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French Utopian Economists of the 19th Century

Jacques Fontanel, Liliane Bensahel, Steven Coissard et Yann Echinard

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The 19th century saw the development of new ideas, often lacking in rigour, but characterised by a peacemaking vision that aimed to guide humanity toward happiness. These ideas were mainly in competition with each other and they often led to religion or the will to establish a new economic system. The economic analyses, which they offered, were therefore more normative than analytical. Karl Marx called these analyses “utopian” and contrasted them with socialist analyses, which were supposedly scientific, dialectical and materialist.

The utopian economists issued a more or less direct challenge to the capitalist mode of production of their time. Specifically, they took a stand against the orders of property and competition, and, most of all, they took issue with the appalling poverty, which afflicted much of the working class at the time. As the offspring of the French Revolution, they felt that France had a historic role to play in the reorganization of society, because of its strength and its reformist or revolutionary capacities. Babeuf (also called Gracchus), their precursor, wanted to abolish the chief corrupter – money – and develop an egalitarian society.

There were two main utopian movements – the “utopian socialists” and the “anarchists”, – although the dividing lines between them are not always well defined. The main difference between the two is in the role given by them to the state in economic and political life. The utopian socialists had a direct influence on the ideas of their time or an indirect influence on the economic analysis of war.¹ Some of them had significant influence, such as the Comte de Saint-Simon (one of the involuntary fathers of technocracy), Charles Fourier (the forerunner of associationism), Sismonde de Sismondi (one of the founders of social democracy), Constantin Pecqueur (the defender of collectivism) and Michel Chevalier (who promoted technology and free trade). Anarchist thought was developed mainly by Proudhon and Bakunin, and the former had a huge influence on the intellectuals of his time. All these authors denied the epithet of “utopian”, which came to be associated with them. However, their ideas failed to gain wide acceptance and the utopian nature of their socialism is well proven.

¹ Coulomb, F. (1998), Les théories économiques de la guerre, de la paix et de la défense, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Grenoble, 10th December.

2. SAINT-SIMON OR THE SUBSTITUTION OF MILITARY SOCIETY BY INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY

Saint-Simon's ambition was to reconcile the religious tradition with the achievements of the revolution and the existence of industry. Although influenced by the law of markets and the pacifist concepts of Jean-Baptiste Say (in particular, the contradiction between well-being and war), Saint-Simon was also convinced that property is a decidedly unfair privilege. It divides people between exploiters and exploited, and it leads to anarchic production, preventing optimal use of the factors of production. He analyses the socio-economic crisis of his time as the result of a precarious organization, in which individualism and competition perniciously foster a society based on isolation, war and injustice.

For Saint-Simon, any war is harmful to industry, destroys people and is detrimental to production and trade. Trade is not to be won by force of arms. Trade goes hand in hand with peace, not with war. The proper conditions for industry are free trade and security. In this context, Saint-Simon does not preach insurrection or revolt; he rejects violence, due to its destructive effects. The peaceful means of trade are the only means for building strong constitutions. The coming to power of men of industry creates the economy of revolution. Men cannot turn on one another without damaging production, the human race and even the nation, which emerges victorious from armed struggle.

Saint-Simon rejects any interpretation of history that makes appeal to providence or chance. History has a sense, namely the rise of industry, despite alternating phases of order and crisis. History has periods of equilibrium, characterized by harmony between the political system, social institutions, art and the economic system. Periods of crisis are preparations for a new equilibrium. When the theological-feudal system came into being in the Middle Ages, the seeds of its destruction were already present; the components of the system that would replace it were in place.² Every period of history is dominated by an activity that ensures the dominion of the class, which practises it. In the Middle Ages, when war and conquest were essential, the nobles had temporal power and the priests exercised spiritual power in a balanced system. With the development of industry, war and pillage give way to production, and power is transferred from men of war to men of industry. The change is all the more inevitable because the art of war is influenced by technical progress and speeds up this evolution. The discovery of gunpowder makes the musketeer more efficient than the knight in shining armour, who had been the guarantor of the security of the realm. Henceforth, the villains can defend their land and the former nobility becomes a social parasite if it persists in clinging to its old

² Saint-Simon (1817), *L'organisateur*, Oeuvres de Saint-Simon et d'Enfantin, Ed. Dentu, Paris.

values. This is the meaning of the famous parable, which gave men of industry a major role in society, opposed to the “political and administrative” class.

