

Cowardly Bourgeois, Brave *Bourgeoises*, and Loyal Servants:**Bourgeois Identity during the Crisis of 1846-47**

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On 13 January 1847, a riot erupted in the small French town of Buzançais in the department of the Indre after some women intercepted several grain carts passing through town. What began as a classic subsistence movement triggered two days of food rioting and class hostilities. In a key incident, the son of a landowner shot and killed a protester; a crowd then beat the shooter to death. Local elites cowered before the crowds and utterly failed to halt the riot's course. Disorder soon spread throughout the region. The July Monarchy mounted a stringent repression, including military occupation, highly publicized trials, and unusually severe sentences (three hangings), all designed to discipline both rebellious populace and cowering local elites. The riot immediately received media attention during the Europe-wide crisis years, 1846-47, focused polemics in the political press, facilitated factional critiques of the government, and contributed to the debates preceding the Revolution of 1848.¹

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¹ For secondary sources that discuss the Buzançais riot in some detail, see Yvon Bionnier, *Les Jacqueries de 1847 en Bas-Berry* (Châteauroux 1979; mémoire de maîtrise, Université de Tours, 1977), 44-64, 98-99, 136-37; Solange Gras, "La crise du milieu du XIXe siècle en Bas-Berry," 2 vols., thèse de 3^e cycle (Université de Paris X - Nanterre, 1976); Philippe Vigier, *La vie quotidienne en Province et à Paris pendant les journées de 1848 (1847-1851)* (Paris, 1982), 35-53; Roger Price, *The Modernization of Rural France: Communications Networks and Agricultural Market Structures in Nineteenth-Century France* (London, 1982), 179; Ernest Labrousse, ed., *Aspects de la crise et de la dépression de l'économie française au milieu du XIXe siècle, 1846-1851* (La Roche-sur-Yonne, 1956); Peter McPhee, *Social History of France* (London, 1992), 174-5; Nicolas Bourguinat, *Les Grains du désordre. L'état face aux violences frumentaires dans la première moitié du XIX siècle* (Paris, 2002), 9-11, 446-50. Bourguinat, like Vigier, introduces his book with Buzançais. The important primary sources are located in the Archives nationales (AN): BB19 37, BB24 327-347, BB 30 432; Archives d'histoire de la guerre (ADG), E5 155, E5 158; Archives départementales du Cher (AD Cher), 2 U 338,

Inspired by exciting and provocative recent work by French historians such as David Garrioch, Carol Harrison, and Sarah Maza,² I explore bourgeois identity at mid-nineteenth century through a close study of this riot. However much historians may grapple with the slippery abstractions of the terms “bourgeois” and “bourgeoisie,” at least two groups of people had no trouble identifying them in the stark realities of 1847—the rioters and the July Monarchy magistrates charged with maintaining order. Indeed, the affair forced participants to negotiate crucial aspects of bourgeois identity and solidarity.³ I would like to explore how the tensions generated by the crisis of 1846-47, the experience of riot and repression, and the subsequent trial of twenty-six rioters reflected and shaped social identities at the end of the July Monarchy.⁴ Not only did rioters specifically target households they had identified as “bourgeois,” but the government itself largely shared their perception of who constituted the bourgeoisie, and although rioters and July Monarchy *grands notables* held sharply contrasting views of bourgeois responsibility for public order and for social welfare, they converged in their condemnation of male bourgeois performance during the crisis. Indeed, July Monarchy spokesmen took advantage of the public trial of the Buzançais rioters to teach a lesson in identity formation and solidarity.

Located in a grain-producing region in the center of France on the river Indre, in 1847 Buzançais had a population of just over 4000 inhabitants.⁵ Its industrial activity included wool production, metallurgy (iron forges and smelting mills along the Indre river), and modern, export-oriented grain mills.⁶ Agriculture occupied over forty percent of its population in the 1840s and powerful, non-noble proprietors controlled vast quantities of land. Industry employed thirty-three percent of the population and counted several entrepreneurs among its highest tax-payers.

The economic crisis of 1846 struck the Indre harshly. Between March 1845 and March 1847, wheat prices rose almost 200 percent,⁷ and bread prices doubled in less than a year.⁸ Fall and winter brought rising unemployment and lower pay.⁹ In

2 U 367; Archives départementales de l'Indre (AD Indre), 2 U 70, 3 U 1 549, M 2565-69. Specific references will appear below.

² Garrioch, *The Formation of the Parisian Bourgeoisie, 1690-1830* (Cambridge, Mass., 1996); Harrison, *The Bourgeois Citizen in Nineteenth-Century France: Gender, Sociability, and the Uses of Emulation* (Oxford, 1999); Maza, *The Myth of the French Bourgeoisie: An Essay on the Social Imaginary, 1750-1850* (Cambridge, Mass., 2003).

