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ARTICLE

Pacifying the Battlefield of Industry: Warfare and Social Rights in 1848 France

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Abstract

This study delves into the intricate relationship between warfare and social rights during the Second French Republic. As recent scholarship suggests that the emergence of social rights in the 18th century involved a transition from Christian charity principles to secular obligations, primarily influenced by proponents of free markets, this research uncovers a distinct path during the July Monarchy. Here, socialists framed social rights using a unique language centered on warfare, which was overtly at odds with the prevailing free-market discourse. This transformation led to the concept of "guerre industrielle" or industrial warfare, portraying industrial workers as modern soldiers in the international economic competition among nations. Such a narrative significantly molded the political demands of the emerging French working class, focusing on securing decent employment and extending to workers the social provisions already granted to the military. These demands gained substantial momentum during the tumultuous 1848 Revolution, fueling a call for comprehensive societal transformation, emphasizing cooperative production and mutual assistance. Nevertheless, the rejection of these radical ideas was primarily attributed to the reluctance of moderate republicans to embrace the profound societal changes implied by such demands. By delving into the intricacies of this relationship, the article offers fresh insights into the development of social rights before the emergence of the Welfare State and their impact on the construction of tools of socioeconomic governance during the last two centuries.

Keywords: social rights; warfare; industry; 1848; France

Introduction. Reconstructing the language of social rights

Only recently has historiography on human rights critically reevaluated the long-established role attributed to social rights.[1] According to an interpretation that gained prominence in the latter half of the 20th century, particularly advanced by scholars such as Thomas H. Marshall and Karel Vašák, social rights have traditionally been classified as "second-generation" human rights, crystallizing only after the World Wars, and thus distinct from civil and political rights, which emerged in the 18th and 19th centuries.

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The extensive body of historiographical work on human rights in the 1980s and 1990s scarcely questioned this theory, allocating minimal attention to social rights.[2]

We can define social rights as the rights connected to ensuring a minimum standard of living, safeguarding individuals from the social consequences of chronic deprivation or temporary adversity.[3] Since their codification in 20th-century constitutions and, especially, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations in 1948, the implementation of social rights has been considered within the framework of the development of the Welfare State at the national level. However, this connection has not always existed. Even though welfare only assumed a "genuine function of governmental activity"[4] from the 1880s onward, the development of social rights predates their systematic recognition in the form of constitutional provisions and government initiatives.[5]

Recent scholarship has revealed how the conceptualization of social rights in the latter half of the 18th century drew heavily from the languages and practices of Christian charity, which prescribed the community's duty, especially the affluent, to aid the impoverished. In certain instances, judges could compel parishes to assist individuals in need.[6] In the case study of France from the first half of the 19th century to the Second Republic, Edward Berenson had previously underscored how religious terminology significantly influenced the discourse surrounding the right to work.[7] Using the same temporal and spatial framework, this article's thesis argues that the language of warfare and the practices of aiding military personnel played an equally significant role in reshaping the discourse on social rights. One could contend that, considering the terminology related to war and conflict pervaded the conception of society, history, and politics in the early 19th century, its presence in the language of social rights may not seem particularly noteworthy.[8] Nevertheless, within this context, the growing use of a war-like narrative transcended mere rhetorical expression. Instead, it was closely intertwined with polemics against market competition, which, as recently highlighted by Xavier Lafrance, played a substantial role in the formation of the French working class.[9]

In this regard, clarification is essential. The relationship between warfare and welfare policies has been a topic of extensive debate since the 1950s when Richard Titmuss illustrated how the World War II experience significantly influenced the concept of universal coverage for social risks in the United Kingdom.[10] In recent times, research conducted by Herbert Obinger and Klaus Petersen has further bolstered the warfare-welfare paradigm, establishing a global network of scholars who have applied this framework to various case studies, spanning from World War I to the Cold War.[11]

However, applying this paradigm to the 19th century, as appealing as it may seem, can be a precarious undertaking. This is not only due to the unprecedented scale of military mobilizations in the 20th century. Toward the conclusion of the World Wars, the Welfare State became the prevailing framework for implementing social rights, linked to the imperative of affording legal protection and ensuring a basic standard of living for citizens and residents. In this context, social rights gradually evolved into individual, enforceable rights for citizens *vis-à-vis* public institutions. In the 19th century, the relationship between welfare and social rights was more intricate. Occasionally, public assistance policies were not grounded in a language of rights but rather served as a means of exerting social control over marginalized social classes.

