavage, vous ne compreniez pas qu’une question de vie et mort est renfermée dans ce mot : *Élections*’

‘Alors, et seulement alors nous serons en droit de crier : Victoire !’

p. 23 ‘le joug de l’ignorance, héritage du dernier régime, pèse encore sur elle’

p. 24 ‘Il y a des gens qui prétendent que, quel que soit l’esprit de l’Assemblée constituante, on doit la maintenir et la respecter’

‘alors il devrait user du pouvoir de sa souveraineté pour dissoudre l’Assemblée et provoquer de nouvelles élections’

‘si ces élections étaient hostiles à la République, nous, citoyens de Paris, conquérans [*sic*] de la liberté dont jouit la France, nous revendiquerions l’exercice de ce droit que nous tenons de la révolution’

‘tu es la majorité, et pourtant tu succombes au dépouillement du scrutin’

p. 24-25 ‘Savez-vous quels hommes ont inauguré le régime de la terreur, dont vous dites que le Père Duchêne est le nouvel apôtre ? Ce sont les hommes qui voulait replâtrer la société nouvelle avec les oripeaux usés du vieux régime ; ce sont les hommes qui, n’étant pas assez mûrs pour la liberté, dont l’immensité les effrayait, voulaient faire une monarchie républicaine.’

p. 25 ‘qui ont seuls ensanglanté la France de 93 ; car ce ne sont pas les hommes mais bien les principes qui commandent et exécutent ces grands sacrifices qu’on rencontre dans l’histoire’

‘Il fallait des lois sévères, des mesures terribles pour arrêter les progrès de la réaction, et tout homme de cœur, tout bon patriote avouera que, frapper alors, c’était faire justice.’

‘En étouffant la Liberté, n’ont-ils pas mis le pays dans la nécessité de renouveler tous ses sacrifices’

‘voilà les hommes qui nous ont accusés et qui nous accusent encore, nous républicains de 93, d’avoir fait preuve d’injustice et de cruauté !’

Chapter II

p. 26 ‘membres du Gouvernement provisoire, vous n’avez pas un instant à perdre ; profitez des derniers moments de cette puissance qui va bientôt vous échapper’

‘Dès le n° 8 (4 mai), il éreinte le gouvernement provisoire’

‘Hommes coupables, qu’avez-vous fait depuis le 24 février ?’

p. 27 ‘Toi, citoyen Louis Blanc, où en es-tu avec tes stériles utopies ? désorganisant le travail, sans rien reconstruire, tu as prêché dans le désert’

‘Résignez vos pouvoirs, hommes faibles ou coupables qui avez gaspillé l’avenir du pays !’

‘parmi lesquels on a peine à compter deux cents bons patriotes’

‘En un mot, nous ramènerez-vous au temps des miracles ? Hélas ! trois fois hélas !’

‘cette autre représentation qui est plus du peuple

p. 28 ‘Insensés, vous oseriez tirer sur le peuple !’

‘mitraille au nom de la République le peuple républicain (…) qui l’ont généreusement épargnée hier d’après l’avoir vaincue’

‘On a moins brûlé de gargousses, moins dispersé de mitraille dans les deux révolutions de juillet 1830 et février 1848.’

p. 29 ‘C’est que, les cris de mort n’ont été et ne sont encore proférés que par le parti des soi-disant modérés. Ce sont les modérés qui ont crié : mort à Cabet, mort aux communistes. Dernièrement, un modéré me disait : La garde nationale devrait en finir avec les républicains exagérés, elle devrait les *exterminer tous*.’

‘nous, qui prêchons la fraternité’

‘c’est nous qu’on accuse d’*exagération* !... C’est nous qu’on voudrait *exterminer* !’

p. 30 ‘Si pourtant, malgré votre saint exemple, ils ne voulaient pas écouter la fraternité…. s’ils

essayaient d'anéantir cette nouvelle République que Dieu nous a confiée à tous…. oh! alors, frappez, frappez sans miséricorde, et la liberté que vous aurez donnée au monde sera votre vengeance !'

'la vieille Europe s'ébranle, et les grandes tyrannies absolues ou aristocratiques, la Russie, la Prusse, l'Autriche, l'Angleterre, sont menacées d'une révolution radicale'

p. 31 'Nous sommes à la veille d'une immense guerre, où deux principes vont se livrer un combat à mort.'

'un grand devoir à accomplir'

p. 31-32 'La guerre n'est donc pas le principe de la République française, comme elle en devint la fatale et glorieuse nécessité en 1792.'

p. 32 'la République française se croisait en droit d'armer elle-même pour protéger ces mouvements légitimes de croissance et de nationalité des peuples'

'Le Manifeste du citoyen Lamartine aux puissances étrangères l'a posée comme la protectrice dévouée de toutes les libertés. Cette protection ne sera-t-elle qu'un vœu ?'

'non plus par de brillants manifestes, spécialité du citoyen Lamartine, mais par des actes'

'Aux arms ! puisque tu l'as juré !'