³ Dror Wahrman has argued for England that “the political process opens up new spaces and new configurations, often rapidly and unexpectedly and then confronts participants with the pressing need to renegotiate their positions vis-à-vis these new configurations.” *Imagining the Middle Class: The Political Representation of Class in Britain, c. 1789-1840* (Cambridge, 1995), 10. The events associated with the Buzançais affair appear just such a instance.

⁴ In this I am influenced by E. P. Thompson’s well known definition of class: “class happens when some men, as a result of common experience (inherited or shared) feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs.” *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York, 1963), 9.

⁵ For general information on Buzançais during this period, see especially, Yvon Bionnier, “Aspects économiques et sociaux des émeutes de la faim dans l’Indre en 1847,” 2 vols., mémoire de maîtrise (Université de Tours, 1977), 1: 57; and Ernest Badin, *Géographie départementale classique et administrative de la France. Département de l’Indre* (Paris, 1847); Gras, “Crise.”

⁶ The Indre River was not navigable, but provided considerable power for several bolting mills (the largest, belonging to Cloquemin, employed ten workers) and iron forges (such as the nearby Bonneau forges, which had employed 140 workers in 1840). Moreover, a woolen industry relied on small shops and domestic industry and employed almost fifty percent of all industrial workers.

⁷ The mixture called *méteil* which formed most of the common people’s diet had risen just over 175 percent. Gras, “Crise,” 1: 155.

⁸ Most towns in the Indre retained the *taxe du pain*, a regulation that fixed the price of bread relative to grain prices. Municipal officials could also block price rises during crises, usually with promises to

these circumstances, hundreds of desperate people in the Indre applied for assistance. Departmental and local authorities, like most of their national counterparts, responded slowly and inadequately, largely preferring private to public forms of relief. Linking assistance to work, many communities turned to charity workshops (*ateliers de charité*), which they funded through borrowing, and with subscriptions from local elites.¹⁰ Demand for work quickly outstripped the capacity of workshops to supply it, despite wages that were half the rate in normal times.

By mid-January 1847, recriminations resonated throughout the town. For example, during a poorly provisioned market several days before the riot broke out, women complained that the “bourgeois were hanging on to their grain, and even with money, no one could get any.”¹¹ A man announced before a crowd assembled at a sack of grain that “he had just bought a new axe with which he planned to break down the doors of all bourgeois [houses].”¹² Male workers in the charity workshop cursed “the bourgeois for their hard-heartedness”¹³ and declared that “it was necessary to kill” the “dirty bourgeois” and “to hang them” because they “want us to starve to

permit slightly higher prices for a while after the crisis had abated. Thus, bakers could recuperate some of the loss they had suffered during the crisis. On the regulation of baking, see Judith Miller, *Mastering the Market: The State and the Grain Trade in Northern France, 1700-1860* (Cambridge, 1999), 282-3.

⁹ During the winter, male agricultural day-laborers, who usually received 1.50-1.75 francs for their work received only 90 centimes, while the price of bread rose from between forty-five centimes per kilogram for the cheaper *pain bis* to sixty-five centimes for wheat. Thus a day’s labor paid for two kilograms of bread at most. The textile workers suffered as consumption of consumer goods declined, while food prices rose. Marcel Bruneau et al., *Aspects de la Révolution de 1848 dans l’Indre* (Châteauroux, 1948), 6; Gras, “Crise,” 1: 408. However, the forges—less linked to food prices—continued to employ many workers. This may explain why skilled forge workers stayed at work rather than join the rioters.

¹⁰ At the beginning of 1847, the workshop in the departmental capital, Châteauroux, supported a third of the working population in sixteen different shops doing road work. (Bruneau, 6) Just five weeks before the Buzançais riot erupted, municipal authorities finally decided to open local workshops. They first fixed the price of a day’s labor at one franc (when in normal years those who could find work usually got 1 franc 50 centimes). Nonetheless, more people rushed to work than resources could support. Rather than increase subventions, authorities concluded instead that some of those seeking support from the workshops “were not really in need.” So, in order to drive them away, they reduced the price of a day’s labor to 75 centimes. Despite this, over one hundred men were working there on the eve of the riot. They then justified their actions by consoling themselves that the “really miserable” individuals also received a bread allocation on Sundays. See AD Indre, Information (26 janvier 1847): Pierre Charles Guesnyer, maire of Buzançais, N° 6, 2 U 70. This is consistent with prevailing July Monarchy liberal notions of assistance. Timothy B. Smith emphasizes how officials and elites “believed that workers needed an element of uncertainty, of insecurity, in order to ensure that they would not remove themselves from the labour market.” “The Ideology of Charity, the Image of the English Poor Law, and Debates over the Right to Assistance in France, 1830-1905,” *The Historical Journal* 40.4 (December 1997), 1007. This is even more starkly put by G. V. Rimlinger: “in France the feeling was still that the poor had to be threatened with the possibility of starvation to be kept industrious.” *Welfare policy and industrialization in Europe, America, and Russia* (New York, 1971), 46.