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Conversely, as extensively demonstrated by the history of labor internationalism, advocating for social rights did not necessarily imply a demand for State-funded welfare programs.[12] From this perspective, the State, at most, acted as a tool for reshaping society, within which the spontaneous realization of social rights would emerge. In contrast, non-state institutions, such as civil society or even the market, were considered necessary instruments for implementing social rights. As we will observe, in the French radical republicanism of 1848, it was a widespread belief that a fundamental precondition for realizing social rights was the freedom of association, a cornerstone of civil and political rights. Hence, not only did social rights develop simultaneously with the latter but the two were often inextricably interconnected.

The events of the Second Republic were profoundly shaped by the challenge of realizing social rights and the divergent perspectives on how this should be accomplished. From its inception in 1848, the new political regime had to contend with the urgent popular demands for the recognition of the *droit au travail* (right to work) and its counterpart, the *droit à l'assistance* (right to assistance) for those unable to work, such as the elderly and the disabled. These demands were undoubtedly exacerbated by the severe European economic crisis that erupted in 1845–1846. Simultaneously, they were underpinned by the concept of the "*guerre industrielle*" (industrial warfare). With this term, we denote imagery that portrayed industry as a battleground and consequently, it was employed to assert the workers' right to be protected against the risks associated with labor. This included maintaining democratic control over production regulations and extending to workers the assistance policies already in place for soldiers.

To understand the origins of this narrative, we must explore the inception of the language of social rights in the mid-18th century. During this era, amid the French Enlightenment, discussions emerged regarding the establishment of lay, State-sponsored charity accessible to all members of society. This secularization of the "charitable imperative"[13] had significant semantic implications: It was during this period that the term "*bienfaisance*" was coined, signifying a nonreligious interpretation of the Christian precept "Love Thy Neighbor."[14] More precisely, the designated actor to instill this moral principle in individuals was the free market. The growing popularity of this ideal, particularly embraced by Physiocrats, is evident in the widespread use of the term *reciprocité* (reciprocity) in France during the latter half of the 18th century. This concept signified not only the equivalence of exchanges but also the moral obligation to provide.[15]

Hence, it is unsurprising that after the French Revolution, advocates of the free market primarily introduced social rights to the newly formed National Assembly's agenda. However, their implementation immediately faced a dilemma: who should bear the financial burden of public assistance? Was it desirable to transform the moral duty to aid into a legal obligation to contribute to social welfare through taxation? The general reluctance of the revolutionary elite to adopt redistributive policies largely explains the absence of social rights in the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. The primary response to the most pressing social issue of the time, the food crisis plaguing the population, was the liberalization of grain trade within the French territory in the name of national *fraternité* (fraternity)—a new, influential revolutionary synonym for reciprocity.[16]

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La guerre industrielle: Workplace narratives of war

Despite the 1793 Constitution recognized the right to education and public assistance, the Jacobin experience had a detrimental impact in this regard. The period of the Terror compromised the language of fraternity, which was the foundation of social rights, by using it to justify forced requisitions and expropriations, presented through propaganda as patriotic gifts. In response, the Thermidorian backlash and the Directory (1795–1799) coincided with the decline of social rights into a state of "collective amnesia."[17]

The language of social rights, though detached from its liberal origins, endured in proto-socialist French factions. Among them, particularly attention must be devoted to Charles Fourier, who ardently championed social rights while vehemently condemning the free market. Coming from a merchant family, his experiences during the Jacobin Terror deeply troubled him as he witnessed social disorder and violence. The extensive poverty and artificial scarcities resulting from speculation at the close of the 18th century fueled his vehement criticism of free competition. He described it as "the most anarchic and perverse mode of exchange that may exist."[18] Instead, Fourier amalgamated the right to subsistence with the natural right to work. The latter had already emerged during the *sans-culottes*' mobilizations in the French Revolution, signifying a working-class reinterpretation of the rights language promoted by Enlightenment philosophers.[19] Fourier embraced this concept and integrated it into a comprehensive restructuring of labor relations within phalansteries, utopian systems of small-scale cooperative communities where all essential aspects of life would occur collectively. This project aimed not at abolishing competition but rather at harmonizing it in line with human nature.[20]

Despite Fourier's passing in 1837, his theories significantly impacted the 1848 Revolution by influencing future key figures of the Second Republic, such as Louis Blanc. Simultaneously, the Fourierist narrative of labor played a vital role in popularizing the idea that workers subjected to market competition confronted a daily struggle for survival and contributed to shaping a utopian vision of peace achievable only through radical reforms.