The repressive function of the State is crucial in a military and feudal society, but it tends to disappear as production becomes a decisive social goal. The industrial system (which includes all forms of material production, agriculture, craft, manufacturing, trade) is destined to become tomorrow's society; it carries a dynamic within itself that transforms social relations. Military society has to be replaced by an industrial society. When manufacturers have become aware of their role and mission, they can take power peacefully. The manufacturing class must take leading positions, it has the advantages of numbers, wealth, intelligence and science, human and divine morality, and it can manage without other classes. The right to work is affirmed and everyone will receive according to his capabilities. There is an elite, a social hierarchy. Since government tends to harm industry when it meddles in its affairs, public administration is to be run in a benevolent fashion by the chief men of industry. Industry leads to a withering away of the state, because society is no longer governed, but administered.³ Crises are to be averted through planning, organised by chambers of inventions, examination and execution, consisting of competent people and by a powerful central bank.

Industrial action represents a contrast to military action. Military societies are based on coercion or violence, whereas industrial societies require participation and peaceful cooperation. Industrial exchanges bring men together and all advances of “industrial values” lead to a decline of military values. Industrial prosperity, based partly on the profit motive, is the best guarantee of universal peace. It helps people to realise that their interests coincide. Nations should specialize in productive activities, which must be peaceful, and military force will gradually disappear.⁴ Freedom, peace and economic strength will only be established when political power is in the hands of men of industry. No significant social change can happen without change of ownership. Principles of association should oppose Christian asceticism and restore love, worldly joys, welfare and equity. Association should replace antagonism. The social ideal of fraternity must be developed. The fundamental objective of society is to improve the lot of the poorest class as quickly as possible, but government must be the prerogative of an elite. Industrial society marks the end of class struggle and conflicts will be permanently eradicated. France will no longer be a huge barracks, but a huge factory, managed as all businesses should be managed. The State will be reduced to a minimum and gradually dissolve into the body of society, as administration of things replaces government over men.

For Saint-Simon, Europe would have the best possible organization if each of its nations, though still governed by a national parliament, acknowledged the supremacy of a European parliament over all national

³ The idea of the decline of the State has been taken over by Marx and Engels.

⁴ Saint-Simon (1819-1820), *L'organisateur*, Ed. Dentu. pp. 81-82.

governments, invested with power to settle their disagreements.⁵ He conceives of a Franco-British alliance with a common parliament, a common currency and free trade, which would ensure peace conducive to economic development. The European race is superior to other races, so it should extend itself to other countries for their own well-being. The golden age of the human race is yet to come, when a perfect social order will be achieved. For the followers of Saint-Simon, wars and misery will be followed by harmony and universal concord, because peace will arise spontaneously from unified industrial society. The world will consist of a single people, without nations. Association creates the conditions for a peaceful universe, in the framework of what would later be called globalization, under European control.

The philosophy of Saint Simon is also referred to as the “philosophy of networks”. Saint Simon made parallels between the development of physical networks and the development of relationships between men. Offering a glimpse of our modern economy, he believed that development of ties and, thus, networks between people enables society to live in harmony (this is also referred to nowadays as social capital, but also coincides with all the organization, which underpins systems of economic intelligence).

3. CHARLES FOURIER OR THE BENEVOLENT DESPOT AS GUARANTOR OF UNIVERSAL PEACE

Charles Fourier was probably a little crazy. In any case, his world, populated by six moons and anti-whales harnessed to ships, was somewhat fanciful or phantasmagorical.⁶ However, its influence on the utopian socialists was very important.