¹¹ AD Indre, Information (21 Jan. 1847): Silvain Dion, gendarme, 2 U 70. All the testimonies may be found in the same carton. Hereafter, where the source is not noted, it is this carton. Although many were assigned numbers, others were not. I have included numbers where they appeared. A property-owner and municipal councilor (and victim) reported a similar scene: “for some time there had been agitation among the people, especially the women on market days. They blamed proprietors for the price rises in grain and one heard groups utter such menacing words as: “the (dirty) bourgeois, it is necessary to kill them.” Information: Jean Brillaut-Bénard, propriétaire, 67 ans, n° 36 (23 Jan. 1847).

¹² Information: Pierre Frédéric Gaulin, propriétaire, 58 ans, n° 42 (23 Jan. 1847). The rioter was Bienvenu, one of the three to be executed.

¹³ Information (21 Jan. 1847): Silvain Dion, gendarme.

death.”¹⁴ Another man specifically threatened to “skin” the proprietor (and future victim), Chambert. During his trial he explained: “I’m a skinner. ... In the charity workshop we often spoke of killing Chambert and all the bourgeois because life had gotten too expensive.”¹⁵

Rising prices, unemployment and insupportably low pay in the charity workshops heightened and focused social tensions; continual grain shipments through town finally triggered a reaction. On Wednesday 13 January, women from a working-class suburb joined with male workers from the nearby charity workshop, diverted several transiting grain carts to the town hall, and demanded local distribution of their contents at a reduced price.¹⁶ While local authorities worried over the situation, a crowd assembled to guard the grain overnight. They lit fires and fortified themselves with booze generously supplied by a sympathetic innkeeper who encouraged them to “pillage and beat up the bourgeois.”¹⁷ Other groups sounded the tocsin and made house visits throughout the night to rally support, declaiming that they would “reduce the price of bread” and “also harass the bourgeois.”¹⁸

First thing Thursday morning, over 200 people turned against the owner of the town’s largest bolting mill, Pierre Cloquemin. Cloquemin’s modern mill produced and exported large quantities of flour, but as a wholesaler, he refused to sell any to locals. Rioters assaulted the mill itself, breaking the waterwheel and millstones,¹⁹ and threatening one of Cloquemin’s workers because “he sided with the bourgeois.”²⁰

After devastating the mill, the crowd descended upon the residence of Frédéric Gaulin, a notorious “bourgeois” proprietor and grain merchant who had for many weeks faced mounting popular wrath at the market because of the high price of his grain.²¹ They invaded his granary, accosted Gaulin himself, forced him to hand over 800 francs, and seemed poised to kill him until his wife interposed herself. When the crowd hesitated, the Gaulins escaped.

As the morning passed, some of the town’s principal proprietors fled to the town hall seeking protection and counsel, but most cowered in their homes. Rioters outside demanded that everyone with surplus grain agree to sell at a reduced price until the next harvest. Indeed, they had this “engagement” put into writing and forced the mayor, the justice of the peace, and other leading grain-producers present to sign

¹⁴ Information: Charles Bonnault, propriétaire, 72 ans, n° 43 (23 Jan. 1847). See also his testimony at the trial. Printed trial report: “Affaire des Troubles de Buzançais” AD Indre, 2 U 70 (hereafter cited, “Affaire”), 25.

¹⁵ Interrogation (instruction): Pierre Laumont, 70 ans, écorcheur, n° 22 (20 Jan. 1847).

¹⁶ They were from the largely working-class *faubourg* of Hervaux, to the southwest of the town. There were 103 men in the workshop at the time of the grain transport interception.

¹⁷ Several sources refer to this episode: Information: Angélique Sallé, femme Bidault, 46 ans, journalier, mère d’un des inculpés, d. Buz., n° 8 (26 Jan. 1847), and her testimony at the trial, “Affaire,” témoin n° 15, p. 17; AD Indre, Interrogatoire: Louis Bidault-Sallé, 18 ans, couvreur (mis en liberté); Acte de l’accusation (7 Feb. 1847), M 2565.

¹⁸ “Affaire,” témoin n° 21, François Lucas, journalier, p. 19. Their exact words were: “Nous ferons enrager les bourgeois.”

