

## “Rothschildian Greed: This New Variety of Despotism”

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On 23 July 1846, the *Charivari* recounted an incident, “unbelievable, and consequently, true”<sup>1</sup> of the topic given as the subject in the Latin *prix d’honneur* for the general junior high school competition:

“Charlemagne, wishing to build a canal that would link the Rhine and the Danube via the Raab and the Main, assembles his valiant knights.

“He tells them: that *peace* is a glorious thing, stability an excellent guarantee, and that *conservatives* are good people...

“That the best way to guarantee peace is to *create routes of communication*;

“That, for this reason, he has built roads, and wishes to build a canal...

“That, if he does not finish it, *one day it will be finished*.

“That he believes that one day, with the advances in *knowledge and industry*, *more rapid means* will be invented, and that, through the *union of fire and water* ... some way to cleave open space and join *people and continents in a universal alliance* will be discovered.”<sup>2</sup>

Was it by chance, the *Charivari* wondered, that the subject had been given by Baron de Rothschild? Was it not, the paper went on to ask, a delightful thing “to see the system of endless subservience and the trickery of the Stock Exchange of 1846 prophesied by Charlemagne?”<sup>3</sup>

It was with this unusually censorious tone that the *Charivari* linked the rail system, the Stock Exchange, and Baron James de Rothschild. In this article, I will seek to throw some light on the reasons behind these links. In order to do this I will revisit and examine criticism of Rothschild and his co-religionists as “kings of the era” from what we could loosely call the left wing, that is, writers such as Pierre Leroux, Charles Fourier, his disciple Alphonse Toussenel, and the lesser-known pamphleteer Georges Mathieu-Dairnvaell.<sup>4</sup> Where figures such as Toussenel, Fourier

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<sup>1</sup> *Le charivari*, 23 July 1846. All translations are the author’s unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> In 1846, Friedrich Engels described Mathieu-Dairnvaell as “a man nobody knows:” “a working man,” “the whole of whose property consists of the suit of clothes he wears.” Friedrich Engels, “Government and Opposition in France,” *The Northern Star*, 5 Sept. 1846. Mathieu-Dairnvaell described himself as

and Leroux are concerned, the historiography of anti-Jewish attitudes during the late July Monarchy has tended to marginalize itself. Numerous researchers have explored and commented on the writings of these men, and their lives and their attitude towards Jews are well known.<sup>5</sup> But while every historian of nineteenth-century France knows that Alphonse Toussenel described the Jews of his world as the Kings of the Era, little or no effort has been made to place men such as Toussenel in the context of this very era. What was it specifically about the state of his times that drove Toussenel to write? What was it about this era that led to such depth of passion? What was it that so outraged the journalist in the *Charivari*?

There is no doubt that many sensibilities were offended by the cold, hard pragmatism espoused by the July Monarchy. Traditional relationships and spheres of influence were eroded or changed during this time, and indeed, Rothschild's detractors did not focus on stockholders and thus the Stock Exchange by chance. It was during the 1840s, in many ways a time of rapid evolution in France, that the nation, "in many respects," entered the modern era of stock movement.<sup>6</sup> Speculation was characterized by a dumbstruck Pierre Leroux as "the right to make a profit ... from the sole fact of accumulated wealth, *without participating in any way in the useful employment of this wealth.*"<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps one of the greatest conceptual changes of this time had to do with the new understanding of land, where relationships between landlords and tenant farmers became based around money alone—a cash rent in exchange for land, animals and tools. All through the July Monarchy those who thought national pitted their interests against those who were historically inclined to think local. Thus "technocrats" whose principal interest was the nation, and whose interests to a large extent matched those of capitalists, challenged the ascendancy of those whom Tudesq has labeled "notables," "whose wealth essentially was derived from land and whose social pre-eminence rested on this, their family name, and their local networks of influence."<sup>8</sup> This new view of land was particularly evident in the development of a rail network, a key issue on which notables—concerned primarily about the use of land in their respective regions—diverged from bureaucrats and capitalists. The 1833 law on

"a writer without name, position, title or rank, not even a Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur or a member of the French Academy, an *obscure scribbler.*" Georges Mathieu-Dairnvaell, *Jugement rendu contre J. Rothschild, et contre Georges Dairnvaell, Auteur de l'histoire de Rothschild I<sup>er</sup>, par le tribunal de la saine raison, accompagné d'un jugement sur l'accident de Fampoux* (Paris, 1846), 7.