Fourier believed that poverty, which he regarded as the most scandalous disorder, is a consequence of progress and development. The freedom promised by revolutionaries was a cruel deceit for the weak, since it leaves the poor with no alternatives but to work hard or starve. Bankers and salesmen are vultures, who practice deception in order to succeed. The way to escape this curse is to develop industry, but also to set a minimum income that ensures a decent existence for individuals, combats poverty, reduces crime and limits population growth through the phenomenon of social capillarity. In addition, any State

⁵ Saint-Simon, *De la réorganisation européenne*

⁶ The word had to exist for eighty thousand years, half of them in ascending vibrations and the other half in descending vibrations. Man is now at the fifth of eight progressive stages, having passed through confusion, savagery, patriarchy and barbarism. The next stage will be gigantism, followed by a harmonious ascent. After achieving bliss, the pendulum would swing back and all the stages of humanity would be repeated in the opposite direction. A Nordic crown would encircle the pole and the sea would be turned into lemonade, six moons would replace the single moon and new species of animals, contrary to existing ones, would arise. We would live for 144 years, of which 120 would be sexually unrestricted. After a long line of social communities, humans would undergo a physical mutation, growing a tail and a third eye.

(civilised or barbaric), which is based on violence, is opposed to the views of God.

In his ideal phalansterian society,⁷ capital, money and property are allowed to exist, but they are incorporated into a tiered system of participation. Distrustful of the workings of large-scale industry, Fourier promotes an economy based on agricultural work, suggesting attachment to a kind of pre-capitalist economy. He believed that it is better to reform industry, rather than the state, because economic and social progress stem from civil society. He condemned the fact that men of industry lay siege to the State, competing for position, demanding protectionist tariffs, and seeking concessions and ownership of canals, mines, and railways. He is not attracted by collectivist ideas, because the equalitarian doctrine, which proposes them, is the enemy of diversity. Providence is universal, but there is a suitable regime for each nation.

Fourier believed that conflicts between peoples will give way to unity and universal peace. Armies are “social parasites”, although they are sometimes necessary to defend a country from threat. Armies represent a misuse of the labour force, they lead to tax hikes, they deprave youth, which loses the taste for work. Fourier’s contempt for the “militarism of tatarism” makes him recommend the creation of productive armies, which would replace destructive ones, and would carry out irrigation, reforestation, drainage or construction work. Industrial trophies should replace the laurels of military victory.

Fourier develops a project for unification of the human race, based on conquest of the entire world by a “great and enlightened despot”, who would direct the affairs of the world and be the supreme regulator of industry.⁸ Eternal peace would thus be achieved, mainly under the enlightened control of France, which would dictate its excellent laws to Europe and then to the whole world. So a war of conquest is a useful and necessary step for the achievement of peace. The phalansterian system could support a productive army, which would embellish the Earth, leaving no place for power and despotism with armies and police forces at their disposal. This new model of social organization will mean the end of war and civil discord.

Fourier believes that duty must be abolished and the passions given free rein. The emancipation of individuals (particularly women⁹) fosters harmony of individual and collective interests, abolition of classes, organisation of collectively useful work, development of all the faculties and good relations between nations. Any morality mutilates man. Freedom is measured by the degree of submission to reason. The more man is a slave of his senses, the more

⁷ The concept of phalanstery comes from the parallel he draws between the human passions and the universe. He believes that studying the animals and trees, we can understand human relations by similar reasoning. He deduces 1620 characters defining man (phalanges), and puts forward an organization of society around phalansteries bringing together 1620 people representing all of these characters.

⁸ Fourier, Ch. (1834), *L'idéal d'une société parfaite*, recueilli par Desanti, Op. Cit., pp. 216-217

⁹ He is regarded as the precursor of the French feminism. For him, the extension of privileges granted to women was the general principle of all social progress, and happiness of men was linked to freedom enjoyed by women.

he is free. Unitary world government will be the centre of major global industrial operations; it will lead industrial armies in immense tasks of general benefit (reforestation of mountain ranges, conquest of vast desert areas by agriculture, development of road networks). Every person will be employed in the activity, which suits him best. This will result in a great harmony and the production of abundant resources.

For Fourier's follower, Benjamin Constant,¹⁰ peace and stable order are only achievable if workers and manufacturers can secure both material welfare and moral dignity. Peace – the precondition for well-being – is incompatible with poverty and coercive relationships in the economy. The system of free association can be an instrument for the unification of peoples, which is the supreme goal of humanity. The creation of a proper European institution would provide major economic benefits by multiplying the productive forces of different peoples, removing trade barriers and implementing freedom of exchange with great common benefits. Only free association in phalansteries, in the context of a unified European (even global) economy (or society) leads to universal peace.

