neo-Ricardianism had no such virtues; instead, this system was essentially an elusive and self-contradictory jumble. There were no clear-cut positions, only vague tendencies, hedged around by backsliding and qualifications. But British economics was now slowly becoming more centred in academics rather than in businessmen, bankers, or eccentric army officers, and academics and their constituencies all too often confuse contradictory wavering with complexity, wisdom, and judiciousness of mind.

8.8 Notes

1. Schumpeter writes that Mill's *Logic* was 'one of the great books of the century, representative of one of the leading components of its *Zeitgeist*, influential with the general reading public as no other Logic has ever been'. It was due to the *Logic* even more than the *Principles*, adds Schumpeter, that 'one speaks of Mill's sway over the generation of English intellectuals that entered upon their careers in the 1850s and 1860s'. Schumpeter adds that even abroad enthusiasm for Mill's logic was intense. 'The book was found in the house of a peasant in Ireland. It was called the "book of books" by an accomplished Viennese woman (a Fabian and suffragist) who felt herself to be progress incarnate.' Schumpeter adds, with characteristic wit, that these instances show not only the great influence of Mill's *Logic* in the nineteenth century, but also 'that the correlation between individuals' enthusiasm for it, and their competence to judge it was not quite satisfactory'. Schumpeter, *The History of Economic Analysis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), pp. 449, 449n.
2. Cf. Neil B. de Marchi, 'The Success of Mill's *Principles*', *History of Political Economy*, 6 (Summer 1974), pp. 119–57.
3. Ibid., pp. 122, 143.
4. The other two influential inductivists were John Herschel (1792–1871), a distinguished mathematician and astronomer, who gained a knighthood; and Charles Babbage (1792–1871), professor of mathematics at Cambridge, and renowned father of the computer. Another inductivist associated with the Cambridge group was John Cazenove (1788–1879), of a stockbroking family. A long-time member of the Political Economy Club, Cazenove had joined in Malthus's assault on Say's law.
5. See S.G. Checkland, 'The Advent of Academic Economics in England', *The Manchester School of Economic and Social Studies*, 19 (Jan. 1951), pp. 59–66.
6. The third kingpin of the Christian socialists was the Rev. John Frederick Denison Maurice (1805–72).
7. Schumpeter, op. cit., note 1, pp. 451, 530. These strictures of Schumpeter's carry all the more weight coming from a book that is, oddly, highly sympathetic towards Mill.
8. Marx, who seems to have had Mill's number, notes that trying to combine Ricardo's theory of profit and Senior' abstinence theory, Mill is obviously 'at home in absurd contradictions'. Bela Balassa, trying to save the day for Mill, sternly counters that Mill's is a 'synthesis' of the two theories. Bela Balassa, 'Karl Marx and John Stuart Mill', *Weltwirschaftliches Archiv*, 82 (1959, no. 2), pp. 149ff.
9. Alexander Gray, *The Development of Economic Doctrine* (London: Longmans, Green, 1931), p. 283. For confirmation, note Mill: 'Who meets with the smallest condemnation, or rather, who does not meet with sympathy and benevolence, for any amount of evil which he may have brought upon himself and those dependent upon him, by this species of incontinence? While a man who is intemperate in drink, is discountenanced and despised by all who profess to be moral people, it is one of the chief grounds made use of in appeals to the benevolent, that the applicant has a large family...Little improvement can be expected in morality until the producing of large families is regarded with the same feelings as drunkenness or any other physical excess. But while the aristocracy and clergy are foremost to set the example of this kind of incontinence, what can be expected from

the poor?' John Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political Economy* (5th ed., New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1901), I, 459, 459n.

10. In Torrens, *On Wages and Combinations* (1834).
11. Cf. Schumpeter, op. cit., note 1, pp. 667–71.
12. See W.H. Hutt, *The Theory of Collective Bargaining, 1930–1975* (San Francisco: Cato Institute, 1980), pp. 1–6.
13. On the other hand, Mill's depiction of Say's Law in the *Principles* was relatively weak, and left room for Keynes's calamitous misinterpretation a century later. See W.H. Hutt, *A Rehabilitation of Say's Law* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1974), pp. 24–6.
14. Cf. de Marchi, op. cit., note 2, p. 154.
15. Cairnes's successor to the Whately chair in 1861, and the last holder of that chair in the archbishop's lifetime, was Arthur Houston (1833–1914), who continued in the new Mill–Cairnes cost of production tradition. In his *Principles of Value in Exchange* (1864), Houston held that the 'net cost of production' was the dominent causal force in determining value, and even tried to arrive at a mathematically expressed 'unit of sacrifice' that could measure that cost. 'Criticism' of this theory, as Black noted, 'would be superfluous'. R.D.C. Black, 'Trinity College, Dublin, and the Theory of Value, 1832–1863', *Economica*, n.s. 12 (August 1945), p. 148. Houston wrote other books on comparative law and the English drama. J.G. Smith, 'Some Nineteenth Century Irish Economists', *Economica* n.s. 2 (Feb. 1935), pp. 30–31.
16. J.E. Cairnes, *The Character and Logical Method of Political Economy* (2nd ed., London: Macmillan, 1875) pp. 83–7, 88.
17. Quoted in Crauford D. Goodwin, 'British Economists and Australian Gold', *Journal of Economic History*, 30 (June 1970), p. 412.
18. Cited in ibid., p. 414, 414n.
19. There is no 'waste', however, from the *non*-monetary viewpoint of increasing the supply of gold for industrial and consumption uses, a point which should not be overlooked. Also, there is no 'waste' within the overall framework of maintaining the most useful commodity standard (gold) as a money produced by the market instead of the state.

