

David M. Hart, “Some Thoughts on an ‘Austrian Theory of Film’:
Ideas and Human Action in a Film about Frédéric Bastiat”
[Libertarian Scholars Conference, NYC, Sept. 28, 2019]

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[<http://davidmhart.com/liberty/>](http://davidmhart.com/liberty/)

Overview of the Paper (1)

<davidmhart.com/liberty/Papers/Bastiat/FilmingIdeas>

- ❖ I. The Problem of the Depiction of Individual and Economic Liberty in Films
- ❖ II. Some Thoughts on Presenting Ideas in Film
- ❖ III. Ideas and Human Action in Film: Towards an Austrian Theory of Film
- ❖ IV. Some More Thoughts on Presenting Ideas in Film: The “Broken Windows” Experiment
- ❖ V. Some Nerdy Stuff
- ❖ VI. Conclusion
- ❖ VII. Appendices: Mises on Ideas, Interests, and Action | Some Notes on the Screenplay

Overview of the Paper (2)

<davidmhart.com/liberty/Papers/Bastiat/FilmingIdeas>

- ❖ I. The Problem of the Depiction of Individual and Economic Liberty in Films
 - ❖ A Liberal Culture: the “Rhetoric” and “Iconography” of Liberty
 - ❖ The Problem of Filming a “Positive” vs. a “Negative” Depiction of Liberty
- ❖ **II. Some Thoughts on Presenting Ideas in Film**
 - ❖ Some Good Movies of Ideas
 - ❖ Some Examples of the Direct Expression of Ideas
- ❖ **III. Ideas and Human Action in Film: Towards an Austrian Theory of Film**
 - ❖ Mises on Ideas, Interests, and Human Action
 - ❖ Seeing the Connection between Ideas and Action
- ❖ **IV. Some More Thoughts on Presenting Ideas in Film: The “Broken Windows” Experiment**
 - ❖ How “Cinematic” was the life of Bastiat? and Paris and the Revolution of 1848?
 - ❖ The Direct Expression of Ideas | The Indirect Expression of Ideas
- ❖ V. Some Nerdy Stuff
- ❖ VI. Conclusion
- ❖ VII. Appendices: Mises on Ideas, Interests, and Action | Some Notes on the Screenplay

II. Some Thoughts on Presenting Ideas in Film: Some Good Movies of Ideas



Akira Kurosawa, *The Seven Samurai* (1954)

- ❖ Akira Kurosawa, *The Seven Samurai* (1954) - private defence organized by powerless peasants against roving bandits
- ❖ Stanley Kubrick, *Spartacus* (1960) - an organized uprising against slavery
- ❖ Warren Beatty, *Reds* (1981) - commie film about ideas and revolution; the journalist John Reed observes the Russian Revolution first hand
- ❖ Richard Attenborough, *Gandhi* (1982) - salt tax, civil disobedience, anti-empire
- ❖ Andrzej Wajda, *Danton* (1983) - opposing Robespierre's Terror
- ❖ Claude Berri, *Jean de Florette* (1986) and its sequel *Manon des Sources* (1986) - on property rights and revenge for their violation
- ❖ [see the paper for more]

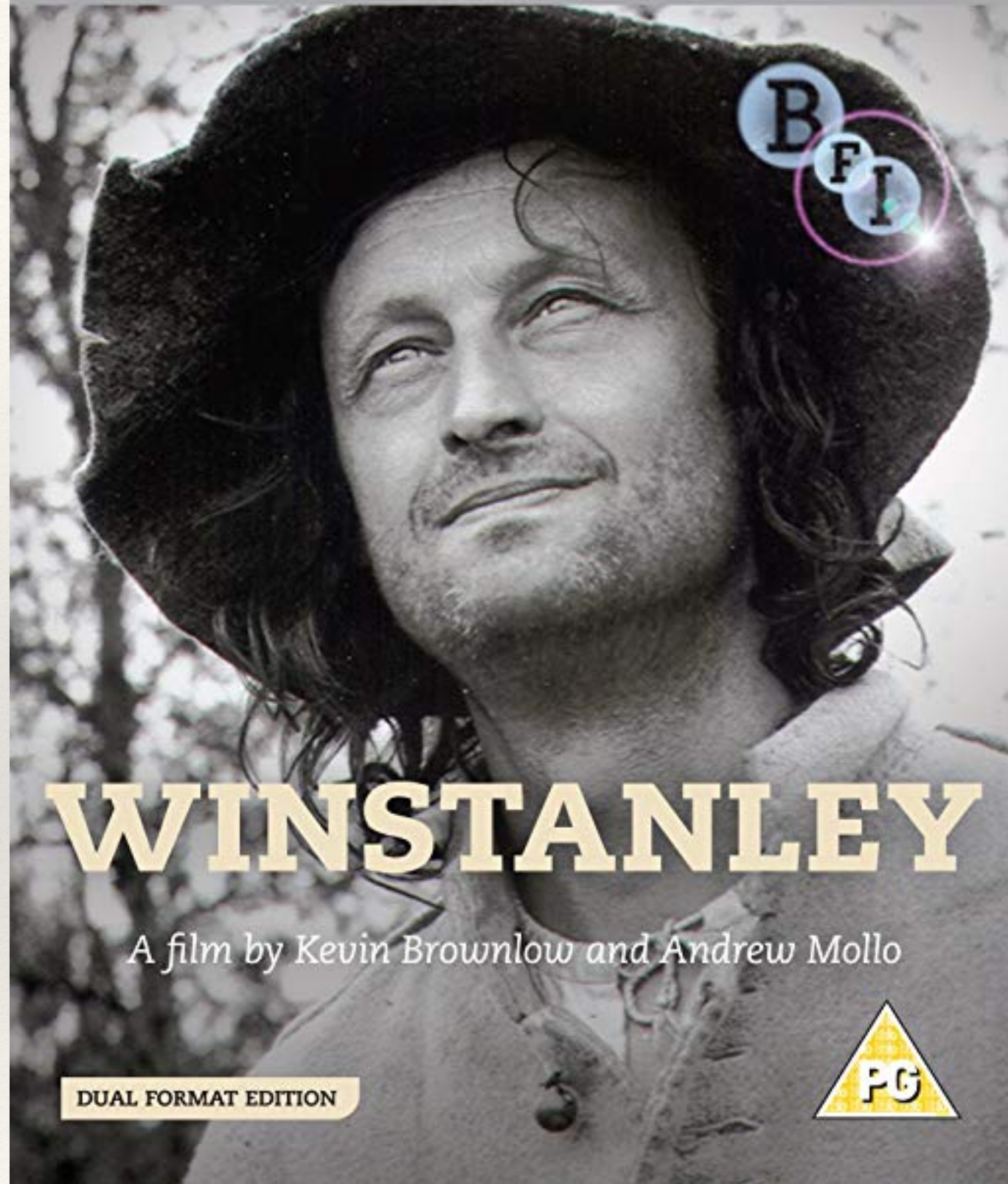
If the Left can do it, why can't we?





DUAL FORMAT EDITION

Contains both DVD and Blu-ray versions



Kevin Brownlow & Andrew Mollo,
Winstanley (1976)



Warren Beatty, *Reds* (1981)



Raoul Peck, *Der junge Karl Marx* (2017)

III. Ideas and Human Action in Film: Towards an Austrian Theory of Film: Mises on Ideas, Interests, and Human Action

What ideas does the viewer infer motivated the actor when they see action on the screen?
How can the filmmaker assist in this inference?