4. CONSTANTIN PECQUEUR, OR THE WORLD STATE AS A FACTOR OF PEACE.

Pecqueur, who is often quoted by Karl Marx, was one of the most influential of the utopian socialists., He was both reformist and pacifist, although his economic analysis is weak. He is also known as the biographer of Charles Fourier and the father of French collectivist socialism.¹¹ Pecqueur finds war to be detrimental to the prosperity of peoples; it is a scourge and a miscalculation, even for the winner. It is very expensive, antisocial, contrary to welfare, and is only waged in the interest of a few privileged individuals. However, peace is beneficial for all, it develops cosmopolitan feelings and it helps to emancipate the masses through population growth, technological progress and application of the solidarity principle.

War is due to exploitation of men that stems from private property rights. In order to address economic crisis and poverty, Pecqueur advocates expropriation of the owners of the means of production, though without violent revolution. Political revolution is not enough unless it also addresses the economic sector, specifically by nationalization of capital goods. State collectivism seems desirable to Pecqueur, but he is opposed to the communist doctrine that also leads to exploitation of the best people and to absolute

¹⁰ Considering, B., *La paix ou la guerre*

¹¹ In this regard see the article of Jacques Thbaut 1990, « Constantin Pecqueur, biographe de Fourier », *Cahier Charles Fourier*, n°1, pp11-40, http://www.charlesfourier.fr/article.php3?id_article=5

reductive equality. He calls for a single, cosmopolitan world association. The State should be the only owner of capital and the only employer, while all citizens should be civil servants. The social economy and politics of the entire human race would be based on brotherhood, freedom, equality, unity and solidarity.

Constantin Pecqueur seeks to balance the socialist ideal with military duty. He believes that the army should be reformed prior to being abolished, calling for an end to the blind obedience of the soldier, which is to be replaced by military bravery and civic virtue. Following Fourier, he calls for an army that is active and working (not idle and expensive), ensuring both national security and prosperity. Nothing must be subtracted from production, which is not absolutely necessary for national security. All the other goods of production must be put at the disposal of society. Like Fourier, he calls for establishment of a single world power, which would concentrate all government and put the end to the remnants of barbarism that nations generate in the form of rivalries and wars. However, he advocates justice and universal solidarity and therefore opposes the concept of strong power. He favours the development of associations based on solidarity, establishment of international tribunals and a league of nations. Pecqueur has two conceptions of universal peace, one based on overhaul of the social system, the other on a political reorganization of humanity. Implementation of a policy of controlled free trade should encourage social progress towards a European merger and a federation of nations. A common market, managed by a Congress with the task of balancing general economic interests, would eliminate prohibitions, restrictions, or restrictive rules in trade between countries. Only the Congress would have the right to make war or peace, and to build alliances. Any policy that aims for peace must promote trade links, making the interests of nations into common interests. Customs unions are a step towards peace, provided that the nations involved have reached the same level of development. Universal union will only be achievable among nations that have reached the same level of development, so some level of protectionism can be temporarily justified (a Listian concept). Pecqueur wants to develop economic solidarities among peoples and to eliminate nation states, which are a powerful cause of war.

5. MICHEL CHEVALIER OR FREE TRADE AS A FACTOR OF PEACE

As a disciple of Saint-Simon, Michel Chevalier believes that the efforts of mankind have aimed at substituting an industrial order for a military order. He condemns the class struggle of Karl Marx, rejects the Malthusian analysis of war in terms of overpopulation, and appeals to the harmony and consent of producers.

As an enemy of war, he was opposed to the maintenance of armies and even proposes an industrial organisation of the army. The army would become a

school providing general education and vocational instruction, so that production and creation would be privileged over destruction. The army would thus participate in economic development, enabling a genuine policy of peace.

Free-trade exchanges and development of communication channels (Chevalier originated a study commission on construction of the Channel Tunnel) would favour emergence of a global economy as a condition for world peace. Men would then seek the best way to exploit the world's riches and achievement of fraternal union between peoples. Chevalier convinced Napoleon III of the benefits of free trade and his name remains attached to the trade treaty signed with Great Britain in 1860.