9 Roots of Marxism: messianic communism

9.1 Early communism

For centuries the alleged ideal of communism had come to the world as a messianic and millennial creed. Various seers, notably Joachim of Fiore, had prophesied the final state of mankind as one of perfect harmony and equality, one where all things are owned in common, where there is no necessity for work or need for the division of labour. In the case of Joachim, of course, problems of production and property, indeed of scarcity in general, were 'solved' by man no longer possessing a physical body. As pure spirits, men as equal and harmonious psychic entities spending all their time chanting praise to God, might make a certain amount of sense. But the communist idea applied to a physical mankind still needing to produce and consume is a very different matter. In any case, the communist ideal continued to be put forward as a religious, millennial doctrine. We have seen in Volume I its enormous influence on the Anabaptist wing of the Reformation in the sixteenth century. Millennial and communist dreams also inspired various fringe Protestant sects during the English Civil War of the mid-seventeenth century, particularly the Diggers, the Ranters, and the Fifth Monarchy Men.

The most important forerunner of Marxian communism among these Civil War Protestant sectarians was Gerrard Winstanley (1609–60), the founder of the Digger movement and a man much admired by Marxist historians. Winstanley's father was a textile merchant, and young Gerrard became an apprentice in the cloth trade, rising up to become a cloth merchant in his own right. Winstanley's business failed, however, and he found himself downwardly mobile, an employed agricultural labourer from 1643 to 1648. As the Protestant Revolution escalated in the late 1640s, Winstanley turned to writing pamphlets espousing mystical messianism. By the end of 1648, Winstanley had expanded his chiliastic doctrine to embrace egalitarian world communism, in which all goods are owned in common. His theological groundwork was the heretical, pantheistic view that God is within every man and woman, and is not a personal deity external to man. This pantheistic God has decreed 'cooperation', which for Winstanley meant compulsory communism rather than the market economy, whereas the antithetical creed of the Devil glorified individual selfishness. In Winstanley's schema, God, meaning Reason, created the earth, but the Devil later originated selfishness and the institution of private property. Winstanley added the absurd view that England enjoyed communist property before the Norman Conquest in 1066, and that this conquest created the institution of private property. His call, then, was to return to the supposedly original communist system.[1]

In the final, most fully developed version of his system, *The Law of Freedom in a Platform, or True Magistracy Restored* (1652), Winstanley envisioned a largely agrarian society, in which all goods would be communally owned, and where all wage labour and all commerce or trade would be

outlawed. In fact, all sale or purchase of goods would be punishable by death as treasonous to the communist system. Money would be clearly unnecessary since there would be no trade, and presumably it would be outlawed as well. The government would establish storehouses to collect and distribute all goods, and severe penalties would be levied on 'idlers'. By this time, Winstanley's pantheism had begun to shade into atheism, for all professional clergy would be outlawed, there would be no Sabbath observation, and 'ministers' would be elected by the voters to give what would be essentially secular sermons, teaching everyone the virtues of the communist system. Education would be free and compulsory, and most of the children would be channelled into useful crafts – a foreshadowing of the progressive educational creed. Book-learning, which the uneducated Winstanley felt to be far inferior to practical vocational skill, would be discouraged.

Winstanley's strategic recipe for communist victory was for various groups of his followers, or Diggers, to move peacefully into waste or common lands, and to set up communist societies upon them. The first Digger group, led by Winstanley, moved on to waste lands near south London in April 1649, and ten Digger settlements were thereby established over the next year. Only 30 Diggers moved into the first commune, and only a few hundred set up communes across the country. The notion was that these egalitarian communist settlements would so inspire the masses that they would abandon wage work or private property and move on to Digger settlements, thus bringing about the withering away of the market and of private property. In reality, the masses treated the Digger communes with great hostility, causing their suppression in a short period of time. By the time of his *magnum opus* in 1652, Winstanley was vainly appealing to the dictator, Oliver Cromwell, to impose his cherished system from above. The idea of mass direct action to establish his system was rapidly abandoned in the face of reality.