“In the world of reality, life, and human action there is no such thing as interests independent of ideas, preceding them temporally and logically. What a man considers his interest is the result of his ideas. (TH, p. 93)”

“Action is preceded by thinking. Thinking is to deliberate beforehand over future action and to reflect afterwards upon past action. Thinking and acting are inseparable. Every action is always based on a definite idea about causal relations. (HA1, p. 177)”

“*Verstehen* [understanding] ... is the method which all historians and all other people always apply in commenting upon human events of the past and in forecasting future events. (HA1, p. 50)”

IV. Some More Thoughts on Presenting Ideas in Film: The “Broken Windows” Experiment



Breaking and Fixing “Broken Windows”

See the “illustrated essay” on the life and times of FB
<[http://davidmhart.com/liberty/FrenchClassicalLiberals/Bastiat/
Screenplay/BrokenWindows.html](http://davidmhart.com/liberty/FrenchClassicalLiberals/Bastiat/Screenplay/BrokenWindows.html)>

How “Cinematic” was the life of Frédéric Bastiat?



Frédéric Bastiat (1801-1850)

- ❖ a gentleman farmer in a beautiful part of France (Basque country and the wine producing area around Bordeaux)
 - ❖ a very cultured man with a “Rabelaisian wit”
 - ❖ a “radical” in every sense of the word
- ❖ active in events which were turning France upside down in the late 1840s:
 - ❖ protests about price of food (free trade movement)
 - ❖ protests about lack of free speech and democracy (political banquets)
 - ❖ the rise of socialism
 - ❖ the Revolution of February 1848 (political clubs, Chamber of Deputies)
 - ❖ the Peace movement
- ❖ the race against time to finish his treatise before he dies of throat cancer



Bastiat's home in Mugron

Basses-Pyrénées.



CITADELLE DE BAYONNE.

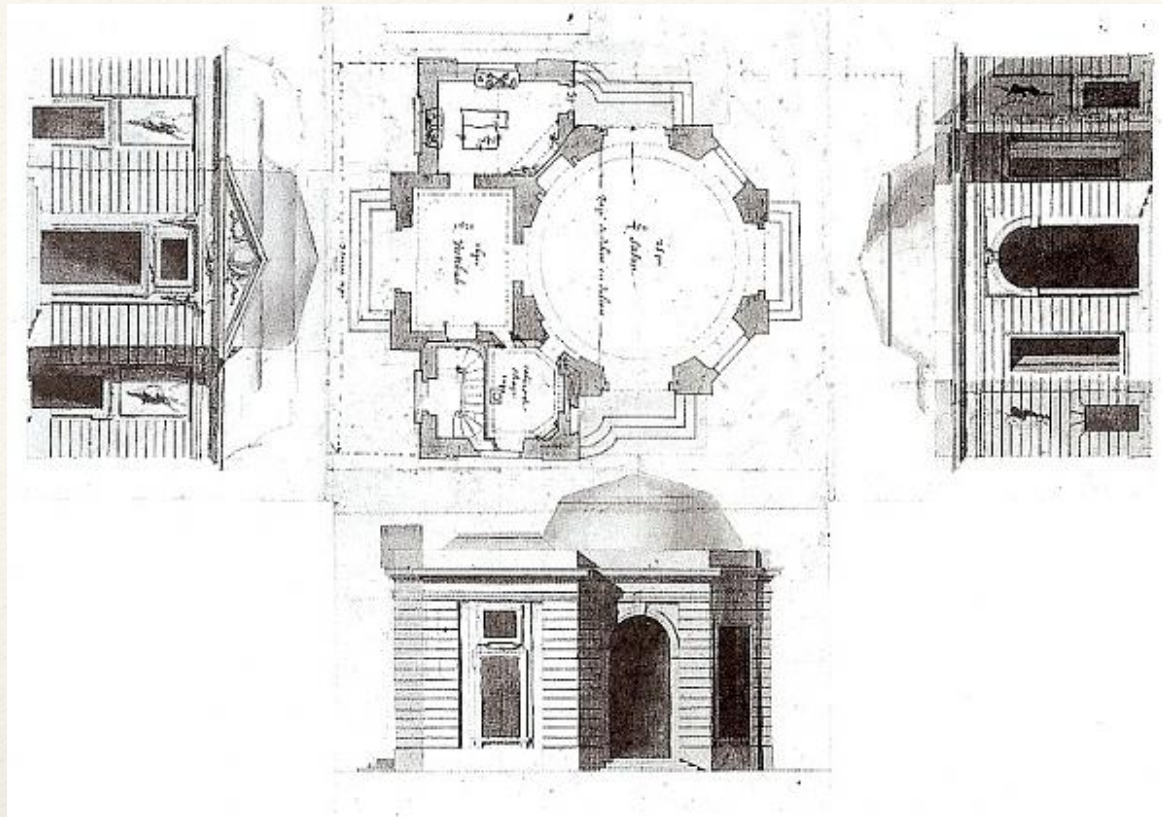
(prise des Allées marines.)

Se vend chez Lafon Libraire à Luchon.

The Citadelle of the city of Bayonne



A Farmer inspecting his tenants in Les Landes



The Butard
Hunting Lodge
outside Paris
where FB wrote
*Economic
Harmonies* (1850)