Nevertheless, it is imperative to approach this narrative with circumspection. Capitalist market competition was virtually absent in France until the latter half of the 19th century, and traditional labor regulations remained deeply ingrained. In essence, the legislation of 1791 abolished the guilds (*corporations*) and prohibited coalitions, but labor practices continued to operate within an informal regulatory framework, largely inherited from the Old Regime. These often-unwritten norms, encapsulated in the concept of *bon droit* (good right), stemmed from a popular sense of justice regarding how labor relations should unfold.[21]

So, against whom was the early 19th-century critique of market competition directed? Concerning labor regulations, the real turning point of the French Revolution was that, while customary Old Regime rules were protected by the State and regional parliaments, after 1791, workplace customs were solely enforced by local authorities. Therefore, French workers' primary concern was to safeguard their organization of labor from attempts to deregulate it, primarily initiated by employers and the State.[22] The main external threat was represented by the British production model, where this

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offensive had indeed been successfully implemented between the 1760s and the 1820s. In Britain, deregulation was accompanied by a process of labor discipline within factories, with the hiring of foremen closely supervising employees and managers tasked with cost calculation and rationalization. In contrast, in France, it remained common for many workers to be paid based on tasks, preserving a higher level of autonomy regarding production rhythms and techniques. Work continued to be spread across numerous production units, often of a domestic nature, while early French factories mainly consisted of assembling a heterogeneous group of workers still engaged in semi-artisanal production.[23]

The expansion of British industrial capitalism in the 19th century was primarily a geopolitical occurrence. Other European governments began to adopt it mainly driven by the need to keep pace with England's commercial power.[24] In France, socialist intellectuals and certain sectors of the emerging labor movement were acutely aware that the pressure of international competition constituted a strong incentive for the infiltration of the British economic model into French society, and they feared its consequences. The riots that ravaged the city of Lyon between 1831 and 1834 perfectly exemplified the implications of this process: In the early 1820s, Britain deregulated industrial relations in the silk industry in London. Lyon silk merchants, fearing the loss of market share on the international stage, attempted to similarly eliminate local tariffs paid to producers to reduce labor costs. When, in November 1831, the central government accepted the silk merchants' refusal to abide by the agreed-upon tariffs, the workshop heads—the so-called *Canuts*—and the journeymen rebelled.[25]

The Lyon *Canuts*' riots elicited conflicting emotions of fear and sympathy in France. Among their advocates, the Revue Républicaine employed the Lyon case to depict the "industrial war" (*guerre industrielle*) that was unfolding: Fierce competition among manufacturers was compelling them to consistently reduce product prices, consequently exerting pressure on worker wages.[26]

The narrative of *guerre industrielle* gained increasing prominence during the July Monarchy and manifested in two distinct yet interrelated forms. In one iteration, the seeds of competition within French society were seen as the precursor to class warfare. This gave rise to the urgent need for a solid reestablishment of workers' rights within a State framework that recognized customary labor relations. This aspiration found expression in the rapid proliferation of "trade socialism" among artisan circles and radical French intellectuals in the 1830s. This movement proposed political solutions aimed at worker emancipation through the establishment of production cooperatives.[27] Behind these initiatives often lay vestiges of ancient corporate identities blended with the principles of the 1789 Revolution. The term *association*, which the French used to denote cooperative societies until the 1860s, progressively supplanted the archaic *corporation* beginning in the 1830s. The concept of association, intricately linked to revolutionary freedoms, posed a challenge to the existing order and was perceived as a solution to the deregulatory threats confronting the French labor organization.[28]

The second facet of *guerre industrielle* emanated from the prevailing notion that nations were embroiled in an economic war in which industrialization played a pivotal role. This parallelism between economic progress and warfare elicited diametrically opposing interpretations from both proponents and opponents of the free market.