Another more mystical communist sect during the English Civil War was the half-crazed Ranters. The Ranters were classic antinomians, that is, they believed that all human beings were automatically saved by the existence of Jesus, and that therefore all men are free to disobey all laws and to flout all moral rules. Indeed, it was supposed to be good and desirable to commit as many sins as possible in order to demonstrate one's automatic freedom from sin, and to purge oneself of false guilt about committing sins. To the pure at heart, the Ranters opined, all things are pure. The Ranters, like Joachim of Fiore and the Anabaptists of the Reformation, proclaimed the coming age of the Holy Spirit, which moved in every man. The key difference from orthodox Calvinism or Puritanism is that in those more orthodox creeds, the workings of the Holy Spirit were closely tied to the Holy Word – that is, the Bible. For the Ranters and other Inner Light Groups, however, all deuces were literally wild. The Ranters pursued this path, too, to pantheism: as one

of their leaders declared: 'The essence of God was as much in the Ivie leaf as in the most glorious Angel.'

The Ranters, then, combined their belief in communism with total sexual licence, including the practice of communism of women, and communal homosexual and heterosexual orgies.[2]

9.2 Secularized millennial communism: Mably and Morelly

During the havoc and upheaval of the French Revolution, the communist creed, as well as millennial prophecies, again popped up as a glorious goal for mankind, but this time the major emphasis was a secular context. But the new secular communist prophets were faced with a grave problem: what will be the agency for this social change? In short, religious chiliasts never had problems about agency, i.e. how this mighty change would come about. The agent would be the hand of Providence, specifically either the Second Advent of Jesus Christ (for pre-millennialists), or designated prophets or vanguard groups who would establish the millennium in anticipation of Jesus's eventual return (for post-millennialists). King Bockelson and Thomas Müntzer were examples of the latter. But if the Christian millennialists possessed the assurance of the hand of Divine Providence inevitably achieving their goal, how could secularists command the same certainty and self-confidence? It looked as if they would have to fall back on mere education and exhortation.

The secularist task was made more difficult by the fact that religious millennialists looked to the end of history and the achievement of their goal by means of a bloody Apocalypse. The final reign of millennial peace and harmony could only be achieved in the course of a period known as 'the tribulation', the final war of good against evil, the final triumph over the Antichrist.[3] All of which meant that if the secular communists wished to emulate their Christian forbears, they would have to achieve their goal by bloody revolution – always difficult at best. It is no accident, therefore, that the heady days of the French Revolution would give rise to such revolutionary hopes and aspirations.

The first secularized communists appeared in the shape of two isolated individuals in mid-eighteenth century France. The works of these two men would later burgeon into an activist revolutionary movement amidst the hothouse atmosphere and the sudden upheavals of the French Revolution. One was the aristocrat Gabriel Bonnot de Mably (1709–85), the elder brother of the *laissez-faire* liberal philosopher Etienne Bonnot de Condillac. In contrast to his brother the distinguished philosopher, Mably devoted himself to being a lifelong writer on a large variety of subjects.[4] A man whose works, as Alexander Gray wittily writes, 'are deplorably numerous and extensive'. Mably's prolix and confused writings were astoundingly popular in his day, his entire collected works, ranging from 12 to 26 volumes, being published in four different editions within a few years of his death.

Mably's main focus was to insist that all men are 'perfectly' equal and uniform, that all men are one and the same everywhere. He professed to discern this alleged truth in the laws of nature. Thus, in his chief work *Doutes proposés* (1786), an attack on the libertarian natural rights theory of Mercier de la Rivière, Mably presumes to interpret the voice of Nature: 'Nature says to us...I love you equally'.[5]

As in the case of most communists after him, Mably found himself confronted with one of the great problems of communism: if all property is owned in common and each person is equal, then the incentive to work is negative, since only the common store will benefit and not the individual worker in question. Mably in particular had to confront this problem, since he also maintained that man's natural and original state was communism, and that private property arose to spoil matters precisely because of the indolence of some who wished to live at the expense of others.[6]

Mably's proposed solutions to this grave problem were scarcely adequate. One was to urge everyone to tighten their belts, to want less, to be content with Spartan austerity. His other answer was to come up with what Che Guevara and Mao tse-Tung would later call 'moral incentives': to substitute for crass monetary rewards the recognition of one's merits by one's brothers – in the form of ribbons, medals, etc. Alexander Gray notes that Mably makes use of such 'distinctions' or 'Birthday Honours Lists', to stimulate everyone to work. He goes on to point out that the more 'distinctions' are handed out as incentives, the less they will truly distinguish, and the less influence they will therefore exert. Furthermore, Mably 'does not say how or by whom his distinctions are to be conferred'.