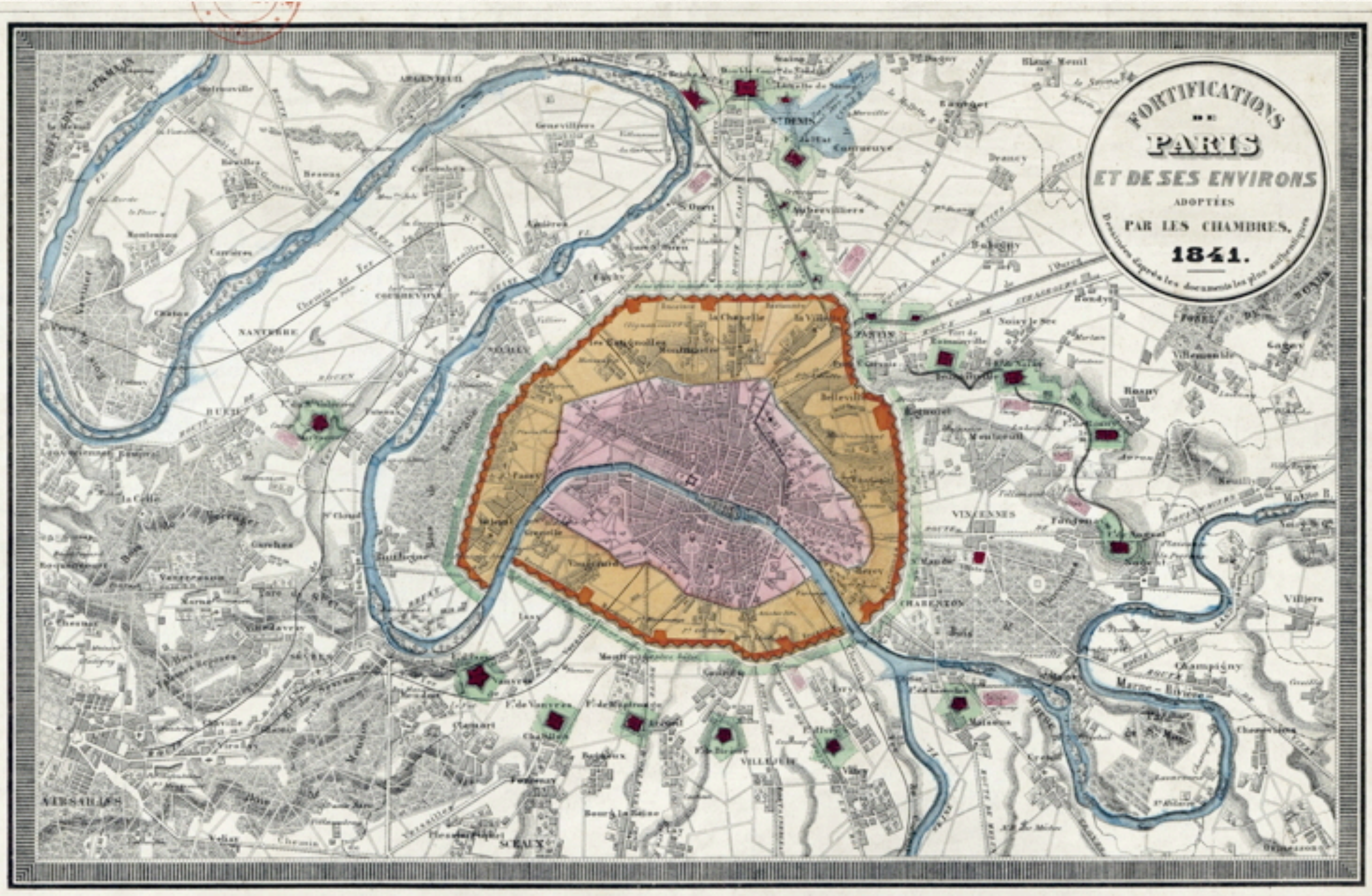


How “Cinematic” was Paris and the Revolution of 1848?

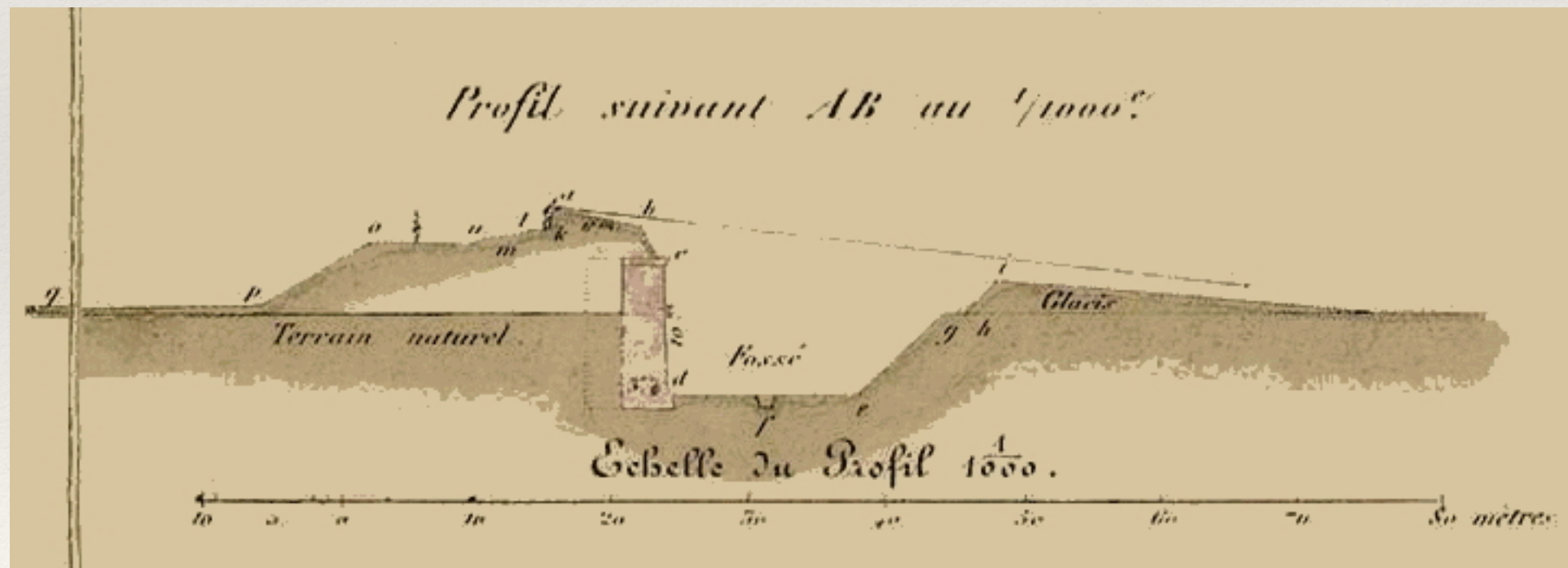


- ❖ Recreating the look of Paris in 1848: a city surrounded by barriers and walls
- ❖ mass protests and violence in the 1848 Revolution: the barricades built by the people
- ❖ the socialists take to the streets

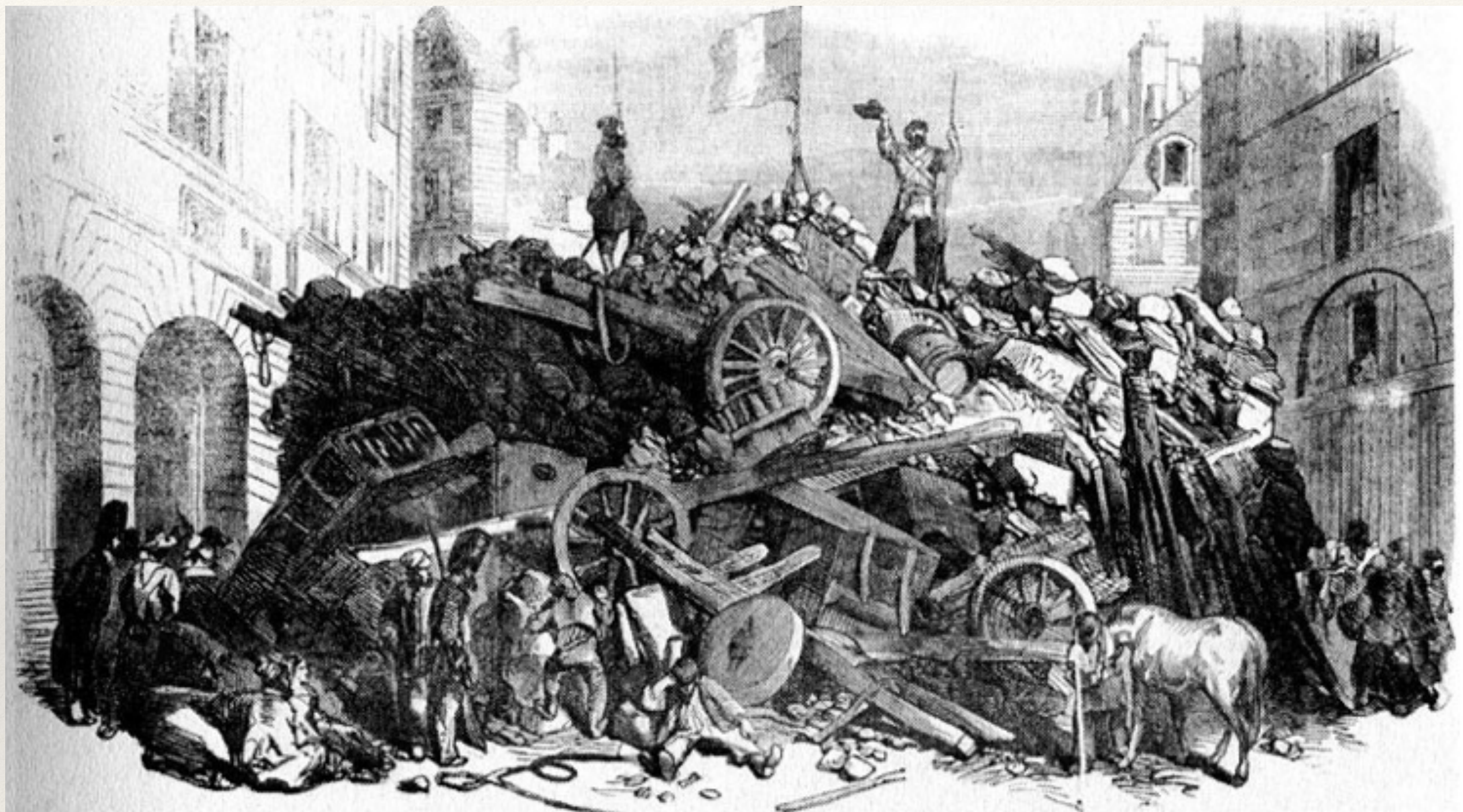
**Barricades on the Rue St. Maur
(June 1848)**



