

and found it in the excessive inequality of fortunes, in a revolting multitude of useless jobs, in a barbaric tax distribution system. . . .

“The population was always regarded as the cause, the sign of prosperity of empires, but the number of citizens is proportional to the sum of their useful labor altogether.”¹³

13. Sébastien de Vauban (1633-1707), Marshal of France, Commissar General of Fortifications, member of the Academy of Sciences. Best known as a military architect, he was also a great economist, and wrote an economic work, *Projet d'un Dîme Royale*, where he developed Leibnizian ideas that earned him royal disgrace.

Lazare Carnot's France

1753: Lazare Carnot is born in Burgundy (May 13).

1773: Carnot studies under Gaspard Monge at the military academy in Mézières, where he meets Benjamin Franklin.

1783: Carnot becomes a captain in the army.

1789: French Revolution begins. Storming of the Bastille in Paris (July 14). Abolition of feudalism. Declaration of Rights of Man and the Citizen. Church property nationalized.

1791: Flight and capture of King Louis XVI. Proclamation of new constitution. Carnot is elected to the new Legislative Assembly (Oct. 1), in charge of education. He writes his first proposals on reform of the army.

1792: France declares war on coalition of Austria and Prussia. First use of guillotine (April). Storming of the Tuileries (Aug. 10); overthrow of the monarchy. Chaotic situation in the army, with losses on all fronts, massacres in Paris. Carnot slowly begins to impose his policies. Carnot elected to National Convention (September); goes to the Pyrenees to organize defense against a possible attack from Spain. Carnot writes a report saying that without educated soldiers and a general economic reorganization, there can be no victory.

1793: Louis XVI is executed (Jan. 16); his wife, Marie Antoinette, is beheaded later. France declares war on Britain, the Netherlands, and Spain. Carnot writes a proposal for a new constitution, “Declaration of the Duties of the Citizens,” stressing education and military service for all citizens from 20 to 25 years. Northern front is collapsing. Carnot is sent there, writes a famous report stressing the need to hit the enemy on the flanks. He turns the military situation around, winning some battles. It is here that he

Carnot goes on to describe how activity can be promoted by correctly orienting the redistribution of wealth. Then he warns:

“When the hard-earned bread which the poor farmer produced, and which he was going to share with his children, is pitilessly stolen from him, what can be expected of that monstrous system, except depopulation of the countryside, sowing jealousy and hatred among the citizenry, the spread of apathy, the crushing of trust and happiness in the hearts of men, and making them all indifferent to the success of the state and the destiny of the fatherland, by breaking all the ties which united men to it? . . .

realizes the importance of logistics, mobility, and intelligence. Girondists are driven from power by Jacobins (July). France is ruled by Maximilien Robespierre and the Committee of Public Safety. Reign of Terror results in guillotining of 1,251 people by July 1794. Revolutionary calendar introduced. British Navy intervenes in the Mediterranean. France responds with total mobilization (*levée en masse*). Carnot reforms the army and brings its strength to 1 million men (4% of the population). Carnot named member of the Committee of Public Safety (August). He reorganizes and takes all military operations under his control, installing, against the will of Robespierre, a military staff composed of officers from the pre-revolutionary school. His general strategy is defensive for all the French border regions, except in the north, where there will be an *offensive* against England. Military situation begins to change, starting in September: French victories in Hond-schoote (north), Lyons (southeast), Toulon (south), Dunkirk (north). Carnot participates personally in battle of Wattignies, where he develops the idea that it is not enough to make the enemy retreat; he has to be destroyed.

1793-94: Carnot's reforms: 1) formation of a new, mass-based army; 2) organization of military forces to fight “total war”; 3) new political strategy: Obtain the neutrality of Prussia. Disrupt communications between Austria and England. Concentrate efforts on attacking the English, leading to an invasion of England. All this, in the midst of chaos in Paris and opposition from the leftist sans-culottes.

1794: Christianity is officially abolished in France, in favor of Robespierre's “Cult of Reason” (May). France occupies the Netherlands (until 1795). French victory at the battle of Fleurus (June), in the north, followed by retaking of all the northern ports, crucial to getting U.S. help for the French. The geopolitical contrast between the anti-Prussian Robespierre, and the anti-English Carnot, now chief of military operations, leads to the coup of 9-10

“Vauban believed that any right which is damaging to society, is unjust, that those who have labored equally for it, have the same rights to its benefits. . . . The government must prevent that odious multiplicity of prerogatives which condemn the most valuable class of men to indigence and scorn.”¹⁴

Today, that concept is forgotten, thrown away as “Marxist.” How stupid! The Marxist apostles of those times, Gracchus Babeuf, the socialist Jacques-René Hébert, were guil-

14. This quote and those following all come from *Eloge de M. le Maréchal de Vauban*, part 2, p. 26 and following.

lined, with Carnot assenting. Fabian socialists despise the labor force.