Gray adds that in a communist society in reality, many people who *don't* receive honours may and probably will be disgruntled and resentful at the supposed injustice involved, yet their 'zeal doesn't flag'.[7]

Thus, in his two proffered solutions, Gabriel de Mably was resting his hope on a miraculous transformation of human nature, what the Marxists would later see as the advent of the New Socialist Man, willing to bend his desires and his incentives to the requirements of, and baubles conferred by, the collective. But for all his devotion to communism, Mably was at bottom a realist, and so he held out no hope for its triumph. On the contrary, man is so steeped in the sin of selfishness and private property that only the palliatives of coerced redistribution and prohibitions of trade are even possible. It is no wonder that Mably was not equipped to inspire and stimulate the birth and growth of a revolutionary communist movement.

If Gabriel de Mably was a pessimist, the same cannot be said of the highly influential work of the unknown Morelly, author of *Le Code de la Nature* (*The Code of Nature*), published in 1755, and going into five further editions by 1773. Morelly had no doubts of the workability of communism: for him

there was no problem of laziness or negative incentives. There was no need, in short, for any change in human nature or the creation of a New Socialist Man. In a vulgarization of Rousseau, man is everywhere good, altruistic, and dedicated to work: it is only institutions that are degrading and corrupt, specifically the institution of private property. Abolish that, and man's natural goodness would easily triumph. (Query: where did these corrupt institutions come from, if not from man?) Banish property, and crime would disappear.

For Morelly, the administration of the communist utopia would also be easy. Assigning every person his task in life, and also deciding what material goods and services would fulfil his needs, would apparently be a trivial problem for the ministry of labour or of consumption. For Morelly, all this was merely a matter of trivial enumeration, of listing things and persons. Here is the ancestor of Marx and Lenin's dismissal of the gigantic problems of socialist administration and allocation as merely a question of book-keeping.

But things, after all, are not going to be that easy. Mably, the pessimist on human nature, was apparently willing to leave matters to voluntary actions of individuals. But Morelly, the alleged optimist, was cheerfully prepared to employ brutally coercive methods to keep all the 'good' citizens in line. Once again, as in Mably, the edicts of the proposed state would be written clearly by Nature, as revealed to the founder Morelly. Morelly worked out an intricate design for his proposed government and society, all allegedly based on the clear dictates of natural law, and most of which were to be changeless and eternal – to Morelly, a vital part of the scheme.

In particular, there is to be no private property, except for daily needs: every person is to be maintained and employed by the collective, every man is to be forced to work, to contribute to the communal storehouse according to his talents, and will then be assigned goods from these stores according to his needs, to be brought up communally, and absolutely identically in food, clothing and training. Philosophic and religious doctrines are to be absolutely prescribed; no differences are to be tolerated; and children are not to be corrupted by any 'fable, story, or ridiculous fictions'. All buildings must be the same, and grouped in equal blocks; all clothing is to be made out of the same fabric. Occupations are to be limited and strictly assigned by the state.

Finally, these laws are to be sacred and inviolable, and anyone attempting to change them is to be isolated and incarcerated for life.

As in all the communist utopias, Mably's and Morelly's, as Alexander Gray makes clear, are ones under which 'no sane man would on any conditions consent to live, if he could possibly escape'. The reason, apart from the grave lack of incentives in utopias to produce or innovate, is that 'life has reached a static state...Nothing happens, nothing can happen in any of them'.[8]

It should be added that these utopias were debased, secularized versions of the visions of the Christian millennialists. In the Christian millennium, Jesus

Christ (or, alternatively, his surrogates and predecessors) comes back to earth to put an end to history; and presumably, there will be enough enchantment in glorifying God without worrying about the absence of earthly change. And, as we have seen, this is particularly true in Joachim of Fiore's envisioned millennium of people without earthly bodies. But in the secularized utopias there reigns, at best, gray gloom and stasis totally contrary to man's nature on earth.