<sup>5</sup> See for example Robert Byrnes, *Antisemitism in Modern France* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1950), 118-125; Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700-1933* (Cambridge, Mass., 1980), chap. 9; George Lichtheim, "Socialism and the Jews," *Dissent* 15 (1968): 314-322; Edmund Silberner, "Charles Fourier on the Jewish Question," *Jewish Social Studies* 8 (1946): 245-266; idem, "The Attitude of the Fourierist School towards the Jews," *Jewish Social Studies* 9 (1947), 339-348; Zosa Szajkowski, "The Jewish Saint-Simonians and Socialist Anti-Semites in France," *Jewish Social Studies* 9 (1947), 46-55; Robert Wistrich, "Radical Antisemitism in France and Germany 1840-1880," *Modern Judaism* 15 (1995): 112-119. For alternative approaches, see Jack Bakunin, "National Socialists and Socialist Antisemites," *Patterns of Prejudice* 11 (1977): 29-33, and Victor Glasberg, "Intent and Consequences: The "Jewish Question" in the French Socialist Movement of the Late Nineteenth Century," *Jewish Social Studies* 36 (1974): 61-71.

<sup>6</sup> Christopher Johnson, "The Revolution of 1830 in French Economic History," in *1830 in France*, ed. John Merriman (New York, 1975), 166.

<sup>7</sup> Leroux, *Malthus et les économistes ou Y aura-t-il toujours des pauvres?* (Paris, 1897), 3: 36. Original emphasis.

<sup>8</sup> Johnson, "The Revolution of 1830," 147. See also André-Jean Tudesq, *Les grands notables en France (1840-1849). Étude historique d'une psychologie sociale*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1964), 2: chap. 2, II: "Les Notables et les chemins de fer," 627.

compensation for land appropriated by the state for railways defined land as “a commodity whose value was simply its market price,” as opposed to the historic understanding of land as an object of sentimental value; a thing to which one could be attached by virtue of generations of use.<sup>9</sup> By the mid-1840s a rail network was being constructed throughout France, joining together “people and continents” as the *Charivari* had put it, by powering through lands which were now a commodity, but to which some peasant or noble family perhaps still felt a sense of attachment. Thus for many the heartlessness of the era was epitomized precisely by the railway.

On 8 July 1846, two weeks before the *Charivari* article appeared, at 3.05 in the afternoon, a train traveling from Paris to Lille was nearing the village of Fampoux, between Arras and Douai. Without warning, the locomotive and its tender skipped the rails, and five or six carriages ran down a bank and into a marsh. Available information put the number of dead at seventeen. The number of wounded was said to be between five and fifteen. Newspapers recounted the horror of families awaiting their loved ones in the station at Lille, as news of the accident spread through that city, and told graphic tales of the accident with descriptions of heroic efforts of survivors and details of the dead and wounded. Thus, for example, a journalist from the *Echo du nord*, by the name of Lestiboudois, was in the second submerged carriage as the dying passengers desperately grabbed on to one another, and he described how he broke the glass of a window, and was pulled from the water, his hands covered in blood, at the very moment when his strength was about to give way.<sup>10</sup>

This was not the first major train accident to occur. In Meudon, on 8 May 1842, fifty-seven people were killed, mostly burned alive, and more than one hundred were seriously injured, when two trains collided. But Fampoux differed from Meudon in that the former was caused by a derailment, rather than a collision, so that blame was laid on the company as a whole and not on an isolated driver or operator. And indeed, if reactions in the press are to be believed, the accident unleashed a wave of public outrage. A torrent of righteous fury was vented against Baron James de Rothschild as owner of the Northern line, for it was on his shoulders that responsibility for the deaths of innocent French men and women could be squarely laid. Rothschild was depicted as having placed speculation and profit above the safety and, indeed, the lives of French citizens.<sup>11</sup>