Association between peoples is also a factor for peace. Chevalier proposed creation of a “Mediterranean System” – a genuine association of peoples located around the Mediterranean Sea, including a rail link between East and West. This organisation could implement a policy of universal association, as the member states would undertake a shared programme of industrial works. The outcome would be a technical, economic and political revolution. Governments would abandon their war policies, suppressing military expenditures and developing communications and infrastructure. The Mediterranean Confederation would give a great impetus to industry. It would ensure peace “as if by magic”, as people finally understood (possibly against the will of their governments) the peaceful nature of joint activities.

For Michel Chevalier,¹² universal association will only happen once there is justice for all parties, classes, races and sexes. By joining forces, bankers could become an enormous political power for good. As cosmopolitans by nature and vocation, bankers have a peaceful role in furthering growth of output and represent a powerful ally of the cause of peace. They are the best catalysts of a European federation, which could form a bulwark against the temptations of war.

These analyses are short on rigour, often representing acts of faith in technical progress and the ability of people to agree and organize themselves in a near-perfect system of conflict resolution.

¹² Chevalier, M. *Politique d'association*, p.32.

VI. PIERRE JOSEPH PROUDHON, FROM WAR AS A CATALYST OF PROGRESS TO PEACE AS A RESULT OF INDUSTRY

For Proudhon, studying the laws of social economy is equivalent to studying the laws of reason and creating philosophy, and analyses are the same for all countries, giving them a scientific nature. Proudhon, who believes that economics cannot be dissociated from politics, seeks to demonstrate how a civilisation that begins from war tends towards universal peace, although his analysis is not without ambiguity.¹³ Proudhon refuses to rely only on violent revolutionary action in order to amend society. He believes in the effectiveness of peaceful reform.

In triumphant capitalism, economic laws are sometimes in formal contradiction with justice. The division of labour is the most powerful engine of industry, but it leads to the moral debasement of workers, exploitation and the creation of a class of serfs. Injustice occurs in exchange. There is an exploitation of man by man, first defined by the famous slogan, “property is theft”, which he later transformed into the anarchist rejection of the State. The issue of property is the key social question. It determines political, administrative, military, family, religious and philosophical organisation. Property causes highly destructive competition, it leads to economic crises, inequality, unemployment, oppression, tyranny, because it cannot prevail without force. Government intervention leads to perverse effects. If the government makes serious efforts to help the working classes, a vicious circle arises: in order to escape the effect of state intervention the capitalists create more poverty by shifting their activities to locations where their investments are can still create value. By relocating their business, they aggravate poverty, which gradually spreads to all levels of society.

Further, government believes in the original perversity of human nature, inequality of conditions, inevitability of poverty, the unending nature of antagonism and war. The State keeps the people in ignorance, and democracy is nothing other than the most deplorable tyranny of the majority. The State is actually only a committee responsible for managing the affairs of the whole of the bourgeoisie. Although private property is theft, it is also a bulwark against the State and reduction of individual freedom.¹⁴ If property is collective, the government will intervene everywhere, from railroad companies to banks, from salt making to armaments. For Proudhon, unlike Pecqueur, nationalisation of the factors of production simply increases the number of people obtaining rent from

¹³ Taken out of context, Proudhon’s phrases sound like exhortations to war, or an apology for war. “War ..., like the beautiful, the just and useful, is a form of our reason, a law of our soul, a condition of our existence ... War is divine ... War is the revelation of justice and the ideal, the deepest phenomenon, the most sublime of our moral life ... War is the most incorruptible expression of our consciousness, the act that ultimately, despite the impure influences that it contains, honours us most before creation and the Lord”.