Meanwhile, however, Christian millennialism was also revived in these stormy times. Thus, the Swabian German pietist Johann Christoph Otinger, during the mid-eighteenth century, prophesied a coming theocratic world kingdom of saints, living communally, without rank or property, as members of a millennial Christian commonwealth. Particularly influential among later German pietists was the French mystic and theosophist Louis Claude de Saint-Martin (1743–1803), who in his influential *Des Erreurs et la Verité* (*Errors and Truth*) (1773), portrayed an 'inner church of the elect' allegedly existing since the dawn of history, which would take power in the coming age. This 'Martinist' theme was developed by the Rosicrucian movement, concentrated in Bavaria. Originally alchemist mystics during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Bavarian Rosicrucians began to stress the coming takeover of world power by the inner church of the elect during the dawning millennial age. The most influential Bavarian Rosicrucian author, Carl von Eckartshausen, expounded on this theme in two widely read works, *Information on Magic* (1788–92) and *On Perfectibility* (1797). In the latter work, he developed the idea that the inner church of the elect had existed backwards in time to Abraham and then forwards to a world government to be ruled by these keepers of the divine light. This third and final age of history, the age of the Holy Spirit, was now at hand. The illuminated elect destined to rule the new communal world were, fairly obviously, the Rosicrucian Order itself, since their major evidence for the dawn of the third age was the rapid spread of Martinism and Rosicrucianism itself.

And these movements were indeed spreading during the 1780s and 1790s. The Prussian King Frederick William II and a large portion of his court were converted to Rosicrucianism in the late 1780s, as was the Russian Czar Paul I a decade later, based on his reading of Saint-Martin and Eckartshausen, both of whom he considered to be transmitters of divine revelation. Saint-Martin was also influential through his leadership of Scottish Rite Masonry in Lyons, and was the main figure in what might be called the apocalyptic-Christian wing of the Masonic movement.[9]

9.3 The conspiracy of the Equals

Inspired by the works of Mably and especially Morelly, a young journalist from Picardy decided, amidst the turmoil of the French Revolution, to found

a conspiratorial revolutionary organization to establish communism. Strategically, this was an advance on the two founders, who had had no idea but simple education of how to achieve their goal. François Noël ('Caius Gracchus') Babeuf (1764–97), a journalist and commissioner of land deeds in Picardy, came to Paris in 1790, and imbibed the heady revolutionary atmosphere. By 1793, Babeuf was committed to economic equality and communism. Two years later, he founded the secret Conspiracy of the Equals, organizing around his new journal, *The Tribune of the People*. The *Tribune*, like Lenin's *Iskra* a century later, was used to set a coherent line for his cadre as well as for his public followers. As James Billington writes, Babeuf's *Tribune* 'was the first journal in history to be the legal arm of an extralegal revolutionary conspiracy'.[10]

The ultimate ideal of Babeuf and his Conspiracy was absolute equality. Nature, they claimed, calls for perfect equality; all inequality is injustice: therefore community of property was to be established. As the Conspiracy proclaimed emphatically in its *Manifesto of Equals* – written by one of Babeuf's top aides, Sylvain Maréchal – 'We demand real equality, or Death; that is what we must have'. 'For its sake', the *Manifesto* went on, 'we are ready for anything; we are willing to sweep everything away. Let all the arts vanish, if necessary, as long as genuine equality remains for us'.

In the ideal communist society sought by the Conspiracy, private property would be abolished, and all property would be communal, and stored in communal storehouses. From these storehouses, the goods would be distributed 'equitably' by the superiors – apparently, there was to be a cadre of 'superiors' in this oh so 'equal' world! There was to be universal compulsory labour, 'serving the fatherland...by useful labour'. Teachers or scientists 'must submit certifications of loyalty' to the superiors. The *Manifesto* acknowledged that there would be an enormous expansion of government officials and bureaucrats in the communist world, inevitable where 'the fatherland takes control of an individual from his birth till his death'. There would be severe punishments consisting of forced labour against 'persons of either sex who set society a bad example by absence of civic-mindedness, by idleness, a luxurious way of life, licentiousness'. These punishments, described, as one historian notes 'lovingly and in great detail',[11] consisted of deportation to prison islands.

Freedom of speech and the press are treated as one might expect. The press would not be allowed to 'endanger the justice of equality' or to subject the Republic 'to interminable and fatal discussions'. Moreover, 'No one will be allowed to utter views that are in direct contradiction to the sacred principles of equality and the sovereignty of the people'. In point of fact, a work would only be allowed to appear in print 'if the guardians of the will of the nation consider that its publication may benefit the Republic'.

All meals would be eaten in public in every commune, and there would, of course, be compulsory attendance for all community members. Furthermore, everyone could only obtain 'his daily ration' in the district in which he lives: the only exception would be 'when he is traveling with the permission of the administration'. All private entertainment would be 'strictly forbidden', lest 'imagination, released from the supervision of a strict judge should engender abominable vices contrary to the commonweal'. And, as for religion, 'all so-called revelation ought to be banned by law'.