What had gone wrong? The Revolution of 1789 had unleashed individualism, and whether writers were for the Revolution, such as Pierre Leroux and Alphonse Toussenel, or against it, like Charles Fourier, they felt that this individualism had gone awry. From the complex web of competing ideologies that characterized the years following 1789, one vital notion that emerged was that all Frenchmen were equal individuals, and that no Frenchman could claim privilege or difference on the basis of membership of a specific corporation (or religion), since all Frenchmen were expected to feel overwhelming loyalty to the great corporation that was the nation. In other words, citizens were to live out a sort of cooperative individualism. Yet if the Revolution of 1830 completed that of 1789,<sup>12</sup> it was perhaps in that it promoted a world of competitive individualism, where man was “morally sovereign, and could

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<sup>9</sup> McPhee, *A Social History of France, 1780-1880* (London, 1992), 121. See also Johnson, “The Revolution of 1830,” 174-175.

<sup>10</sup> From *L'echo du nord*, reproduced in *La réforme*, 11 July 1846.

<sup>11</sup> *La réforme*, 14 July 1846. On train accidents in nineteenth-century France, see François Caron, “Le rôle des accidents de voyageurs dans la gestion des chemins de fer en France,” *Entreprises et Histoire* 17 (1997), 85-93.

<sup>12</sup> McPhee, *A Social History of France*, 120.

choose to follow the dictates of his own conscience.”<sup>13</sup> This was anathema to early socialists who believed that the ideal citizen should be an individual who cooperated with his fellows, rather than competing with them.<sup>14</sup> For Mathieu-Dairnvaell, the new era was one of “selfish and brutal” individualism.<sup>15</sup> Fourier envisaged utopian societies based on co-operation. But in the materialistic atmosphere of the July Monarchy, competitive individualism translated easily to capitalism, or, as Toussenel and others were to describe it, “financial feudalism.” Indeed, for these men, medieval feudalism had never truly come to an end, but had merely metamorphosed into a new form. Various described as industrial, financial, or mercantile, this was a system where, as with its forebear, the powerful few cemented their position at the expense of the powerless majority. The feudal lord had been replaced by the banker, who waged war on his fellow men by means of lucre, so that where men were once killed by the sword, now they succumbed to hunger.

Indeed, one of the features of this time that so outraged these men was the uneven struggle between honest working French citizens and the capitalist juggernaut, precisely characterized by the circumstances of the Fampoux accident. Leroux and his fellow writers saw themselves as lone battlers, the champions of the little man and his cause.<sup>16</sup> In fact, so many saw the world of the July Monarchy as disastrous that outpourings of outraged morality such as those expressed in reaction to the accident in Fampoux were common by the later years of the regime in both newspapers and pamphlets.<sup>17</sup> Perhaps it would not have been so difficult for men like these writers, who saw the working classes at the mercy of capitalists’ needs for a cheap labor force and for stability, unions and mutual-aid societies disbanded, the master given word over his worker, the spread of practices such as *marchandage*, concentrations, mergers and collusion, and growing competition from an influx of cheaper labor and more efficient methods of production, to believe that in their world, workers indeed lived on in servitude and grinding poverty, with merely a change of master. And the new masters were none other than the Jews, “cunning and despoiling,”<sup>18</sup> and, as

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<sup>13</sup> Lichtheim, “Socialism and the Jews,” 317.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. See also Pamela Pilbeam, *Republicanism in Nineteenth-Century France, 1814-1871* (London, 1995), 182-183.

<sup>15</sup> Mathieu-Dairnvaell, *Guerre aux fripons. Chronique secrète de la Bourse et des Chemins de fer*, 3d ed. (Paris, 1846), 37.

<sup>16</sup> Sartre described the antisemite as envisaging a Manichean dichotomy in which he represented good, and the Jew evil. In the eternal struggle of one force against another, the role of good was quite naturally to destroy evil, and thus the antisemite saw himself as committing necessary evils for the sake of good, in the name of the people. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Réflexions sur la question juive* (Paris, 1954), 59.