¹⁴ Proudhon supports two ideas, one about the class struggle, but also another about “Public Choice”, which will be presented in the same form a century later by American liberals.

the State and swells the ranks of civil servants. Statism creates monopolies that are harmful to the interests of workers. The centralized State is an instrument of exploitation and subjugation, the destroyer of freedoms, an unbearable financial burden, incapable of ensuring national education. Proudhon advocates the end of the State. He rejects Rousseau's social pact – an alliance of those who own property against those who do not, a coalition of the lucky few against the proletariat. He sanctions the abdication of man in the hands of the State. Nationalism is the principle that makes it possible to avoid economic revolution.¹⁵ Forced to choose between state violence and the injustice of property, he chooses the latter, because it is the best safeguard of human freedom. For Proudhon, history shows clearly that the most powerful and civilised nations are those, which have defended the values of individual liberty, property and the family.¹⁶

Peace has its natural conclusion in war, and the idea of peace is negative – a synonym for non-being and inaction.¹⁷ Peace without war is unintelligible, it is what occurs when war is at rest. “Peace proves and confirms war, war in its turn is a claim for peace ... So peace is still war and war is peace; it is childish to imagine that they are mutually exclusive”¹⁸.

For Proudhon, war is divine¹⁹ in its origins and ignoble in the accomplishment of its ends. Man must fight in order to prove himself and to merit rewards. Everything in the world begins by divine and human force. The right of force is primary. Human life is a permanent war with need, with nature, with peers, and with itself. The theory of peaceful equality is based on renunciation of property, dear to the Catholic religion and to the principle of eternal poverty. Man is a fighting animal. Assimilation after conquest is necessary and it involves pacification by force. So war is a factor of development.²⁰

Although war seems to have political causes, the real causes are economic. “The primary, universal and constant cause of war is lack of means for subsistence; stated differently, war is caused by a breakdown of the economic balance. Ultimately, the original cause of any war is pauperism.”²¹ War is due to pauperism (or abnormal, excessive poverty), a concept which must

¹⁵ Proudhon, (1858), *De la justice dans la Révolution et dans l’Eglise, nouveaux principes de philosophie pratique adressés à son Eminence Mgr Mathieu, cardinal-archevêque de Besançon*, Garnier Frères (1858), Ed. Rivière (1930). t.II, p.289

¹⁶ After having humbled it, Proudhon defends private property, which is the real shield against the power of the State, and even defends inheritance.

¹⁷ All peoples have been organised in goodtime for war; but we do not know of any peoples who have been ready for peace. (Proudhon, *Guerre et paix*, Op. Cit. p. 473.)

¹⁸ Proudhon, *Guerre et paix*, Op. Cit. p.64 et 68.

¹⁹ Proudhon (*Guerre et paix*), Op. Cit. p. 29.

²⁰ Proudhon, P.J. (1861), *La guerre et la paix, Recherches sur le principe et la constitution du droit des gens*, Michel Lévy frères, Paris. Repris dans les *oeuvres complètes de Proudhon*, Marcel Rivière, Paris.

²¹ Proudhon, *Guerre et Paix*, Op. Cit. p. 326-327. Which makes Moysset, prefacer of his book, say that in order not to sink into bellicosity, Proudhon needs an enemy, and finds its in poverty. “Whence the bold reduction of the causes of war to a single economic cause, reversing the order of the factors of peace in the future”.

be distinguished from that of poverty (defined as a law of nature and society, and as the normal human condition).²² The spirit of war takes hold of a State when livelihoods are beginning to fail, markets prove insufficient, territory is inadequate for the population, or property rights are not respected. The prerequisite for improvement in the art of war is specialisation by a certain number of citizens. War is becoming increasingly industrialised.²³ States choose to maintain professional armies because national militias cannot keep pace with the development of firearms and industrialisation of weaponry. Proudhon is opposed, therefore, to the notion of “productive” armed forces, which carry out works of public use, tending to reduce warlike abilities in the individual, society and State. Weapons have a destabilising effect in modern societies, they undermine order, and the role of the soldier is indeed coming to an end. But, although war is less necessary, the warrior spirit must be kept intact for the unremitting struggle to achieve social progress. Antagonism is not only a matter of armed conflict, but is also an essential element of industry and progress. Absolute monarchy, without any expressions of conflict, is absolute immobility. Antagonism enables forward movement and production of a higher order. Europe still lives in the era of armed peace, but the urge to actually wage war will weaken.²⁴

War must be transformed, moving from the heroic to the economic phase.²⁵ Proudhon then develops the concept of economic war, which will replace war using weapons. He regrets signing of the trade treaty with England, competition with which will weaken French industry. England may find instigation of conflict, particularly with France, to be in its interest.²⁶ Proudhon has an intuition of the “beggar-thy-neighbour policy”, made even easier by the opening of borders. In this case, deprivations can affect the French worker, promoting the emergence of a few large fortunes, on the one hand, and pauperism, on the other. In the longer term, liberalism and private ownership can lead to limitation of pauperism, but war will then have recourse to an increasing role of the State, towards a system of public exploitation of conflicts. If outright looting is judged abhorrent and stopped, military governance is likely to impose itself²⁷ upon liberalism and mutualism.