Not only was Babeuf's egalitarian communist goal an important influence on later Marxism–Leninism, but so too was his strategic theory and practice in the concrete organization of revolutionary activity. The unequal, the Babeuvists proclaimed, must be despoiled, the poor must rise up and sack the rich. Above all, the French Revolution must be 'completed' and redone; there must be total upheaval (*bouleversement total*), total destruction of existing institutions so that a new and perfect world can be built from the rubble. As Babeuf called out, at the conclusion of his own *Plebeian Manifesto*: 'May everything return to chaos, and out of chaos may there emerge a new and regenerated world.'[12] Indeed, the *Plebeian Manifesto*, published slightly earlier than the *Manifesto of Equals*, in November 1795, was the first in a line of revolutionary manifestos that would reach a climax in Marx's *Communist Manifesto* a half-century later.

The two manifestos revealed an important difference between Babeuf and Maréchal which might have caused a split had not the Equals been crushed soon afterwards by police repression. For in his *Plebeian Manifesto*, Babeuf had begun to move toward Christian messianism, not only paying tribute to Moses and Joshua, but also particularly to Jesus as his, Babeuf's, 'co-athlete', and in prison Babeuf had written *A New History of the Life of Jesus Christ*. Most of the Equals, however, were militant atheists, spearheaded by Maréchal, who liked to refer to himself with the grandiose acronym l'HSD, *l'homme sans Dieu* (the man without God).

In addition to the idea of a conspiratorial revolution, Babeuf, fascinated by military matters, began to develop the idea of people's guerilla warfare: of a revolution being formed in separate 'phalanxes' by people whose permanent occupation would be making revolution – what Lenin would later call 'professional revolutionaries'. He also toyed with the idea of military phalanxes securing a geographical base, and then working outwards from there: 'advancing by degree, consolidating to the extent that we gain territory, we should be able to organize'.

A secret, conspiratorial inner circle, a phalanx of professional revolutionaries – inevitably this meant that Babeuf's strategic perspective for his revolution involved some fascinating paradoxes. For in the name of a goal of harmony and perfect equality, the revolutionaries were to be led by a hierar-

chy commanding total obedience; the inner cadre would work its will over the mass. An absolute leader, heading an all-powerful cadre, would, at the proper moment, give the signal to usher in a society of perfect equality. Revolution would be made to end all further revolutions; an all-powerful hierarchy would be necessary allegedly to put an end to hierarchy forever.

But of course, as we have seen, there was no real paradox here, no intention to eliminate hierarchy. The paeans to 'equality' were a flimsy camouflage for the real objective, a permanently entrenched and absolute dictatorship, in Orwell's striking image, 'a boot stamping on a human face – forever'.

After suffering police repression at the end of February 1796, the Conspiracy of the Equals went further underground, and, a month later, constituted themselves as the Secret Directory of Public Safety. The seven secret directors, meeting every evening, reached collective and anonymous decisions, and then each member of this central committee radiated activity outwards to 12 'instructors' each of whom mobilized a broader insurrectionary group in one of the 12 districts of Paris. In this way, the Conspiracy managed to mobilize 17 000 Parisians, but the group was betrayed by the eagerness of the secret directorate to recruit within the army. An informer led to the arrest of Babeuf on 10 May 1796, followed by the destruction of the Conspiracy of the Equals. Babeuf was executed the following year.

Police repression, however, almost always leaves pockets of dissidents to rise again, and the carrier of the torch of revolutionary communism was a Babeuvist arrested with the leader but who managed to avoid execution. Filippo Giuseppe Maria Lodovico Buonarroti (1761–1837) was the eldest son of an aristocratic but impoverished Florentine family, and a direct descendant of the great Michelangelo. Studying law at the University of Pisa in the early 1780s, Buonarroti was converted by disciples of Morelly on the faculty. As a radical journalist and editor, Buonarroti then participated in battles for the French Revolution against Italian troops. In the Spring of 1794, he was put in charge of the French occupation in the Italian town of Oneglia, where he announced to the people that all men must be equal, and that any distinction whatever among men is a violation of natural law. Back in Paris, Buonarroti successfully defended himself in a trial against his use of terror in Oneglia, and finally plunged into Babeuf's Conspiracy of Equals. His friendship with Napoleon allowed him to escape execution, and eventually to be shipped from a prison camp to exile in Geneva.

For the rest of his life, Buonarroti became what his modern biographer calls 'The First Professional Revolutionist', trying to set up revolutions and conspiratorial organizations throughout Europe. Before the execution of Babeuf and others, Buonarroti had pledged his comrades to write their full story, and he fulfilled that pledge when, at the age of 67, he published in Belgium *The*

Conspiracy for Equality of Babeuf (1828). Babeuf and his comrades had been long forgotten, and this massive work now told the first and most thoroughgoing story of the Babeuvist saga. The book proved to be an inspiration to revolutionary and communist groupings, and it sold extremely well, the English translation of 1836 selling 50 000 copies in a short space of time. For the next decade of his life, the previously obscure Buonarroti was lionized throughout the European ultra-left.