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Advocates believed that trade served as a civilizing force in international relations. The idea that market competition could gradually supplant warfare, fostering the common progress of nations, assumed a central position in 19th-century liberal pacifism.[29] Conversely, opponents of the free market harbored dire forebodings. Louis Blanc, who would later become one of the most prominent figures in French socialism during the 1840s, argued that the free-market system would inevitably lead to a deadly war between France and England. He firmly believed that such a system would ultimately impoverish both the French proletariat and the bourgeoisie. In a manner akin to Fourier, Blanc asserted that international competition was not a civilized substitute for warfare but rather that both were two sides of the same coin.[30]

Despite the efforts of some economists, like the liberal thinker Frédéric Bastiat, to protest against the growing use of "expressions borrowed from the vocabulary of battles"[31] in the realm of political economy, such objections proved to be ineffectual. Even among advocates of the free market, the employment of war-related imagery had become commonplace, further reinforcing the narrative of industrial warfare. A pamphlet advocating for Fourier, disseminated by his followers at the *École Societaire*, drew upon the words of four liberal economists to exemplify the relevance of their master's theory of competition. These chosen citations portrayed the industrial system by employing military terminology, incorporating phrases such as "intestine war," "battlefield," and "a genuine struggle in which the participants employ ingenious and formidable mechanisms that leave thousands of exhausted laborers, both men and women, showing no mercy for old age or childhood, on the field of pauperism."[32]

In a veritable campaign against the proliferation of British political economy ideas in France, socialist intellectuals utilized the concept of *guerre industrielle* to mold the political call for wealth redistribution and social protection. In the entries "*Économie Politique*" and "*Concurrence*" in the Encyclopédie Nouvelle, Pierre Leroux and Jean Reynaud, while welcoming industry as the successor to war in the course of human civilization, concluded that the bourgeoisie faced a crucial choice: either to share a portion of its wealth with the working class or to silently endure the strife between the impoverished and the affluent.[33]

Through the recourse to metaphorical language, the narrative of *guerre industrielle* conveyed a profound political assertion: If industry represented the new battleground of nations, then workers assumed the role of its soldiers and thus merited a level of protection and support akin to the long-standing provisions that France had extended to its military. Since the early 18th century, the Old Regime had furnished its armed forces with health care (1708), disability benefits (1764), and pensions for the elderly (1776). The events of the 1789 Revolution did not jeopardize these entitlements in any way. Quite the opposite, in 1790, the National Assembly acknowledged the right of soldiers to retire, facilitating social advancement for many. The magnificence of Paris's *Hôtel des Invalides*, a residence for veterans since 1674, stood as a potent emblem of France's commitment to military welfare.[34]

Consequently, calls to extend these provisions to workers multiplied. In 1833, the *Revue Encyclopédique* advocated for the establishment of a disability retirement fund for workers, modeled after the already-existing *Caisse des Invalides de la Marine*, established in 1670.[35] The idea of providing industrial workers with the same benefits as war veterans gained popularity among intellectuals and workers. Even the widely

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read middle-class newspaper, *Journal des Débats*, dedicated two articles to the issue in 1838.[36] Adolphe Boyer, a French printer who committed suicide in 1841 in protest against worker exploitation, was writing a proposal to open a *Hôtel des Invalides* for industrial workers when he killed himself.[37]

However, the most comprehensive and ambitious project of trade socialism during the July Monarchy period was outlined by Blanc. As a journalist, he gained notoriety for his 1839 essay *Organisation du Travail*, which was reprinted ten times until 1848. In this book, he synthesized both variations of the *guerre industrielle* to outline a new production system that, on one hand, would achieve the long-desired public protection of worker self-managed associations, and on the other, would ensure adequate forms of assistance and social security for workers. According to Blanc, the State was tasked with encouraging the formation of so-called *Ateliers Sociaux*, or "Social Workshops," workers' associations that would take over industrial production, devoting one-third of their profits to hiring willing workers, with the goal of neutralizing labor market competition. Furthermore, like mutual-aid societies, Social Workshops would provide social assistance to elderly, invalid, or ill workers, as well as aid to industrial sectors experiencing temporary crises to prevent mass unemployment.[38]

Even though in the first half of the 19th century attempts to deregulate labor relations in France were largely futile, the imagery of *guerre industrielle* struck a chord among workers, primarily due to the exhausting physical effects of work. In the mid-1830s, a typical thirty-year-old textile worker in Mulhouse had a life expectancy of only thirteen more years, while a factory owner of the same age could expect to live another thirty years. Alongside the prevalence of occupational diseases, hand and finger injuries such as burns, mutilations, and even sudden deaths were common due to the negligence of both employers and employees. Those who could no longer work were compelled to rely on their families for support, seek refuge in a hospice, or resort to begging.[39]