The battle against pauperism is conducted, firstly, through public education, labour and temperance. Proudhon’s mutualist society (close to

²² It is proved by statistics that a nation like ours, placed in the best conditions, does not produce more in a normal year than is sufficient for its needs. The normal condition of man in a state of civilisation is poverty... In itself, poverty is not miserable: following the ancients, we could treat it as the average state of being...”

²³ « La paix selon toute probabilité sera l’oeuvre du XIXème siècle ».Proudhon, *Guerre et paix*, Op. Cit. p. 482.

²⁴ Proudhon, *Guerre et paix*, p. 499.

²⁵ Proudhon, *Guerre et paix*, Op. Cit. p. 369.

²⁶ England arms its shores, casts guns in its foundries, builds its navy, exercises its volunteers, expands its budget, raise its discount ... and, then resists with iron and fire anyone who dares to touch its traffic, its conquests, its monopolies. The suffering this winter in Great Britain was extreme, and yet the British nation never produced so much. The issue of subsistence is the cause of war .

²⁷ Proudhon, *Guerre et paix*, Op. Cit. p. 423.

mutualism) seeks to preserve justice, freedom and independence. It is based on three ideas: possession replaces property; and mutualism rules distribution via natural exchange and free credit. Unlike Fourier and Saint-Simon, Proudhon has a measure of egalitarian passion. He calls for establishment of workers companies responsible for the production of wealth, using machines as soldiers use their weapons to overcome pauperism. The strategy of the battlefield is replaced by strategy of “bellicose” competition, where victories produce rights. Peace is thus founded in economic law.²⁸

Proudhon wants to develop a positive, dynamic peace. His position is against the warrior *status quo* and militarism. The issue for him is not the abolition of war, but transforming the conditions of men’s struggle against pauperism. The disappearance of armed conflict depends on removal of its common cause, namely the governments of kings and dictators, who are continuously fighting with each other. States, being political creations rather than natural phenomena, tend towards conquest, limited only by the strength of their opponent. Nationalities tend to oppose any unitary world economy (the idea of economic globalisation, which exists today). The economic organisation that replaces the abolished governmental institutions must address the problem of universal revolution. What is at issue is nothing less than a metamorphosis of humanity as a whole.

By contrast, a federative system, based on mutual defence, right of secession, the establishment of joint operations freely decided, and guarantee of the independence of each individual (territory, sovereignty, constitution, freedom of citizens), can defend itself in case of attack, but does not have the force for, and is even incompatible with the task of conquest. National groups should be seen as links in chains of larger groups – confederations of states – which can ensure the international balance, entailed by the rights of individuals. From 1852 Proudhon develops a concept of a European Union, which would eliminate the risk of formation of great rival powers.²⁹ Like other French socialists, he imagines that the Confederation will be made by and for France, which is the guarantor of civilisation and the battle to defeat pauperism.³⁰ The Federated States of Europe are not about the creation of a super State, but of a confederation of sovereign and independent States, capable of grouping separated and disjointed countries. For Proudhon, mutualist federalism is a factor of justice and social peace.

²⁸ “The hypothesis of a universal and permanent peace is legitimate. The establishment of law in humanity is the abolition of war itself, the organisation of peace.” Proudhon, *Guerre et paix*, Op. Cit. p. 487.

²⁹ It should be noted that the inspirers of Europe have always developed the idea of peace gained by economic and political Union.

³⁰ The human-being remains sacred, and our duty, as a superior race towards the inferior one, is to make them equal to us, to try to improve, to strengthen, to educate them, to ennoble them. Who are the real enemies of the blacks? Those who ... wish to make them perish in the desolation of the proletariat. Who are, on the contrary, the real negrophiles? Those who, keeping them in servitude and (admittedly) exploiting them, normalise their livelihood, improve them gradually through labour, and multiply them by marriage. Proudhon (*Guerre et paix*, Op.Cit. p. 179).