Brooding over previous revolutionary failures, Buonarroti counselled the need for iron élite rule immediately after the coming to power of the revolutionary forces. In short, the power of the revolution must be immediately given over to a 'strong, constant, enlightened immovable will', which will 'direct all the force of the nation against internal and external enemies', and very gradually prepare the people for their sovereignty. The point, for Buonarroti, was that 'the people are incapable either of regeneration by themselves or of designating the people who should direct the regeneration'.

9.4 The burgeoning of communism

The 1830s and 1840s saw the burgeoning of messianic and chiliastic communist and socialist groups throughout Europe; notably in France, Belgium, Germany and England. Owenites, Cabetists, Fourierites, Saint Simonians, and many others sprouted and interacted, and we need not examine them or their nuanced variations in detail.[13] While the Welshman Robert Owen (1771–1858) was the first one to use the word 'socialist' in print in 1827, and also toyed with the word 'communionst', the word 'communist' finally caught on as the most popular label for the new system. It was first used in a popular printed work, Étienne Cabet's utopian novel, *Voyage in Icaria* (1839),[14] and from there the word spread like wildfire across Europe, spurred by the recent development of regular steamboat mail service and the first telegraphy. When Marx and Engels, in the famous opening sentence of their culminating *Communist Manifesto* of 1848, wrote that 'A spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of Communism', this was a bit of hyperbolic rhetoric, but was still not far off the mark. As Billington writes, the talismanic word 'communism' 'spread throughout the continent with a speed altogether unprecedented in the history of such verbal epidemics'.[15]

In this welter of individuals and groups, there are some interesting ones to focus on. The earliest German exile group of revolutionaries was the League of Outlaws, founded in Paris by Theodore Schuster, under the inspiration of the writings of Buonarroti. Schuster's pamphlet, *Confession of Faith of an Outlaw* (1834) was perhaps the first projection of the coming revolution as a creation of the outlaws and marginal outcasts of society, the ones outside the circuit of production whom Marx would understandably dismiss brusquely as the '*Lumpenproletariat*.' The *Lumpen* were later emphasized in the 1840s by

the leading anarcho-communist, the Russian Mikhail Bakunin (1814–76), and by various strains of the New Left of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The Outlaws was the first international organization of communist revolutionaries, comprised of about 100 members in Paris and nearly 80 in Frankfurt am Main. The League of Outlaws, however, disintegrated about 1838, many, including Schuster, going off into nationalist agitation. But it was succeeded quickly by the larger group of German exiles, the League of the Just, also headquartered in Paris. The German communist groups always tended to be more Christian than the others. Thus, Karl Schapper, leader of the Paris headquarters section of the League of the Just, addressed his followers as 'Brothers in Christ' and hailed the coming social revolution as 'the great resurrection day of the people'. Intensifying the religious tone of the League of the Just was the prominent German communist, the tailor Wilhelm Weitling (1808–71). In his secretly printed manifesto that he wrote for the League of the Just, *Humanity, as it is and as it ought to be* (1838), which though secret was widely disseminated and discussed, Weitling proclaimed himself as a 'social Luther', and denounced money as the source of all corruption and exploitation. All private property and all money was to be abolished and the value of all products to be calculated in 'labour-hours' – the labour theory of value taken all too seriously. For work in public utilities and heavy industry, Weitling proposed to mobilize a centralized 'industrial army', fuelled by the conscription of every man and woman between the ages of 15 and 18.

Expelled from France after revolutionary troubles in 1839, the League of the Just moved to London, where it also established a broader front group, the Educational Society for German Workingmen, in 1840. The three top leaders of the society, Karl Schapper, Bruno Bauer, and Joseph Moll, managed to enlarge the total to over 1 000 members by 1847, including 250 members in other countries in Europe and Latin America.

A fascinating contrast is presented in the persons of two young communists, both leaders of the movement during the 1840s, and both totally forgotten by later generations – even by most historians. Each represented a different side of the communist perspective, and together two different strands in the movement.

One was the English Christian visionary and fantast, John Goodwyn Barmby (1820–?). At the age of 20, Barmby, then an Owenite, arrived in Paris with a proposal to set up an international association of socialists throughout the world; a provisional committee was actually formed, headed by the French Owenite Jules Gay, but nothing came of the scheme. The proposal, however, did prefigure the First International. More importantly, in Paris, Barmby discovered the word 'communist', and adopted and spread it with enormous fervour. To Barmby, 'communist' and 'communitarian' were interchangeable

terms, and he helped organize throughout France what he reported to the English Owenites as 'social banquet(s) of the Communist or Communitarian school'. Back in England, Barmby's fervour was undiminished. He founded a communist propaganda society, soon to be called the Universal Communitarian Society, and established a journal, *The Promethean or Communitarian Apostle*, soon renamed *The Communist Chronicle*. Communism, to Barmby, was both the 'societarian science' and the final religion of humanity. His *Credo*, propounded in the first issue of *The Promethean*, avowed that 'the divine is communism, that the demoniac is individualism...'. After that flying start, Barmby wrote communist hymns and prayers, called for the building of communitariums, all directed by a supreme communarchy headed by an elected communarch and communarchess. Barmby repeatedly proclaimed 'the religion of Communism', and made sure to begin things right by naming himself 'Pontifarch of the Communist Church'.