However, worse than the harshness of labor was its scarcity. Between 1825 and 1848, the real wages of French workers declined by nearly 35 percent. This trend was common in many other continental European countries and was due to significant population growth. In the first half of the 19th century, the French population increased from twenty-six million to thirty-six million, while the labor market was unable to absorb the offer surplus adequately due to the very low degree of industrialization in the country.[40] The narrative of *guerre industrielle* resonated with the growing discontent of the French working class. The economic crisis, aggravated by the crop failure that struck Europe in 1845–1846, further exacerbated the problem of unemployment.[41] In France, this crisis coincided with an intense campaign for electoral reform, especially championed by the Republican opposition. When the monarchic government attempted to ban a political banquet in Paris, the people revolted. This led to the downfall of King Louis Philippe on February 24, 1848, and the birth of the Second Republic.

Revolution or social control? Labor and public aid in 1848

Between the February 1848 Revolution, which ended the July Monarchy, and the bloody June uprising that pitted the Republican army against its citizens, Paris served as a revolutionary laboratory that captivated all of Europe. The evolution of social rights

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during the 1848 French Revolution can be condensed into three key phases. The first phase, spanning from February to April 1848, featured a stark confrontation between the Provisional Government, which held a moderate majority, and the Luxembourg Commission. The latter was established to compensate for the absence of a Ministry of Labor, an idea consistently championed by Blanc. During this stage, two distinct approaches to social policies emerged: a moderate one primarily focused on consolidating a political regime built on universal male suffrage (*République modérée*) and a radical one aimed at achieving comprehensive societal reform centered on labor emancipation and mutual association (*République démocratique et sociale*).[42] Each of these currents developed their own social policies to translate the promise of *droit au travail* into practical measures. On one hand, the moderates' primary response was the National Workshops, public construction projects designed to provide employment for Paris' unemployed population. On the opposite end of the spectrum were the experiments of *Organisation du Travail* conducted under Blanc's leadership within the Luxembourg Commission.

The second period, spanning from late April to June, was demarcated by the elections for the National Assembly, which resulted in a clear majority of moderates. The dissolution of the Luxembourg Commission, following allegations—probably baseless—that Blanc had been involved in an attempted coup by some radical clubs on May 15, shifted the political focus toward the inclusion of social rights in the new Constitution drafted by the National Assembly.

The growing antagonism between the two factions of the revolution would reveal their incompatibility, undermining the very foundations of the new regime. The dismantling of the National Workshops and the subsequent June popular uprising in Paris, harshly suppressed by General Louis Eugène Cavaignac, marked the definitive turning point of the 1848 French Revolution and the decisive defeat of radical demands. Despite Cavaignac's exhaustive efforts, as head of the government following the June Days, to balance public order and social reforms, an insurmountable rift in popular support for the Republic had emerged, hastening its downfall.[43]

Before 1848, the imagery of *guerre industrielle* had formed the basis for two political demands: the protection of workers' *bon droit* from the infiltration of British political economy into France and the right to assistance for those unable to work. These demands were closely intertwined with the concept of *association*, seen as antithetical to market competition that threatened to erode the customary rules of labor and, with them, the integrity of society. Immediately after the revolution, these issues took a central role in the French political agenda: On February 26, it was decreed to transform the Palais des Tuileries—the former royal residence—into a residence for disabled workers, thus realizing the aspiration of an *Hôtel des Invalides* for civilian purposes.[44]

In the following weeks, these demands were primarily taken up by the Luxembourg Commission, which became an echo chamber for the most radical demands of the revolution. Convened by Blanc to represent the common interests of the working class, delegates from various professional categories submitted numerous projects for *sociétés générales* inspired by the doctrine of *Organisation du Travail*. These were associations intended to encompass all members of each profession, with three simultaneous tasks: regulating working conditions, sometimes even sanctioning workers who offered their

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labor under conditions worse than those commonly established; providing forms of mutual assistance; and directly managing production in a cooperative form. The language they drew upon clearly expressed the ideological underpinnings in which these projects had germinated: The terms *association* and *corporation* were often used interchangeably, and criticism of market competition was used as the foundation to claim the right to work.[45] An example of the evocative power of these concepts can be found in the preamble to the statute of the *société générale* of wallpaper workers:

> Considering that the Principle of Association is a natural right, made sacred after the foundation of our glorious Republic.
>
> That the Nation has recognized this immortal principle without restriction, along with that of *property*; that for the *Worker*, their *only* property is their *wage* and their *time*;
>
> That [workers] must have, just like Manufacturers, sufficient guarantees to ensure their existence; a fair principle, based on humanity, proclaimed by the Revolutions of 1789, 1830, and 1848; and that they only want security for their Future;
>
> That it is time to put an end, also in the interest of Manufacturers, to disastrous competition, which brings no advantage to anyone and which mostly impacts the worker's wage;
>
> Recognizing these truths, and in the interest of all, they establish the following Society …[46]

There was a common thread connecting these declarations to the language of *guerre industrielle* that continued to inflame radical clubs between February and the elections of the National Assembly on April 23.[47] Manifestos posted on the streets of Paris and French cities exuded a narrative of a prerevolutionary order depicted as a harbinger of war and social disorder. Faced with this reality, the only way to establish peace was through a radical transformation of society itself. Joseph Sobrier, a former delegate at the Paris police prefecture and tireless agitator, advocated a program that, alongside the right to work and assistance, envisioned the transformation of armies into "industrial regiments" tasked with carrying out public works and maintaining internal security, as they would no longer be needed in the new society. The prominent socialist Étienne Cabet revendicated "the right to live by working so that the father of a family is no longer reduced to the dreadful necessity of leaving his wife and children to die in battle."[48]

Statements like these signaled the conception that the realization of social rights was contingent on the reorganization of social relations. Essentially, just as the Physiocrats of the 18th century argued that the free market would spontaneously bring social rights, the socialists of 1848 believed that *association* would produce a similar outcome. This was the stake of Blanc's repeated demands for the establishment of a Ministry of Labor: Such a move would have allowed him to obtain an administrative structure and material resources to put his radical social reform plan into practice. Not surprisingly, fearing its consequences, the moderate majority consistently opposed him. Therefore, the significance of Blanc's ultimate appeal to a National Assembly in which the radicals were largely in the minority should not be underestimated: "You have a Ministry of

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War, you need a Ministry of Peace, and the Ministry of Peace is the Ministry of Labor and Progress."[49]

This was an argument entirely consistent with what Blanc himself had advocated in the preceding years. Faced with the specter of social warfare between classes and nations, there was only one solution: the State as a tool to generalize the principle of association; the principle of association as the basis for realizing social rights. As we have seen, this vision enjoyed a certain consensus among the Parisian working class, which did not waver even after the dissolution of the Luxembourg Commission and Blanc's rapid political decline. On the contrary, comparing the popular petitions submitted to the Luxembourg Commission with those to the Labor Committee, the parliamentary body that replaced Blanc's institution reveals a surprising continuity.[50]

After the April elections, disastrous for the radical currents of the Second Republic, the political contest centered on the Constitution that the National Assembly was drafting. The *guerre industrielle* reemerged even more prominently in this debate. Depicting the workers as servants of the common good, who, like soldiers, risked their lives every day to contribute to the nation's power, was instrumental in securing the constitutionalization of their social rights. For example, one petition requested that the National Assembly recognize "a *real* and *positive* right on the *product of national Labor*, intended to make the Worker holder of a *constitutional right* ensuring and granting him a retirement pension, and eradicating forever the title of *proletarian* from his person."[51] Equally explicit was a pamphlet written by Pétit-Cretal, a Niort leatherworker and administrator of a mutual-aid society:

> The soldier, the clerk who spends thirty years in the service of the State have an old-age pension: it is just fair; one has shed his blood on the battlefields for the motherland, and the other has contributed, with his work and knowledge, to the smooth course of public affairs. And has not the Worker spent his life in the service of society as a whole? Is not Labor that produces public prosperity? Therefore, we cannot condemn his old age to certain misery; he is also entitled to a pension, is not he the invalid of Labor? Have we not proclaimed the principles of Equality and Fraternity? Is not the Motherland the common mother of us all?[52]

From this perspective, the establishment of the *Hôtel des Invalides Civiles* at the Tuileries had contributed to stimulating political demands for assistance to the disabled. Clément, a former factory director, proposed to the Labor Committee an ambitious plan to establish a nationwide system of accommodations for disabled workers, as well as a retirement fund administered by a mutual society called *La Sécurité de l'Avenir.* Clément stated that he had submitted the same proposal to the monarchist government in 1846, but it was not taken into consideration.[53]