The Fortifications of Paris (1841-44)



The fortification wall; the Mont Valerien star fort;
cross-section of the wall



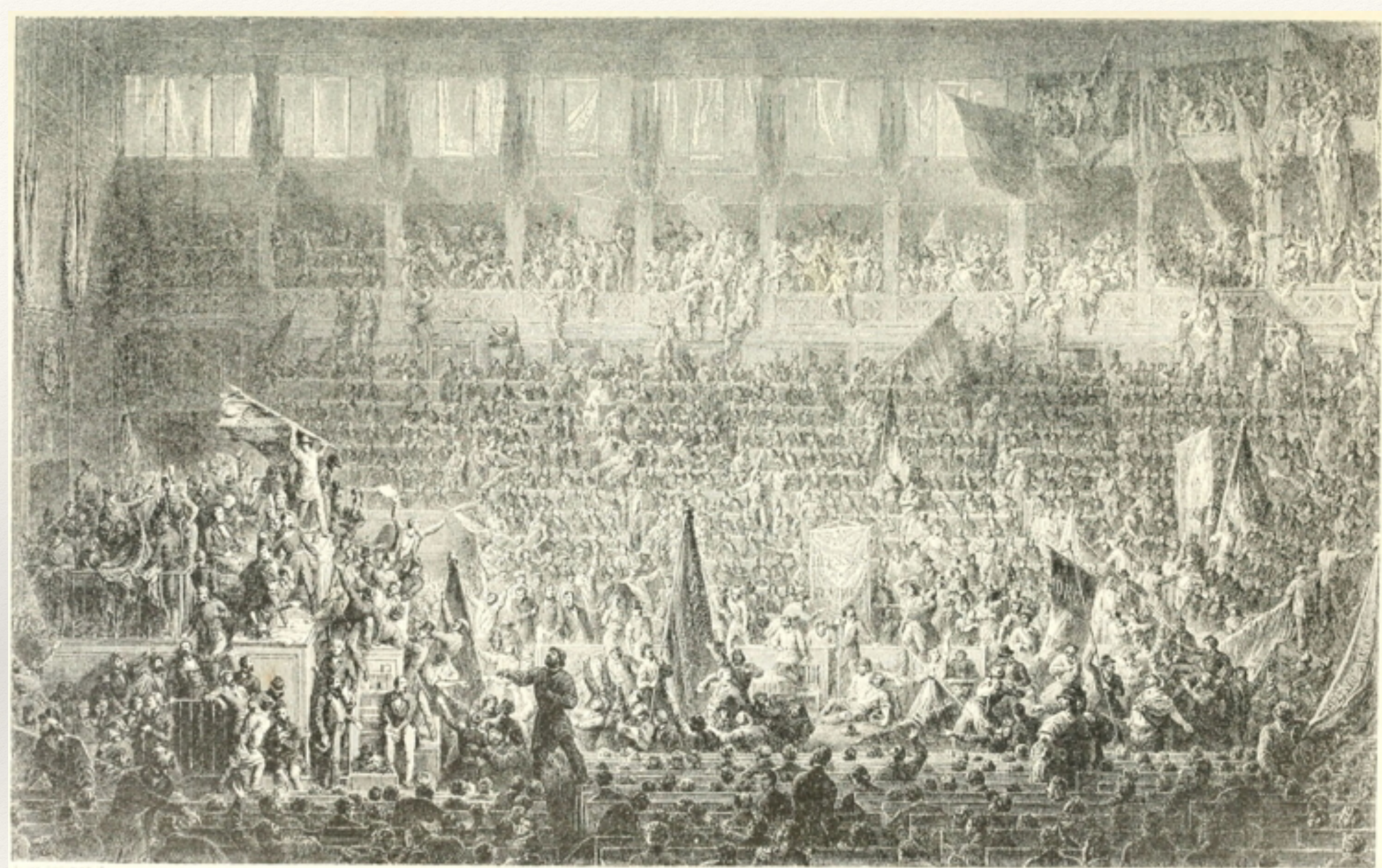
A Barricade on rue Saint Martin (Feb. 1848)



Map showing the street barricades of June 1848



The invasion of the Assembly by Blanc supporters (15 May 1848)



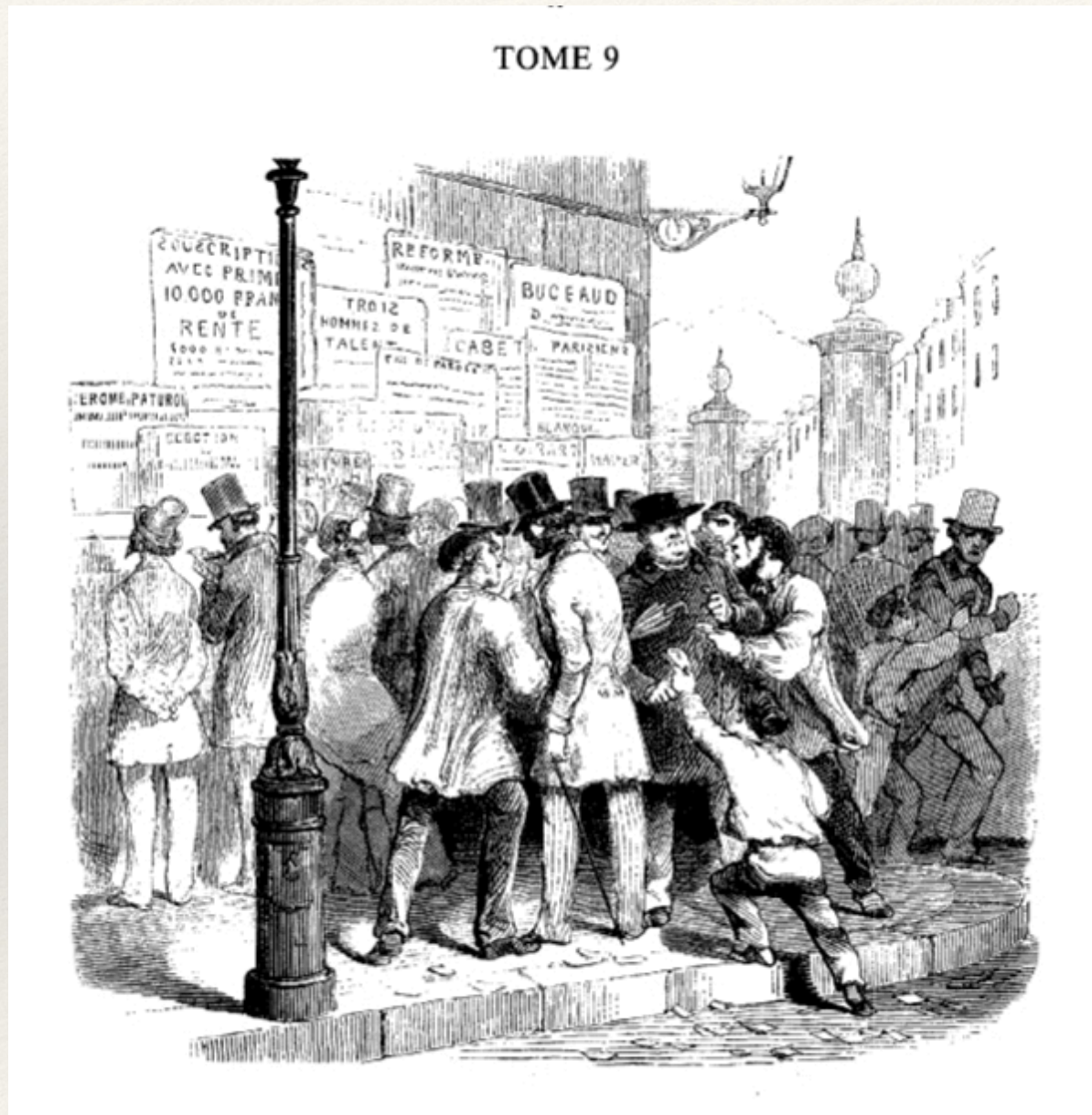
Envahissement de l'Assemblée (15 mai 1848). — Composition de Bonhomme, gravée par Beyer et J. Villmann.