<sup>17</sup> Echoes of this criticism can be found, for example, in Marx’s *Class Struggles in France*, where he described the July Monarchy as being ruled by a “finance aristocracy,” which “made the laws, was at the head of the administration of the State, had command of all the organized public powers, dominated public opinion through facts and through the press,” and exploited the construction of the railway. Bankers such as Rothschild ruined financial reforms that were not in their interest. This was the nation of the ‘Stock exchange Jews.’” Karl Marx, *Class Struggles in France 1848-1850* (New York, 1969), 33-37. Alexis de Tocqueville also spoke about “moral decay.” (*Chambre des députés. Annales du parlement français* 27 Jan. 1848 (1849), 108-9, quoted in Pilbeam, *Republicanism*, 152). In 1856, de Tocqueville wrote of the power of money. It had become “the chief means by which to distinguish between people,” and the desire “to enrich oneself at any price,” if unchecked, demoralized and degraded the entire nation. Alexis De Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the Revolution*, eds. François Furet and Françoise Mélonio, trans. Alan Kahan (Chicago, 1998), 87. Tocqueville made no specific mention of Jews.

<sup>18</sup> Leroux, *Malthus et les économistes*, 1:31.

Leroux, Toussenel, and Mathieu-Dairnvaell all put it, the kings of the era.<sup>19</sup> These men had much to say about the involvement of Jews in what for them was this disastrous situation. Georges Mathieu-Dairnvaell, who used the accident in Fampoux as the background to his attacks on Rothschild, was, and still remains an elusive figure. Nonetheless his words seem to have resonated with readers of the day since all of the four pamphlets he wrote went through more than one edition, and his pamphlet *Histoire édifiante et curieuse de Rothschild I<sup>er</sup>, roi des juifs* sold more than sixty thousand copies, was widely translated, and went through twenty editions in 1846 alone: a feat all the more impressive given that the capital was flooded with similar works.<sup>20</sup> For them, the spirit of “avarice and cupidity” that reigned in France was none other than the “Jewish spirit.”<sup>21</sup> In Fourier’s eyes, the granting of citizenship to the Jews was “the most shameful” of all society’s recent vices.<sup>22</sup> For not only had they been emancipated by the Revolution, they were now thriving on the immoral individualism it had unleashed. In this time, when individualism and egotism reigned, the Jews, egotists par excellence, were triumphant. Wherever they prospered, stated an angry Fourier, neatly separating Jews from the body of the nation, it was “at the expense of the citizenry.”<sup>23</sup>

Indeed, Fourier produced a vivid image of the Jew, who, having no ties to the nation, allowed himself to pillage it like a pirate.<sup>24</sup> For not only was the competitive and individualistic Jew the antithesis of everything these men envisaged as characterizing the nation, *their* nation, the Jew himself subscribed to this notion, treating the sacred *patrie* with the utmost contempt. The Jews shunned the honest and patriotic labor that was agriculture. But it was no wonder that the Jew did not work the land, for why would a man who had no sense of attachment to the nation choose a career that involved hard manual labor and financial uncertainty?<sup>25</sup> The Jews preferred to devote themselves to what for Fourier were “mercantile depravities.”<sup>26</sup> For not only did Jews not work the land, they also owned the railways that took the land from honest French citizens, and at no more than its market price.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 2:148; Alphonse Toussenel, *Les juifs, rois de l'époque. Histoire de la féodalité financière* (Paris, 1847). It is unclear who of the three was the first to coin this phrase. Leroux published a lengthy essay which bore this title in the *Revue sociale* in Jan. 1846. Toussenel’s pamphlet was published in 1847, and Mathieu-Dairnvaell used the epithet to describe Rothschild. See for example Mathieu-Dairnvaell, *Jugement*, 11.

<sup>20</sup> According to Engels, “some thirty pamphlets,” both for and against Rothschild, had been published. Engels noted that the public had followed the exchanges between Mathieu-Dairnvaell and Rothschild “with the greatest interest.” Engels, “Government and Opposition in France.” (Rothschild had two pamphlets published in his defense. These were A. Deprez, *Guerre aux Juifs! Ou la vérité sur MM. De Rothschild, par A.D.\*\*\*, Avocat, ancien Directeur de la Bibliothèque ecclésiastique* (Paris, 1846); and J.B. Mesnard, *Dix jours de règne de Rothschild I<sup>er</sup>, roi des juifs, ou Notes pour servir à l’Histoire de la Fondation de la Monarchie de ce Souverain* (Paris, 1846).) Journalist and public servant Cerfberr de Medelsheim also noted in his work on the Jews that “Lately, numerous different brochures and works that are against the Jewish monopoly have attracted the attention of the public, which showed proof of the interest it had in this discussion through the multitude of copies which were quickly sold.” Cerfberr de Medelsheim, *Les Juifs, leur histoire, leurs mœurs* (Paris, 1847), preface.