The subtitle of *The Communist Chronicle* revealed its neo-Christian messianism: 'The Apostle of the Communist Church and the Communitive Life: Communion with God, Communion of the Saints. Communion of Suffrages, Communion of Works and Communion of Goods.' The struggle for communism, declared Barmby, was apocalyptic, bound to end with the mystical reunion of Satan into God: 'in the holy Communist Church, the devil will be converted into God...And in this conversion of Satan doth God call people...in the communion of suffrages, of works, and of goods both spiritual and material...for these latter days.'[16] The arrival in London of Wilhelm Weitling in 1844 led him and Barmby to collaborate on promoting Christian communism, but by the end of 1847, they had lost out and the communist movement was shifting decisively toward atheism.

The crucial turn came in June 1847, when the two most atheistical communist groups: the League of the Just in London, and the small 15-man Communist Correspondence Committee of Brussels, led by Karl Marx, merged to form the Communist League. In its second congress in December, ideological struggles within the league were resolved when Marx was asked to write the statement for the new party, to become the famed *Communist Manifesto*.

In any case, Cabet and Weitling each left permanently for the United States in 1848, to try to establish communism there. Both attempts foundered ignominiously amid America's expanding and highly individualistic society. Cabet's Icarians settled in Texas and then in Nauvoo, Illinois, then split and split again, until Cabet, ejected by his former followers in Nauvoo, left for St Louis and died, spurned by nearly everyone, in 1856. As for Weitling, he gave up more rapidly. In New York, he became a follower of Josiah Warren's individualistic though left-Ricardian labour-money scheme, and in 1854 he deviated further to become a bureaucrat with the US immigration service, spending most of his remaining 17 years trying to promote his various inven-

tions. Apparently, Weitling, willy-nilly, had at last 'voted with his feet' to join the capitalist order.

Meanwhile, Goodwyn Barmby sequestered himself in one after another of the Channel Islands to try to found a utopian community, and denounced a former follower for setting up a more practical *Communist Journal* as 'an infringement of his copyright' on the word 'communism'. Gradually, however, Barmby abandoned his universalism and began to call himself a 'National Communist', and, in 1848, he went to France, became a unitarian minister and friend of Mazzini and abandoned communism for revolutionary nationalism.

On the other hand, a leading young French communist Théodore Dézamy (1808–50), represented a competing strain of militant atheism and a tough, cadre approach. In his youth the personal secretary of Cabet, Dézamy led the sudden communist boom launched in 1839 and 1840. By the following year, Dézamy became perhaps the founder of the Marxist–Leninist tradition of ideologically and politically excommunicating all deviationists from the correct line. In fact, in 1842, Dézamy, a highly prolific pamphleteer, turned bitterly on his old mentor Cabet, and denounced him, in his *Slanders and Politics of Mr. Cabet*, for chronic vacillations. In *Slanders*, Dézamy, for the first time, argued that ideological as well as political discipline was requisite for the communist movement.

More importantly, Dézamy wanted to purge French communism of the influence of the quasi-religious poetic and moralistic communist code propounded by Cabet in his *Voyage in Icaria* and especially in his *Communist Credo* of 1841. Dézamy attempted to be severely 'scientific' and claimed that communist revolution was both rational and inevitable. It is no wonder that Dézamy was greatly admired by Marx.

Furthermore, pacific or gradual measures must be rejected. Dézamy insisted that a communist revolution must confiscate all private property and all money immediately. Half-measures will satisfy no one, he claimed, and furthermore, as Billington paraphrases it, 'Swift and total change would be less bloody than a slow process, since communism releases the natural goodness of man...'.[17]

Not only would revolutionary communism be immediate and total: it would also be global and universal. In the future communist world, there will be one global 'congress of humanity', a single language, and a single labour service called 'industrial athletes', who perform work in the form of communal youth festivals. Moreover, the new 'universal country' would abolish not only 'narrow' nationalism, but also such divisive loyalties as the family. In stark practical contrast to his own career as ideological excommunicator, Dézamy proclaimed that under communism conflict would be logically impossible: 'there can be no splits among Communists; our struggles among ourselves can only be struggles of harmony, or reasoning...', since 'communitarian principles' constitute 'the solution to all problems'.