Carnot also details Vauban’s economic reform proposals, adding his own view of what it means to be a wise man:

“How rare it is that the wise man is able to obtain the fruits of his labor! He is ahead of his century, and his language can only be heard by posterity, but that is enough to sustain him. . . . He is a friend of those yet to be born; he converses with them in his profound reflections. As a citizen, he watches over the fatherland, he takes part in its triumphs; as a philosopher, he has already overcome the barriers which separate empires; he is the citizen of every land, contemporary of all ages; he

Thermidor, led by Paul Barras, which ends the Reign of Terror and leads to the arrest of Robespierre. Danton and Robespierre are executed (July). The authority and military influence of Carnot are used to remove Robespierre, although Carnot will never accept the reactionary policies of the Thermidorians. In the meantime, the French armies continue to regain territory after territory. Creation of the Ecole Polytechnique (September).

1795: Dutch fleet captured by France. Prussia, Spain make peace with France. Carnot leaves the Committee of Public Safety, in opposition to the right-wing policies of Barras. He returns to power on April 11, becoming a member of the Directorate, which rules France with a five-man executive committee.

1796: Napoleon Bonaparte leads French army in conquest of most of Italy by 1797. Carnot elected president of the Directorate (April 30).

1797: Coup d’état of 18 Fructidor by General Pierre Augereau (Sept. 4). Carnot is removed from the Directorate, escapes first to Switzerland, then to Germany. The Directorate, now a triumvirate under Barras, becomes dependent on Napoleon.

1798: French occupy Rome, invade Switzerland. Bonaparte leads expedition into Egypt (until 1799), takes Cairo. British fleet defeats French in the Battle of the Nile.

1799: Bonaparte invades Syria. Coalition formed of Britain, Austria, Russia, Portugal, Naples, and Ottoman Empire against France. French driven out of Italy. Coup d’état of 18 Brumaire: Bonaparte returns to France, overthrows the Directorate, and sets up a Consulate, which rules until 1804. Carnot returns, is named minister of war; but resigns in opposition, 1800.

1801: Treaty between France and Austria leads to breakup of Holy Roman Empire. France gains left bank of the Rhine, and keeps most of Italy.

1802: Treaty of Amiens between Britain and France. Bonaparte is created First Consul for life, over opposition

of Carnot, who was against the establishment of the empire.

1803: War breaks out between Britain and France.

1804: Bonaparte crowns himself emperor. First Empire lasts until 1814. Third Coalition is formed by Britain, Russia, Austria, and Sweden against France.

1805: France defeats Austria at Battle of Ulm. British Navy defeats Franco-Spanish fleet at Battle of Trafalgar. France defeats Austria and Russia at Battle of Austerlitz.

1806: Napoleon dissolves Holy Roman Empire. Prussia defeated by France at Jena and Auerstädt.

1807: Carnot withdraws from public life.

1808: French occupy Spain; Joseph Bonaparte becomes king of Spain.

1810: France annexes Holland.

1811: French driven out of Portugal.

1812: Napoleon invades Russia; occupies Moscow. Greatest extent of Napoleon’s empire, encompassing 50 million of the 175 million inhabitants of Europe. Napoleon forced to retreat from Russia. Only 100,000 survive, from his army of 600,000.

1813: Prussia begins War of Liberation from France. Coalition against France formed by Russia, Prussia, Britain, Austria, and Sweden. French defeated at Battle of Leipzig, Battle of Vittoria. Allied forces invade France.

1814: Coalition forces enter Paris in March. Carnot is appointed governor of Antwerp by Napoleon. Napoleon abdicates and is exiled to Elba. Louis XVIII becomes King of France. Treaty of Paris ends Napoleonic Wars. Congress of Vienna (to 1815).

1815: The Hundred Days: Napoleon returns to Paris. Carnot serves as minister of the interior. Battle of Waterloo: Napoleon defeated and exiled to St. Helena. Carnot is exiled from France (July), settles first in Warsaw and later in Magdeburg, Germany. France’s boundaries are restored to those of 1790.

1823: Carnot dies in Magdeburg.