<sup>21</sup> Leroux, *Malthus et les économistes*, 1:31.

<sup>22</sup> Fourier, *Le nouveau monde*, 421, quoted in Silberner, “Charles Fourier,” 250.

<sup>23</sup> Fourier, *Publication des manuscrits*, 3:36, quoted in Silberner, “Charles Fourier,” 249.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 2: 228, quoted in Silberner, “Charles Fourier,” 249.

<sup>25</sup> Toussenel, *Les juifs, rois de l'époque*, 75.

<sup>26</sup> Fourier, *Le Nouveau monde*, 421, quoted in Silberner, “Charles Fourier,” 249.

But if the Jews were the kings of the era, Rothschild was king of the Jews.<sup>27</sup> By the 1840s, Rothschild was clearly fixed in the popular consciousness as a synonym for “wealthy.”<sup>28</sup> But he could represent much more, for Rothschild, banker *and* Jew, personified the “Jewish spirit,”<sup>29</sup> and thus his very era. The man variously described as “James the Great,”<sup>30</sup> “the rich son of Israel,”<sup>31</sup> “the divine Rothschild,” and “the noble Jew,”<sup>32</sup> was a calculating, competitive, heartless power, with no sense of national loyalty; he was most certainly not a cooperative citizen. Satirists underscored Rothschild’s foreignness by emphasizing his heavy Germanic accent. Mathieu-Dairnvaell made much of his Teutonic origins.<sup>33</sup>

In mid-nineteenth century France, where so many still competed to impose their understanding of terms such as nation, and citizen, the terrain was fertile for the creation of a *bouc-émissaire*. Political writers such as Toussenel and Leroux, seeking to document their times, created what I call the Rothschild-Jew, on whose back were laden all of society’s ills. Freed from the moorings of common humanity, he became a superbly efficient receptacle for all that lay beyond the bounds of the ideal world of those who created him. But was it central to the identity of this scapegoat that he be Jewish? Or was Rothschild’s Jewishness incidental to his other qualities that so perfectly characterized the era’s evils? Were attacks on Rothschild such as the one in the *Charivari* antisemitic? After all, those who released his bounds did so consciously and deliberately. Thus, just like the *Dictionnaire*, they argued that when they wrote about Jews, they were using the term Jew as it was understood in its “popular” usage; that is: “Jew, banker, trader,”<sup>34</sup> or “salesmen or second hand dealer in silver.”<sup>35</sup> The “Jewish spirit” was one of “gain, of lucre, of profit, of the spirit of business and of speculation,”<sup>36</sup> so that Jew was a title reserved for any shrewd speculator who earned it. In this sense, Leroux could argue that while he might have a healthy dislike for

<sup>27</sup> Mathieu-Dairnvaell described him as James Rothschild I, “king of Europe, Asia, Africa, America, Oceania and other places, and especially king of the Jews!” Mathieu-Dairnvaell, *Histoire édifiante et curieuse de Rotschild I<sup>er</sup>, roi des juifs, par Satan*, 15th ed. (Paris, 1846), 16.

<sup>28</sup> On 10 July 1846, the *Charivari* announced that one Van Gend—apparently the owner of a mail-coach service—had put up a placard challenging Rothschild to a race from Paris to Brussels, promising to get there in eighteen hours, and for less than the railway charges. “When Mr de Rothschild sees the placard,” the author tells us, “he won’t be able to avoid squinting. I pray to God that I will not be on the boulevard des Italiens at that moment! The sight of a man squinting is always disagreeable to me, even when he is a multi-millionaire.” On 27 July the *Charivari* made reference to an advertisement that “appeals to the public’s cupidity, and it is perfectly right to do so. Every notice beginning with the words *one hundred thousand francs to be won* is read by all the paper’s subscribers, even by Mr de Rothschild.” (Original emphasis).

<sup>29</sup> Leroux, *Malthus et les économistes*, 1: 24.

