

rupt group, deaf and indifferent to the cries for extendin
erty, broadening the franchise, and relieving the misery c
working class.

Shortly after this warning, in February 1848, a Paris re
tion overthrew the French monarchy and established a
erately conservative republic. Continued discontent amon
workers and some provocation from the new governme
sulted in a bloody battle in June in which the workers we
tally defeated. This event, known as "The June Days,"
legacy of distrust and hatred between workers and the m
class in France.
Tocqueville was a member of the Chamber of Dep
(the lower house of the French legislature) when the revol
broke out in February 1848.

I come at last to the insurrection of June, the most exte
and the most singular that has occurred in our history and perha
any other: the most extensive, because during four days more th
hundred thousand men were engaged in it; the most singular, be
the insurgents fought without a war cry, without leaders, without
and yet with a marvelous harmony and an amount of military e
ence that astonished the oldest officers.
What distinguished it also, among all the events of this kind w
have succeeded one another in France for sixty years, is that it dic
aim at changing the form of government, but at altering the ord
society. It was not, strictly speaking, a political struggle in the
which until then we had given to the word, but a combat of class ag
class. . . . We behold in it nothing more than a blind and rude
powerful effort on the part of the workmen to escape from the ne
ties of their condition. . . . It was this mixture of greed and false t
which first gave birth to the insurrection and then made it so for
ble. These poor people had been told that the wealth of the rich w
some way the produce of a theft practiced upon themselves. . . .

It must also be observed that this formidable insurrection was
the enterprise of a certain number of conspirators, but the revolt of
whole section of the population against another. Women took pa

Source: Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Recollections of Alexis de Tocqu*
translated by Alexander T. de Mattos, London: H. Henry & Co., Ltd.,
pp. 187-88, 199-200, 212, 230-31.

overthrow of bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the
proletariat. . . .

The distinguishing feature of Communism is not the abolition of
property generally, but the abolition of bourgeois property. Modern
bourgeois private property is the final and most complete expression of
the system of producing and appropriating products that is based on
class antagonisms, on the exploitation of the many by the few.

In this sense, the theory of the Communists may be summed up in
the single phrase: abolition of private property. . . .
Communism deprives no man of the power to appropriate the
products of society; all that it does is to deprive him of the power to
subjugate the labor of others by means of such appropriation. . . .
We have seen . . . that the first step in the revolution by the work-
ing class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class. . . .

The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest by degrees
all capital from the bourgeoisie; to centralize all instruments of pro-
duction in the hands of the state, i.e., of the proletariat organized as the
ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as
possible. . . .

The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They
openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible over-
throw of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at
a Communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but
their chains. They have a world to win.
Workmen of all countries, unite!

The Paris Workers in Revolt—June 1848

What are the fundamental causes of revolution? asked the
French aristocrat Alexis de Tocqueville. Governments are over-
thrown, he decided, when corruption, indifference, and selfish-
ness render the rulers "incapable and unworthy of governing."
Such was the state of the government of King Louis Philippe,
he warned; the nation was in the hands of a small, wealthy, cor-