The Storming the Chamber of Deputies (May 1848)



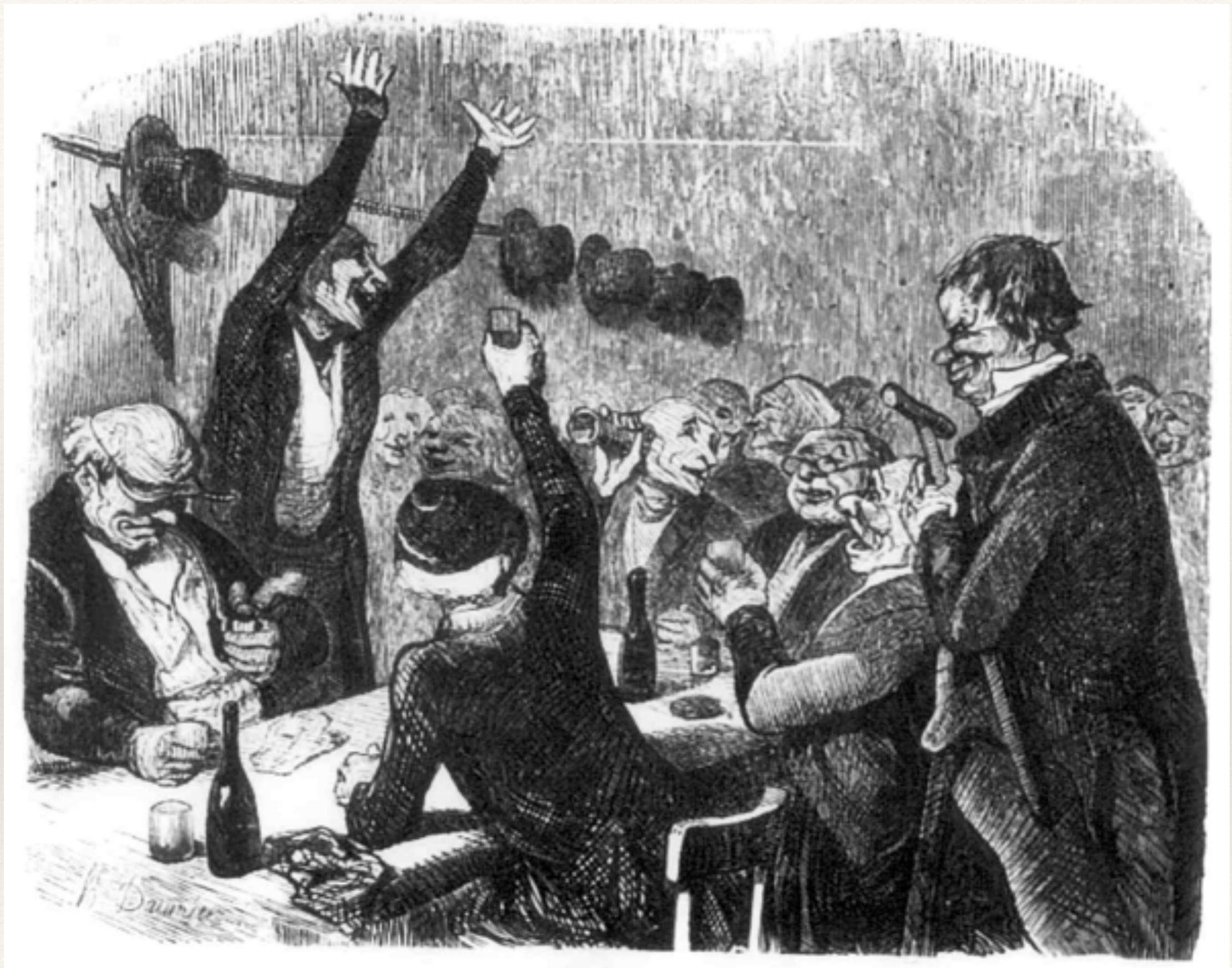
Louis Blanc carried aloft by his supporters (15 May 1848)