<sup>30</sup> Mathieu-Dairnvaell, *Histoire*, 10.

<sup>31</sup> Mathieu-Dairnvaell, *Guerre*, 31.

<sup>32</sup> Mathieu-Dairnvaell, *Rothschild I<sup>er</sup>*, 18.

<sup>33</sup> Mathieu-Dairnvaell wrote Rothschild’s speech thus: “Ma chournée de chasse gomme commence bien.” (*Ma journée de chasse commence bien.*) Mathieu-Dairnvaell, *Histoire*, 27.

<sup>34</sup> Toussenel, *Les juifs, rois de l’époque*, 4. Under “Juif” in the *Dictionnaire de l’Académie Française* could be found the following definition: “‘JEW:’” We do not put this word here to represent the name of a Nation, but rather, because It is used figuratively in certain sentences in the Language. Thus a man who practices usury and who sells goods at exorbitant prices is called a Jew: *He is a Jew, he makes loans at fifteen percent; That merchant is a real Jew.* It is used, in the familiar style, to describe all those who demonstrate a great greed for money and ardor in making it. It is said proverbially that *A man is as rich as a Jew*, to mean that he is very rich, etc., etc.” Quoted in Leroux, *Malthus et les économistes*, 1:24.

<sup>34</sup> Mathieu-Dairnvaell, *Rothschild I<sup>er</sup>*, 35-36.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Leroux, *Malthus et les économistes*, 1:24. Original emphasis.

what he called the “Jewish spirit,” this had nothing to do with the Jews themselves.”<sup>37</sup> And in Toussenel’s world, Jew and Protestant were “*one and the same thing*.”<sup>38</sup> Yet Toussenel’s work was not entitled *Les protestants, rois de l’époque*, and in the end all authors returned to the Jews. Indeed, the fact that the identification of the Jew as representative of the evils of the era was not incidental is demonstrated by the difficulty all four had in maintaining a clean separation between the Jew as metaphor and Jew as human being. All of these men were insistent in their view of the Jews as a great people. Leroux would have awarded the Jews the “prize for humanity,” had such a thing existed.<sup>39</sup> But the Jews were also damned by their history, and this is where the Jew as human being and Jew as metaphor tended to become one. For from the medieval image of the Jew as usurer, the depiction of the Jew as banker could follow as though it were a natural progression.<sup>40</sup> Mathieu-Dairnvaell used the name *Jew* deliberately as a punishment, because one part of the Jewish population, had “remained Jews of the Middle Ages,” and continued to deserve the name. Leroux made a similar leap, criticizing the Jews of his world for their continued crucifixion of Christ, through “speculation and capital.”<sup>41</sup>

This legacy of Catholic teaching evident in the discussions of all these men best underscores the importance of the Jewishness of the Rothschild-Jew. French men and women had lived through forty years of revolutionary upheaval and were now faced with the challenge of making sense of capitalism.<sup>42</sup> Those who sought comfort in angry criticism of the system could draw on a Catholic worldview that, for many, had only been superficially uprooted by the Revolution. For such people the Catholic overtones evident in the censure of the kings of the era would have made it all the more resonant. And Mathieu-Dairnvaell, Toussenel, Fourier and Leroux all clearly understood their world through their adherence to Catholicism. For Leroux the present world was one where Economic Science had entered into battle with the Gospel. Chapters in his work were entitled “The law of nature of economists is against the law of God,”<sup>43</sup> or “Political economy orders for poor children to be killed, the Gospel orders for them to be saved.”<sup>44</sup> Toussenel, too, was a religious man and faith informed his understanding of his world. Thus his greatest wish was to see the people

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Toussenel, *Les juifs, rois de l’époque*, 178. Original emphasis.

<sup>39</sup> “because as a people they have taken on and made themselves the guardians and propagators of “the two most precious of all truths ... *the unity of God and the unity of the human spirit*.” Leroux, *Malthus et les économistes*, 1: 31. Original emphasis. Sartre argued that the antisemite envisaged the Jew as an “indivisible totality,” where the whole was greater than the sum of its parts, and all the Jew’s characteristics were governed by his innate evil. Thus, according to Sartre, the antisemite could willingly acknowledge that the Jew was intelligent and hardworking. This cost the antisemite nothing, for he also believed that these qualities got their value from their possessor. Evil was the Jew’s essence, so that in fact the more virtues he had, the more dangerous he could be, since his virtuous façade could effectively mask his true nature. Sartre, *Réflexions sur la question juive*, 40.