The idea of conquest is incompatible with the federalist principle, which ensures the triumph of moral autonomies and makes imperialism irrelevant. Each “linguistic and racial” group remains the master of its own territory and it governs itself on the basis of mutuality. The groups protect each other against outside enemies and the dangers of domestic tyranny, and they seek each other’s council and help each other to develop their respective economic activities. The administration functions on a contractual basis, with a high degree of autonomy granted to municipalities. Society can defend itself if it is attacked, but it does not have the right to judge and punish. Consciousness cannot be judged except by itself, and refusal to admit this rule is to admit war, authoritarian regimes, barbarism and the abuse of power.³¹ Anarchy removes any exploitation and, therefore, any hint of war.

The challenge then is to develop a society without a State and without pauperism. “A universal end to exploitation by landlords and capitalists, to the hired labourer, and guaranteed provision of equal and genuine exchange, constituted value, affordability, an adapted principle of protection, the global open market for producers of all countries; consequently, removal of barriers, ancient rights of people replaced by commercial agreements; police, justice, and administration, entrusted everywhere to men of industry; economic organisation replacing government and the military in both colonial possessions and cities; finally the free and universal interpenetration of races subject only to the law of contract: such is the Revolution”.³² The purpose, to which the institution of government works, is economic anarchy. If Revolution has put an end to government, a policy of centralisation no longer has any justification; it resolves itself into industrial solidarity. Proudhon is opposed to the State, which creates monopolies, centralisation and privileges, and he supports the social contract and mutualism. Proudhon does not believe in violent revolution. He wants to develop within capitalist society an anti-society based on the principles of association and mutuality. “Humanity alone is great, it is infallible. And I believe that I can say on its behalf: humanity does not want any more warfare”.³³

³¹ Proudhon, P.J., *Idée générale de la Révolution*

³² *Idée générale de la Révolution au XIXème siècle*, Garnier (1951), Ed. Rivière 1946., recueilli par Lajugie, Op. Cit. p. 481

³³ Proudhon, *Guerre et paix*, p. 510.

VII. CONCLUSION

The economic analyses offered by French utopian economists were often very brief. For Marx, the same was true of philosophy. Table 1 shows a summary of their theses concerning war and peace. Some of them have been neglected. Louis Blanc offers one example. For him,³⁴ state intervention is a necessary part of economic life. It is an instrument for providing information and forecasting, capable of reducing economic crises that lead to poverty. Generous ideas about peace are not sufficient. War will persist until people become their own masters, until they can express their sovereignty. Belligerents, victor or vanquished, suffer from the negative effects of armed conflicts, which are, in today's vocabulary, a negative sum game, with no winner. Worse, the constant threat of war makes it difficult, if not impossible, to implement the economic benefits of peace. The system of armed peace is as dangerous and counterproductive as war itself.

As can be seen, utopian economists are fecund in high-minded ideas, and their ideas are not always based on rigorous economic thought, although a century later many of their ideas about Europe have become realities. The capitalist system has survived their analyses, and war has not disappeared ... At least their suspicions about the connections between capitalism and war have not been belied by events.

³⁴ Blanc, L. (1839), *L'organisation du travail*

Table 1 - The foundations of a real disarmament by utopian economists

Actions to advance disarmament	Justified action	Unjustified action
Fighting against capitalist overproduction	Sismondi	Proudhon (underproduction with respect to needs)
Fighting against private property	Louis Blanc Pecqueur Saint-Simon	Proudhon
Reducing the size of the State	Proudhon	Fichte Blanc Pecqueur Sismondi
Limiting free trade	Proudhon Pecqueur	Sismondi Saint-Simon Fourier Chevalier
Fighting against social inequality (Poverty)	Babeuf Proudhon Fourier (pauvreté)	Saint-Simon Fourier Pecqueur
Preventing economic war	Proudhon	Sismondi
Abandonment of class struggle	Saint-Simon Bazard Proudhon	Sismondi Fourier
Ending the conflict between labor and capital	Owen Pecqueur Sismondi	Sismondi Fourier

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