The Direct Expression of Ideas

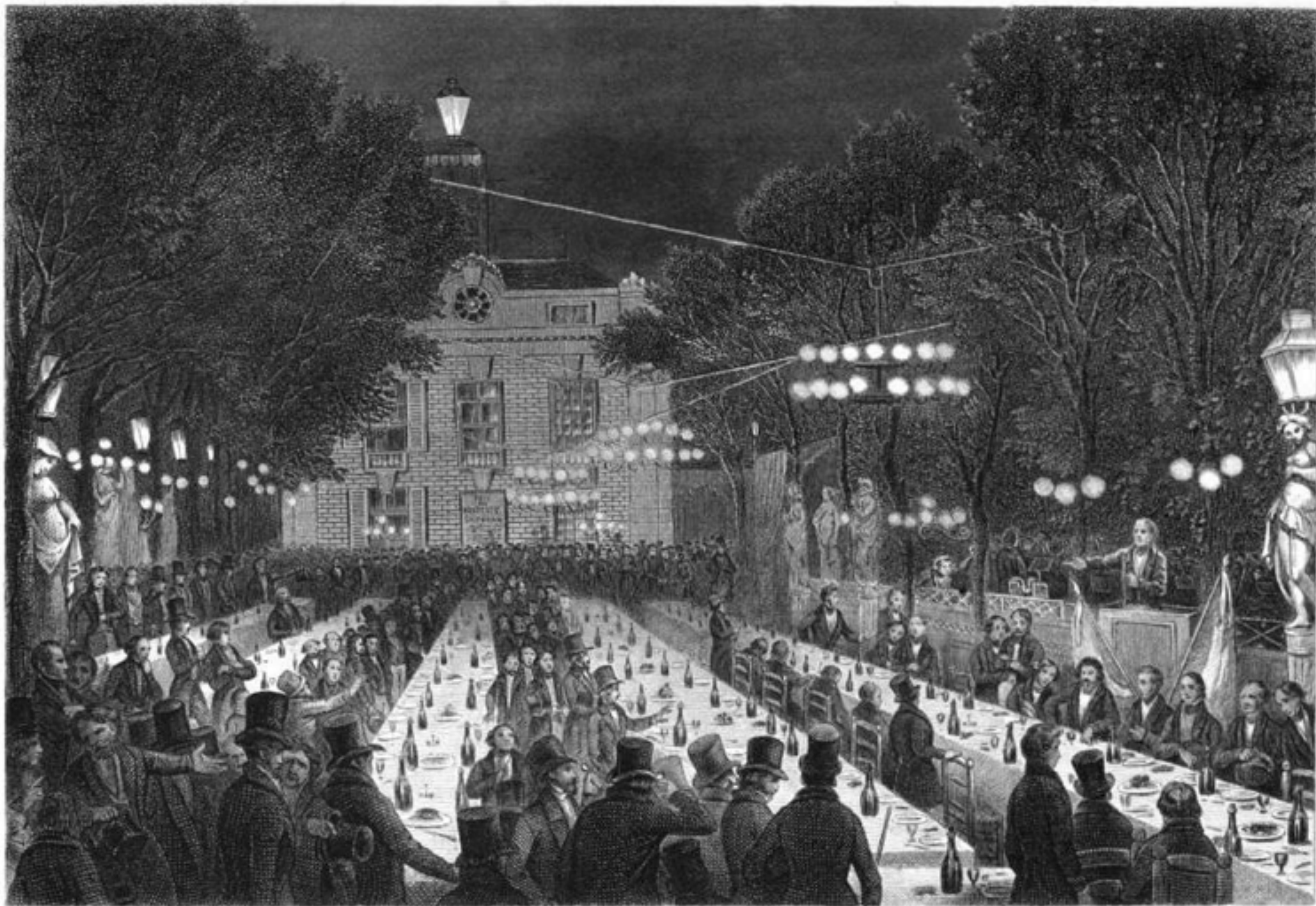


**Citizens reading wall posters
for news**

- ❖ Goguettes
- ❖ Political Banquets
- ❖ Political Clubs
- ❖ Set Speeches
- ❖ Private Conversations
- ❖ The Soirées



A drawing of a Goguette by Daumier



A Political Banquet in July 1847



(Un club en 1848.)

**CLUB DE LA
LIBERTÉ DU TRAVAIL,**

Boulevard et Bazar Bonne-Nouvelle,
Salle du fond ou deuxième.

LES MARDIS ET VENDREDIS

A 7 h. 1/2 du soir.

Entrée publique, par séance 20 cent.

*Les souscriptions pour le soutien du club
sont reçues aux séances ou chez POTONIE (Léon)
trésorier, 5, rue Neuve-Saint-François (au
Marais), Paris.*

Toute souscription de
2 fr. donne le droit d'entrée pour un mois,
4 fr. pour deux mois,
et ainsi de suite.
24 fr. et plus pour un an.

Modes. — Costumes de soirée.

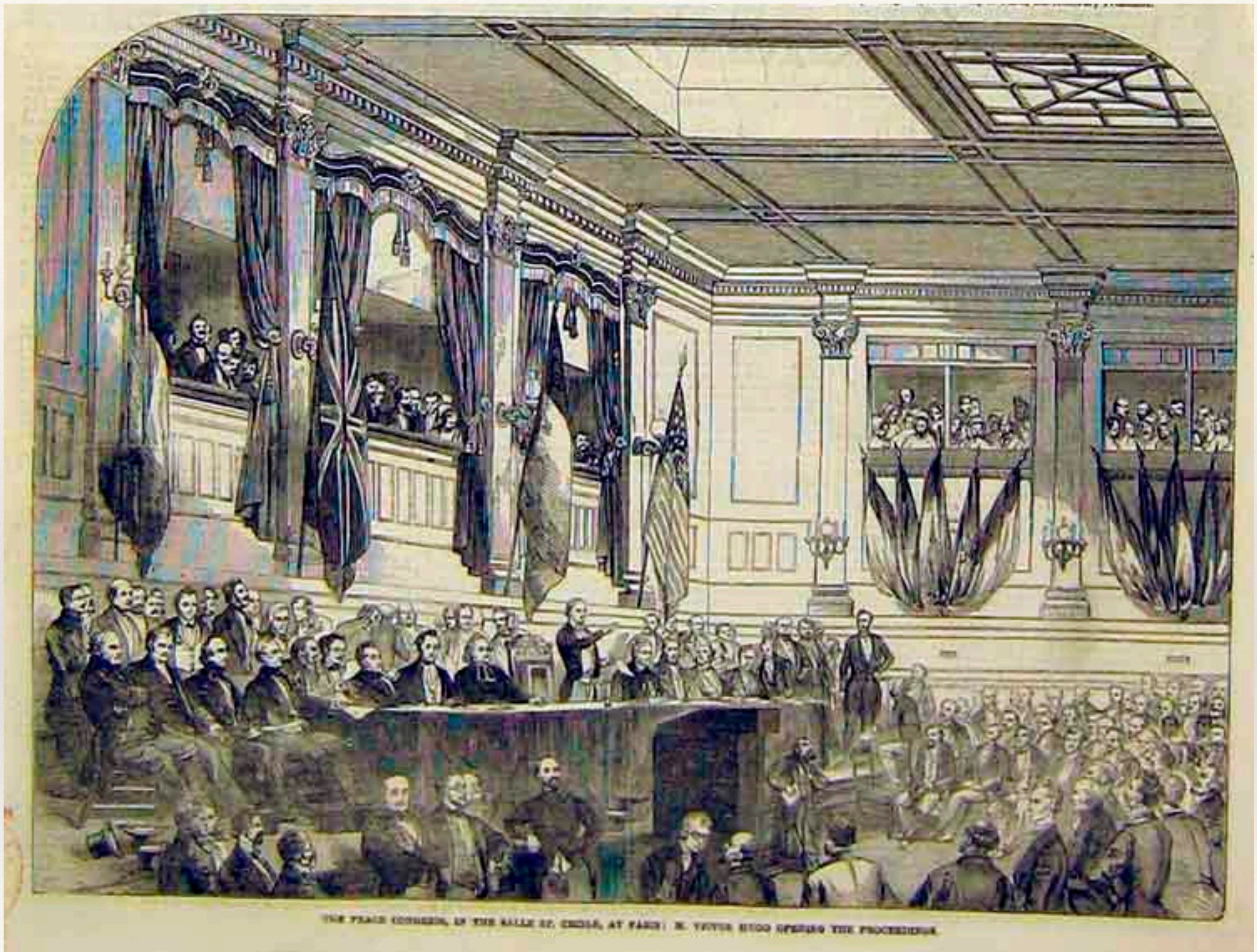
Nous avons enfin retrouvé le Paris dansant : bals parés, bals de bienfaisance, bals d'artistes costumés et masqués font depuis un mois de la capitale de la France une vaste salle de danse. Pour accompagner cette joie cadencée et

sautillante, la mode a dû se faire splendide, et les plus somptueuses étoffes se sont enrichies de garnitures soit d'or et de diamants, soit de fleurs exotiques et rares presque aussi coûteuses que les pierreries. Cependant, malgré la brillante

réunion de délicieuses toilettes qu'ont présentées les bals de l'Élysée, de l'Hôtel-de-Ville et de la Présidence de l'Assemblée nationale, on parle déjà de fantaisies bien autrement magnifiques et surprenantes que verraient éclore les fêtes



Fashionable Soirée attire in 1850



THE PEACE CONGRESS, IN THE SALLE ST. CHARLES, AT PARIS: H. VIVIER DEL. OPENING THE PROCEEDINGS.