Throughout the summer of 1848, the National Assembly continued to receive such requests. However, the Constitution of the Second Republic in its official formulation, issued toward the end of the year, did not contain the *droit au travail* and only made a timid reference to the *droit à l'assistance* in Article 13. Moreover, like the revolutionaries of 1789, the 1848 National Assembly did not refer to the State as the guarantor of the right to assistance but rather to society. It stipulated that assistance would be provided only in cases where individuals unable to work did not have a family to care for them.[54]

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The vision of the worker-soldier had a radically different inspiration. Firstly, it regarded the *droit au travail* and the *droit à l'assistance* as closely interconnected. Furthermore, just as the State protected its soldiers, it should reward the analogous sacrifice of workers for the nation's wealth in two ways: by recognizing their *bon droit* once and for all and by assisting those who could no longer work. Both objectives would be achieved through association, the guiding principle of a profound societal renewal.

Why did these reform demands go unanswered? Their intensity did not diminish over the months, and the initial draft of the Constitution presented on June 20 seemed much more in line with these claims. It recognized both the *droit au travail* and the *droit à l'assistance* (Articles 2, 7, and 9), and Article 132 stated that their realization was the joint responsibility of both the State and *association*.[55]

To understand the reason for this radical change in direction, it is important to remember that from the decree of February 25, which first promised the French the *droit au travail* and encouraged workers to associate to reap the fruits of their labor, the recognition of social rights had always occurred under the threat of a constant state of mobilization within the working class. Advocates of the *République modérée*, who were strengthened by the April elections, believed that to stabilize republican institutions, it was necessary to defuse the demands for the reorganization of society that were coming from below and redirect the masses into the institutions of the new regime. It should also be noted that a not insignificant portion of those elected to the National Assembly had ties to the July Monarchy: Their commitment to the Republic was mostly apparent, and they certainly did not desire further changes.[56]

Within a few months, it became clear that insisting on the *droit au travail* only increased the expectations of the population toward the Republic, reigniting demands for radical reform that moderates were not willing to satisfy. The course of the National Workshops was highly illustrative in this regard. Announced on February 26, they constituted the main response of the moderates to the acute employment crisis in France: to guarantee the right to work for the unemployed through public works projects, but without implying a radical transformation of labor relations—essentially, *droit au travail* without *Organisation du Travail*. The National Workshops ended up resembling the prerevolutionary *ateliers de charité*, public charitable institutions in use since the late 18th century,[57] but with a peculiarity: a quasi-military organization in which workers were organized into a rigid hierarchy, with young director Émile Thomas at the top. This "irregular army of the poor" was used by the Provisional Government as a praetorian body of the Republic, to be deployed as necessary against the crowds of workers linked with the Luxembourg Commission and the radical clubs.[58]

However, it was the insistence of the moderates on the need to control the workers in the National Workshops that quickly led to their closure. By May, the number of employed workers exceeded 100,000, with an actual capacity of 10,000 positions. In addition to the growing cost required to maintain the workshops, which burdened the budget of a Republic on the verge of bankruptcy,[59] there was a fear of losing control over such a large group of people, who, in the event of a popular uprising, could join the rebels. As demonstrated by Mark Traugott, this was an unfounded fear, but it turned into a self-fulfilling prophecy: The decision to dismantle the National Workshops, officially announced by the National Assembly at the same time it published the draft Constitution containing the *droit au travail*, caused the radicalization of workers that

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moderates had feared so much.[60] The June Days uprising was primarily a reaction to what was perceived as a betrayal of the Republic's promises. Its bloody suppression and the subsequent declaration of martial law in Paris realized, in the most brutal and unwanted way, the forced demobilization of the masses that moderates had sought to achieve through consent.