<sup>40</sup> Katz argues that anti-Jewish sentiment was also transferred from “the marketplace of the Alsatian town to the scene of the economic transactions in Paris.” Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction*, 127. In reference to Leroux, Graetz has argued that a “slippage” occurred: “the people despised and vilified because of its rejection of the Christian Messiah, presented in its weakness as the manifestation of Evil, was becoming a powerful, threatening people, a people ready to extend its power to everyone. This mutation was neatly condensed in the slogan, “Rothschild, king of Jews,” The new myth rested on the old even as it brought about a shift in it. Michael Graetz, *The Jews in nineteenth-century France: from the French Revolution to the Alliance israelite universelle*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Stanford, 1996), 84.

<sup>41</sup> Leroux, *Malthus et les économistes*, 1: 22.

<sup>42</sup> Lichtheim, “Socialism and the Jews,” 320.

<sup>43</sup> Leroux, *Malthus et les économistes*, 2: 166.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 2: 156.

emancipated from financial feudalism, for this would allow them to find their faith again.<sup>45</sup> In the eyes of Mathieu-Dairnvaell, who set up Rothschild and his fellows against “carpenters,”<sup>46</sup> the Jew was still clearly the other, the one who did not belong, in a Catholic nation.<sup>47</sup> Even Fourier, who disliked the Church, based his “whole system” “on a set of unquestioned assumptions concerning God and the nature of Divine Providence.”<sup>48</sup> For Fourier, as for Mathieu-Dairnvaell, Jews were clearly a discrete group within society. This was how, for example, they could continue to hate Christians.<sup>49</sup>

These men, among them the founders of socialist thought in France, were—consciously or not—clearly able to comfortably combine their modern criticism of Jews with “standard” Catholic antisemitism, and for all of them, and particularly for Fourier, who read very little, such “standard abuse” is as strong as possible an indication of the continuing pervasiveness of Catholic thought in France.<sup>50</sup> These socialist thinkers created a Rothschild-Jew rooted in traditional Catholic imagery. It is little wonder that works such as that of Mathieu-Dairnvaell were so resonant with the population. But while the Rothschild-Jew sprang from Catholic teaching, these men loosened his chains and allowed him to go far beyond his modest origins.

Historians of nineteenth-century France have allowed the antisemitism present in the writings of men such as Leroux and Fourier to remain the domain of the specialists in such sentiment.<sup>51</sup> There is a need to bring it into the mainstream. It is certainly the case that beyond their antisemitism, it is only possible to group men such as Fourier and Leroux in the loosest sense. As Pilbeam has pointed out, at this time there were as many brands of socialism as there were socialists,<sup>52</sup> and not all those who wrote to expose the evils of the regime and to propose a replacement for it incorporated Jews into this scheme. Moreover, while negative attitudes to Jews most certainly feature in the works of Leroux, Toussenel and Fourier, and they were even

<sup>45</sup> Toussenel was also a royalist, for in his eyes, the only way to remedy the current situation was to return to monarchy and a government monopoly. For Toussenel, the solidarity of the monarchical principle and the people was such that “the history of the miseries and prosperities of the France nation were merely the copy of the history of the good fortune and unhappy times of its kings.” Toussenel, *Les juifs, rois de l'époque*, 42.

<sup>46</sup> Mathieu-Dairnvaell, *Guerre*, 9.

<sup>47</sup> Mathieu-Dairnvaell, *Jugement*, 16.

<sup>48</sup> Jonathan Beecher, *Charles Fourier: The Visionary and His World* (Berkeley, 1987), 196.

<sup>49</sup> Silberner, “Charles Fourier,” 247.

<sup>50</sup> Pilbeam argues that the republicans of the 1840s were in fact “far from hostile to religion as such,” believing that society needed a spiritual foundation. Pilbeam, *Republicanism*, 17. Had socialists such as Buchez and Cabet had their way, France would have experienced a reinvigorated primitive Christianity, which would surely have brought with it all the exclusivity of the Restoration.