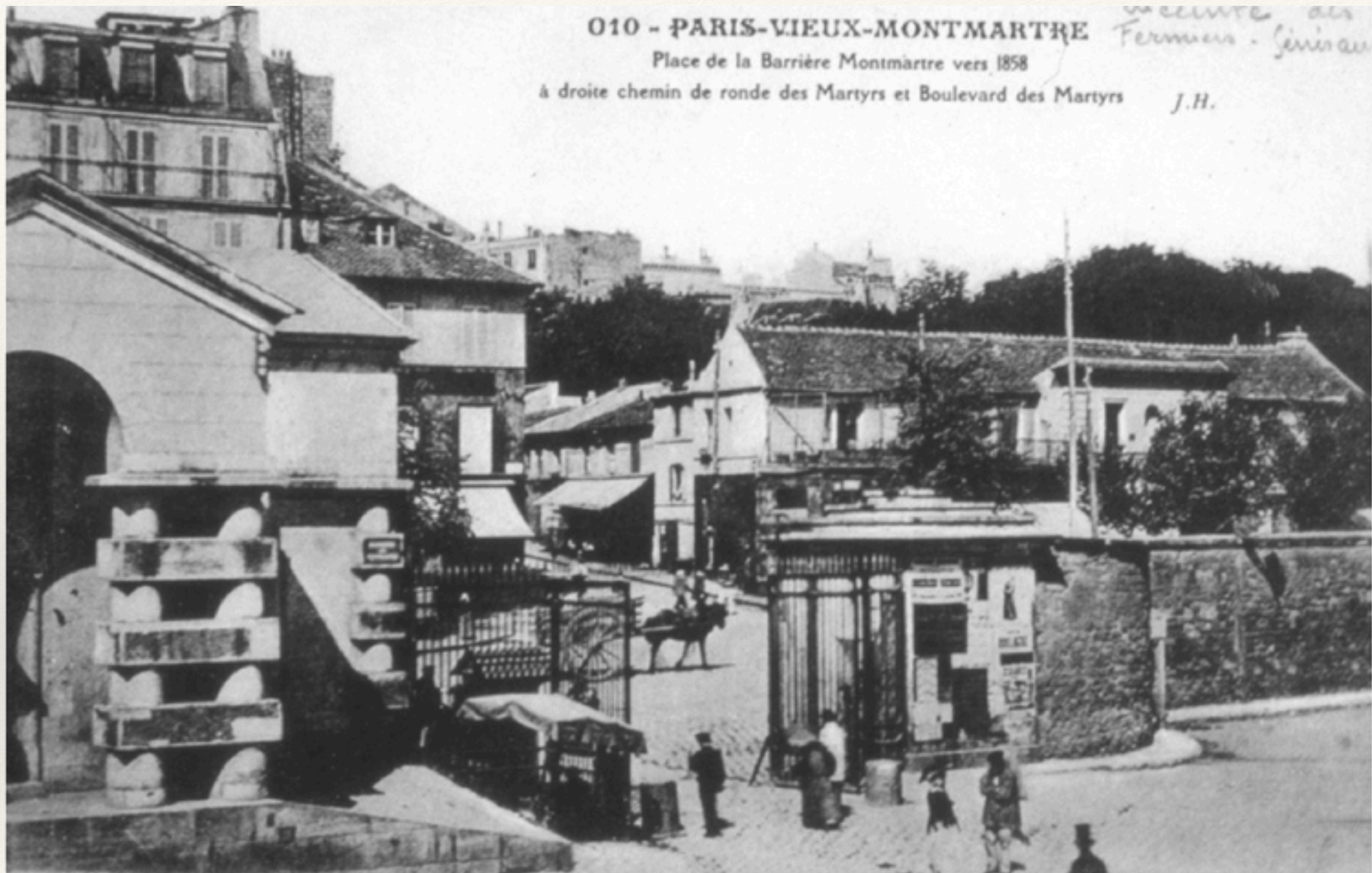
The Friends of Peace Congress, Paris, August 1849

The Indirect Expression of Ideas

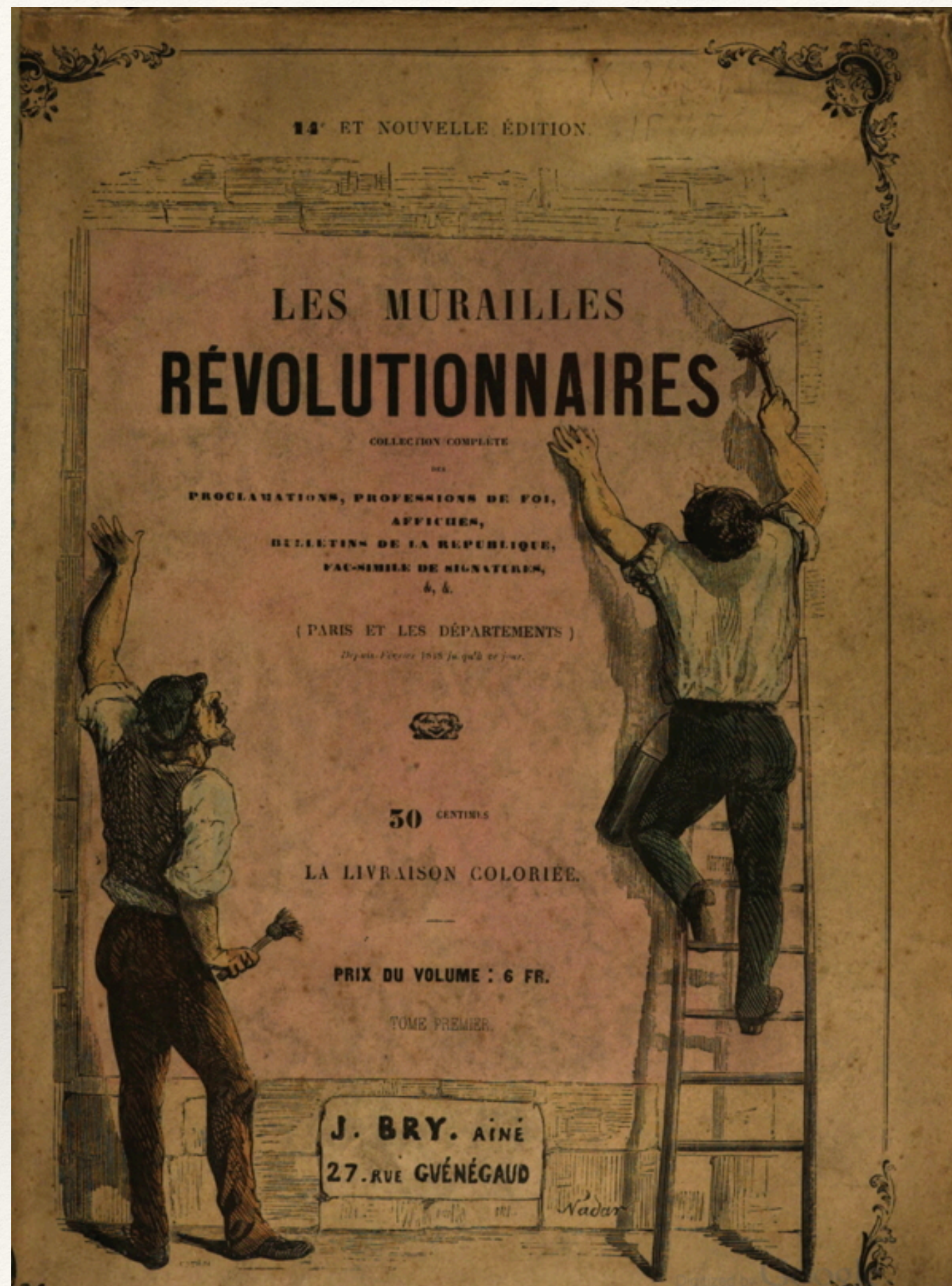


**A photograph of the Military Wall
at the Versailles Entry Gate**

- ❖ Static images of State Power
- ❖ Showing the everyday violence of the State
- ❖ Showing the Violence used by the State during the Revolution 1848–49
- ❖ Showing the everyday good things done by the Market
- ❖ Showing works of Art, Literature, and Music
- ❖ Other Opportunities for “visual nudging” and intellectual “product placement”