Deprived of the driving force of popular mobilization, social rights came to be seen as dangerous slogans heralding disorder. General Cavaignac, responsible for the suppression of the June Days uprising and then the new head of government, was a sincere moderate republican who sought to regain support for the Republic by proposing social policies detached from the language of social rights and, even more so, from the imagery of *guerre industrielle*. The decree of July 5, 1848, which provided a credit of three million francs to finance cooperatives and worker participation in companies, excluded all associations that aimed to replicate the model of *Organisation du Travail*.[61] The *Hôtel des Invalides* Civiles closed on August 15, while on September 12, the National Assembly voted to remove the *droit au travail* from the Constitution.[62]

Conclusion. Duty and obligation: Following the thread of Ariadne

The Republic, which was founded on the universal promise of the right to work, did not survive long after it abandoned that goal. The overwhelming victory of Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte in the presidential elections of December 1848 marked the beginning of its end, culminating in the *coup d'état* of December 1851 that granted him full powers. As we have seen, the narrative of *guerre industrielle* played a central role in shaping the demands for social rights in 19th-century France. It is worth asking whether it survived the decline of the Second Republic and, if so, how it transformed following the profound changes in French society and economy during the Second Empire. Some clues suggest at least its persistence. For instance, at the 1867 Universal Exposition in Paris, mechanical workers still advocated for the reestablishment of the *Hôtel des Invalides* for workers, using a rhetoric entirely consistent with that of the 1848 petitions: "If soldiers, obeying the State, risk one hundred times a minute of being killed or harmed on the battlefield, do not we run the same risk on the battlefield of industry every day, where the fighting will never end?"[63]

Furthermore, the case of industrial warfare in 1848 France prompts broader considerations regarding the relationship between warfare and social rights. As asserted by Stephen W. Sawyer and William J. Novak, during the late 18th to mid-19th century, discussions concerning socioeconomic rights became intricately intertwined with matters of regulation, administration, governance, and provision.[64] Consequently, transformations in the discourse surrounding social rights are closely linked to the formulation of social policies and the introduction of novel "technologies of socioeconomic governance"[65] enacted by political authorities since the era of the Revolutions.

Charles Tilly's renowned assertion that "war makes States, and States make war"[66] underscores how military policy was the primary issue in which modern States concentrated their efforts, encompassing redistribution, training, planning, and assistance. Thus, it was a natural progression to look to warfare policies as a reference point when considering extending these issues to other segments of society. French intellectuals and workers, beginning in the 1830s, advocated for the extension of military-style

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welfare measures, such as the *Hôtel des Invalides* and pension funds, to industrial workers. However, as observed in the case of the National Workshops in 1848, policy-makers also drew from military paradigms to construct their tools of socioeconomic governance, irrespective of whether they aligned with radical or moderate ideologies.

This approach was exemplified by Blanc's struggles, who faced the challenge of determining the production focus of the early cooperatives which were intended to foreshadow the *Organisation du Travail* model. In this instance, the solution involved the manufacturing of uniforms, saddles, and epaulettes for the National Guard, whose ranks had nearly quadrupled following their extension to all male citizens aged twenty to fifty-five.[67] The Provisional Government further implemented this approach by establishing the Mobile Guard, a city militia of volunteers organized similarly to the National Workshops, including wage structures ranging from three to five francs per day. The stated objective was to replace the discredited Municipal Guard, which had sided with the monarchy during the revolution. Another significant, albeit hidden, aim was to reduce unemployment while the National Workshops were being organized.[68] Finally, even in the dramatic decision to disband the latter, the military was once again employed as a last-resort employer, as the newly legitimized government resulting from elections decreed the conscription of all workers from the workshops aged eighteen to twenty-five.[69]

The connection strongly emerging from the events of the Second French Republic is the thread of Ariadne guiding historians in understanding how two areas of policy—warfare and social rights—dealing with different elements of collective life can be so interconnected. The attempt by the Second French Republic to use the democratization of the armed forces as a labor policy tool should be taken seriously. It offered income and employment to respond to the masses' demand for social intervention but required their integration into the Republic's consensus structures. Here, we see the fundamental question surrounding the realization of social rights: who owes what to whom? In both language and practice, warfare is inherently based on the concepts of duty and obligation, the same foundations of social rights conceptualization.

The construction of democratic states has always been marked by tension between two complementary issues: integrating popular power into institutions and opening these institutions to the political demands of the people. Historically, one response to this dilemma has been the establishment of mass security apparatuses, with citizens safeguarding common institutions. Simultaneously, policies aimed at preserving the general welfare through provisions, utility, anti-poverty measures, and regulations have addressed legitimizing democracy on economic grounds.[70]

While avoiding hasty comparisons to the 20th-century warfare-welfare paradigm, it would be insightful to examine to what extent this connection can be observed in other historical contexts, especially those predating the World Wars. In this sense, the history of social rights before the 20th century remains a largely untapped field of research.

Notes

1. I would like to thank Charles Walton and the anonymous reviewers for their invaluable advice while drafting this article.

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