'cette entente cordiale du peuple et de la bourgeoisie patriote, cette fusion des classes, est la meilleure garantie de l'ordre public'

p. 33 'sans armes, sans colère, n'ayant dans la bouche que ces mots : République démocratique ! Il ne demandait la tête de personne'

'Barbes et nos autres amis tombés au pouvoir des modérés'

'A mort Barbes ! à mort Raspail ! à mort Cabet ! il faut les fusiller cette nuit, les gueux ! les brigands ! les communistes !'

p. 34 'les prisons étaient vides de vaincus ; (…) Au 15 mai de la même année, la *canaille* est repoussée, la bourgeoisie triomphante, et soudain les prisons se remplissent'

'Puisse cette fête être à jamais mémorable dans les annales glorieuses de la République de 1848.'

‘ne trouvez-vous pas de terribles leçons dans le passé ?’

p. 35 ‘Une fête maintenant ! m’écriais-je, c’est triste, c’est mal.’

‘ils devraient appeler ça la Fête de la *Réaction*’

‘Citoyens, votre solennité va rappeler ces grandes assemblées du Champs-de-Mars et de Mai’

‘également aux fêtes de notre première République, plus belle que celle-ci’

Chapter III

p. 37 ‘les paroles de violence ou de mépris, sont venus les actes’

‘une majorité anti-républicaine, qui s’est si fatalement révélée depuis le 15 mai.’

‘Ils rouvrent les prisons aujourd’hui, demain ils redresseront l’échafaud, et une fois qu’ils auront fait le premier pas, ils glisseront rapidement sur la pente ensanglantée, pour aller se perdre eux-mêmes dans le gouffre des révolutions.’

‘Il faut que vous puissiez la réciter comme le *Pater noster*’

p. 38 ‘C’est là que je vous attends, mes commis ! Rappelez-vous la Déclaration des droits de l’homme et du citoyen de Robespierre.’

‘La question brûlante des ateliers nationaux, qui devait aboutir aux sanglantes journées de Juin, devint le cheval de bataille du *Père Duchêne*’

‘abolir le prolétariat, cette dernière transfiguration de l’esclavage’

p. 39 ‘La religion politique nouvelle’

‘Ami Blanc, rejouis toi ! il manquait à ta couronne la branche d’épines qui déchira le front du Christ.’

‘Pour la première fois, grâce *à la fraternité*, on peut dire que dans la grande ville pas un seul pauvre ne se couchera sans avoir pris de nourriture.’

p. 40 ‘tout près de Vincennes’

‘les plagiaires qui font crier journellement la colère du *Père Duchêne* dans les rues’

‘les agents provocateurs de la réaction’

‘Nos femmes, nos enfants seront avec nous ; avec ces convives on ne marche pas à la guerre civile.’

p. 41 ‘Etes-vous en état de livrer aujourd’hui bataille ? Non, mille tonnerres.’

‘Lorsque le Gouvernement viole le droit du peuple, l’insurrection est le plus sacré des droits et le plus indispensable des devoirs.’

p. 42 ‘Ta cause triomphera, mais sans violences inutiles, sans orage prématuré.’

Du calme donc ! attends l’heure… ne répands ni ton sang ni celui de tes frères aveugles, que lorsque les *nécessités* cruelles l’auront voulu.’

‘Vous verrez, camarades, que nous serons obligés de reprendre nos fusils un de ces quatre matins et de refaire quelques barricades.’

‘Nous sommes arrivés à ce point, qu’un coup de fusil tiré dans la rue maintenant nous ferait perdre tous les fruits de notre dernière victoire.’

‘les dictatures viennent à la suite de l’anarchie’

‘Napoléon fut un génie, mais il fut un traître ! La France lui doit les quarante-huit ans d’esclavage et de bassesse’

p. 43 ‘un vieux misérable, un terroriste, un fauteur d’anarchie, un fou furieux du régime de 93’

‘Vous dites que nous sommes, nous francs républicains, les hommes de la terreur et de l’échafaud. Dieu veuille que nous ne suivions pas dans l’avenir l’exemple que vous nous donnez aujourd’hui ! La terreur ! mais c’est vous qui la faites; l’échafaud! mais c’est vous qui tentez de le relever.’

‘un des agents les plus actifs de l’insurrection de juin.’

‘Sa rédaction *sournoise* poussait à la révolte en prêchant le calme et la patience.’

‘Ce journal a eu assez d’influence pour qu’on ait cru devoir l’accuser d’avoir été l’une des causes les plus irritantes de l’insurrection de juin’

p. 44 ‘Pour moi, retenu, surveillé par ma compagnie, (…) je fus contraint de rester, menacé par les royalistes qui s’y trouvaient’

p. 44n ‘puisqu’aucune charge ne pèse sur lui’

p. 45 ‘des instrumens [*sic*] de guerre civile et non des instrumens [*sic*] de liberté.’

‘L’histoire est là pour attester que les paroles n’obtiennent rien sans révolution’

‘S’ils eussent écouté notre voix populaire, la guerre civile n’eût pas ensanglanté nos murs’

‘qui ont provoqué cette terrible catastrophe’

p. 46 ‘J’ai vu 93, j’ai assisté à, tous les drames de cette époque terrible, je me suis en quelque sorte familiarisé avec toutes les cruautés politiques ; eh bien ! faut-il le dire, rien de ce que j’ai vu jadis n’approche de ce que je vois aujourd’hui.’