Octroi Gate, Montmartre (1858)



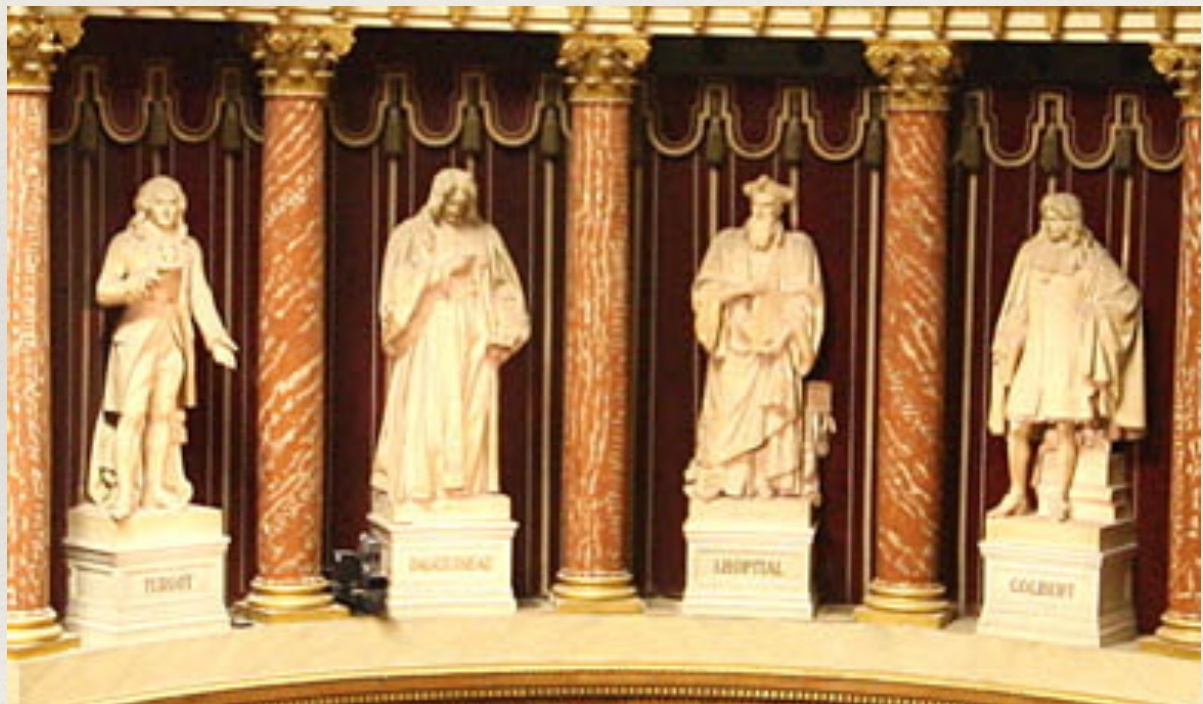
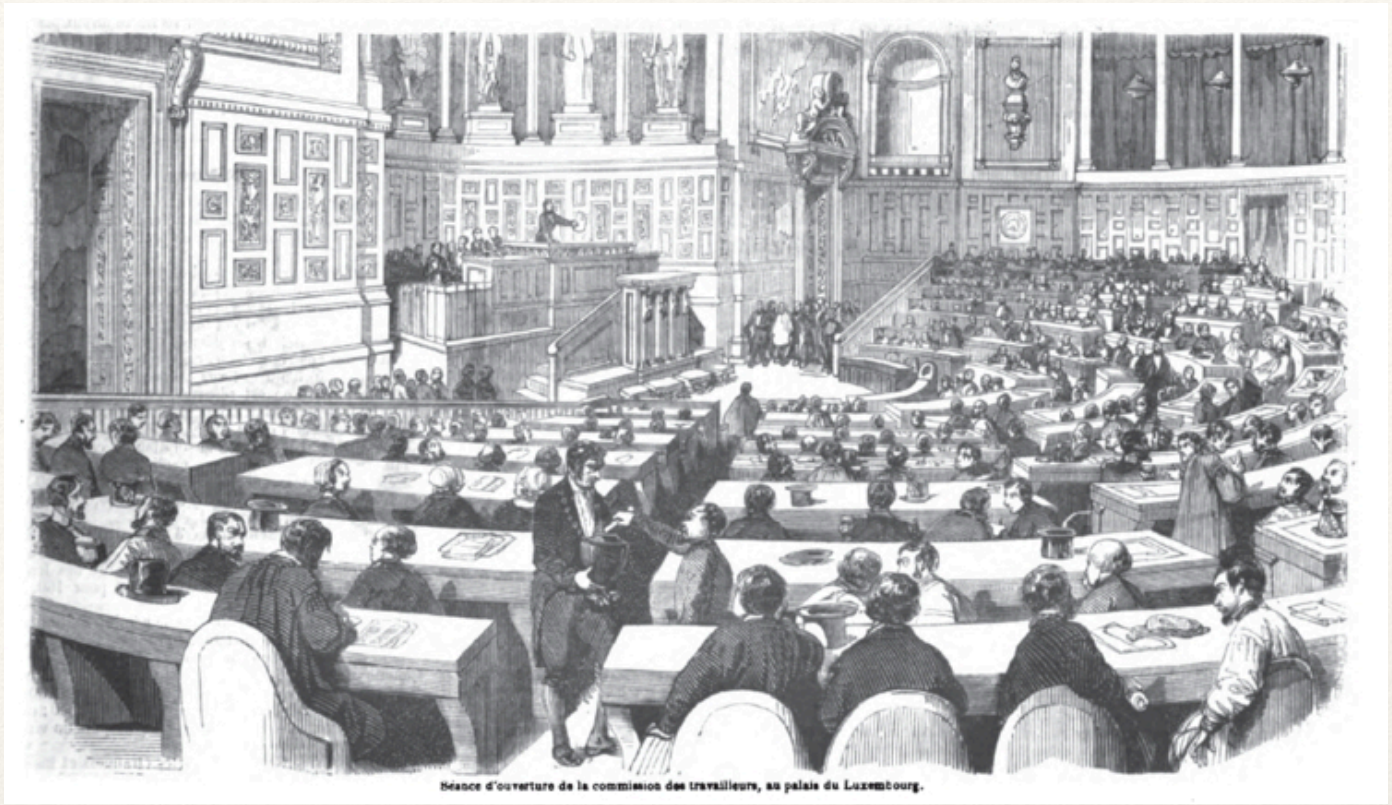
The Political "Poster Wars" on the streets of Paris



Eugène Delacroix, "Liberty leading the People on the Barricades" (1830)



Delacroix's ceiling mural of Orpheus (Peace) vs. Attila (War) in the Library of the Palais Bourbon (Leg. Ass) (1847)



The Semi-Circle of Famous French Politicians in the Luxembourg Palace; Turgot the Free Trader and Colbert the Mercantilist

A meeting of members of National Workshops in the Luxembourg Palace (1848); the socialist Louis Blanc (1811-1882)

MERRIE MELODIES
REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.

"That's all folks!"

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