<sup>51</sup> See for example Pilbeam, *Republicanism*, chaps. 5-7; Roger Price, *A Social History of Nineteenth-Century France* (London, 1987); Maurice Agulhon, *1848 ou l'Apprentissage de la République 1848-1852* (Paris, 1973); Bernard Moss, *The Origins of the French Labor Movement* (Berkeley, 1976); John Merriman and Elise Kenney, *The Pear: French Graphic Arts in the Golden Age of Caricature* (New Haven, 1991); and McPhee, *A Social History of France*, chaps. 6-9. Tudesq did note the existence of “sentiments of hostility based on long habit and on causes both religious and economic;” although he believed that this “latent antisemitism” was more the domain of what he called the popular classes, particularly in rural areas, than of notables. He also argued that Jewish notables were welcomed by Orleanist notables due to their economic power, rather than by reason of their liberalism. Tudesq, *Les grands notables en France*, 1: 447-8. In his weighty tome on Charles Fourier, Jonathan Beecher sets Fourier’s anti-Jewish writing in the context of the “assumptions and prejudices of his age,” and sees this particular sentiment as evidence of weakness of Fourier’s critique of commercial capitalism, in that he “remains on the moral level.” Beecher, *Charles Fourier*, 196, 203-4.

<sup>52</sup> Pilbeam, *Republicanism*, 156.



innovative, at the same time, this antisemitism is not the principal aspect of their works. Nor was antisemitism the natural corollary of anti-capitalism for all socialist writers in July Monarchy France. Nonetheless, more than a few of them saw it thus, and it is important to acknowledge this, and to seek to understand why they chose the Rothschild-Jew to play the role of evildoer in their tales of woe. Old and new myths regarding Jews were ever-present in July Monarchy society. Members of the public were fed with reminders of such myths: the title alone of Halévy and Scribe's opera *La Juive*, or of Eugène Sue's highly successful novel, meant that throughout the July Monarchy notions of the *belle juive* or of the "wandering Jew" presented themselves to the nation's consciousness.<sup>53</sup> And the most visible of Jews in France was clearly a highly accessible target, even if not all those who attacked him, such as the *Charivari*, made his religious affiliation clear. But did they need to? After all, the pamphlets of Mathieu-Dairnvaell, of Leroux and Toussenel, were busy making this connection explicit in their works that sold so well. From their writings, sternly moral, comes a strong message of horror at competitive individualism unleashed. Those who sought someone on whom to lay the blame for the current situation could easily choose to see Rothschild looming large on their horizon. For them, it would seem, none symbolized this new regime better than those who were seen to have derived the most benefit from it. This was the epoch of the "Jewish spirit," and greed, deceptiveness, dishonor, and cold-heartedness, all characteristics of the competitive individual, were all familiar Jewish qualities to such men. Moreover, these qualities no longer needed to be contained within the Jew. Rothschild's attackers made him into a symbol, a "new variety of despot,"<sup>54</sup> and this was a role that he could play to perfection, for Rothschild, who in fact never became a French citizen, was the anti-citizen personified. He was visibly (and audibly) foreign. He was fabulously wealthy and powerful. He could be shown to care nothing for innocent French men and women; to stand firm against the tide of the national will. And most importantly, perhaps, he was Jewish.

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<sup>53</sup> While there is a certain amount of ambiguity in Sue's portrayal of Jews in his highly popular serialized novel of 1844, *Le juif errant*, there is no doubt about the "wandering Jew" of the title. Sue himself explained to his readers that "The subject of the legend of the 'Wandering Jew' is that of a poor shoemaker of Jerusalem. When Christ, bearing his cross, passed before his house, and asked his leave to repose for a moment on the stone bench at his door, the Jew replied harshly, 'Onwards! Onwards!' and refused him. 'It is thou who shalt go onwards—onwards—till the end of time!' was Christ's reply, in a sad but severe tone." Eugène Sue, *Le juif errant* (Paris, 1876), 216 note 1. Sue's wandering Jew was a solitary, unhappy character who roamed the world, leaving death and misery in his wake.

<sup>54</sup> *L'univers*, 19 July 1846.