¹⁹ They invaded the main building, whose six stories included the apartment where Cloquemin himself lived. They threatened to kill him, seized his grain and flour but scattered much of it on the ground, shattered windows and doors, smashed furniture, set several fires that the beleaguered brigadier of the *gendarmerie* rushed to extinguish, and divvied up almost 7000 francs they found stored in a desk and an iron cask. According to one of Cloquemin’s sons the sum was 6,983 francs 50 centimes. Information (20 Jan. 1847): Charles Fernand Cloquemin, négociant, n° 98.

²⁰ “Affaire,” témoin n° 21, François Lucas, journalier, p. 19.

²¹ Information: Pierre Frédéric Gaulin, propriétaire, 58 ans, n° 42 (23 Jan. 1847).

it.²² Those not present soon received a visit from crowds that carried the engagement and demanded assent to it.²³

The presentation of this “engagement” already signed by the mayor and justice of the peace, and backed by a simmering crowd, persuaded most to sign. However, at least nine hesitated, and rioters responded with violence that included physical threats, occasional scuffles and retribution directed at houses and their contents.²⁴

One individual offered violent resistance and he paid for it with his life: Louis Chambert, the forty-year-old son of one of the largest property owning families in town.²⁵ Amid the morning turmoil, two men carrying the “engagement” entered the Chambert house, encountering his mother.²⁶ As she signed, another man, Venin, burst into the house demanding money. During a scuffle, Chambert got a gun and fired point blank. Venin collapsed, mortally wounded. Hearing the shot, a larger crowd broke into the house. During the fray, a female servant, Madelaine Blanchet, whisked Mme Chambert away, at one point throwing herself on the old woman’s body to protect her from harm. Chambert himself fled up the main street, into a saddler’s shop to hide. There, his pursuers found him, dragged him into the street, and battered him to death. Scores of people watched—some rioters, some “bourgeois,” some from the street, others from attics and behind shuttered doors—but no one intervened to stop the assault.

Was Chambert “bourgeois?” Several rioters clearly thought so. The skinner had specifically named Chambert in his promise to skin any bourgeois who needed skinning.²⁷ A fifty-four year-old veteran of many a French upheaval, François Légéron, announced just outside Chambert’s door that “today is Mardi-Gras and tomorrow Lent; we will kill the bourgeois and bury them like during carnival!”²⁸

In the mid-afternoon, the Prefect arrived from Châteauroux with magistrates and a detachment of twenty-five dragoons. People pled their case to the Prefect; they explained that they and their families could not eat at such high prices and begged him

²² It read: “I, the undersigned, agree to sell to the public all the wheat that I possess at 1.50 francs the décalitre and barley at 1 franc. The undersigned proprietors agree from now until the harvest to give grain to the people at 3 francs the double décaliter.” In French: “Je, soussigné, m’oblige à vendre au public tout le froment que je possède à 1 F 50 c. le décalitre, et l’orge à 1 F. Les propriétaires soussignés s’obligent d’ici la moisson à donner le blé au peuple à raison de 3 F le double décalitre.” Lettre du 2^e avocat général à Châteauroux sous le couvert du procureur du roi, M Robert de Chenevière, à M le Garde des Sceaux (17 Jan. 1847), AN, BB19 37; and Lettre de Raynal, avocat général de la cour Royale de Bourges (20 Jan. 1847) n° 6, AD Indre, 2 U 70 (which contains the actual engagements and signatures).

²³ The village drummer paraded the streets proclaiming the concessions.

²⁴ Indeed, the presentation usually began with a polite request to sign, with threats escalating when proprietors hesitated or refused. See for example the testimony of Etienne Geay de Montanon, the richest inhabitant of Buzançais, who explained that he was told that quite simply “that the way to avoid pillage was to sign the engagement.” He signed and thus avoided disorder. Information: Etienne Geay de Montanon, 64 ans, propriétaire, Buz., n° 9 (25 Jan. 1847).

²⁵ This according to the tax-based electoral lists. His father Louis-Joseph Huard-Chambert, paid 1,204 francs for the *cens*. The Huards had produced a long line of local lawyers and municipal administrators. See *Annuaire administratif, statistique, historique et topographique du département de l’Indre* for 1846 and 1847.

²⁶ The father, Louis-Joseph Huard-Chambert, a retired military *officier*, lived in a separate house in town.

²⁷ See above.

²⁸ “C’est aujourd’hui le mardi-gras et demain le mercredi de cendres; nous tuons les bourgeois et nous les enterrerons comme le carnaval!” “Affaire,” accusé n° 8: François Légéron, père, p. 6. Witnesses claimed that he had said earlier, “I have already seen three revolutions; at the first sign I’ll turn a scythe around and we’ll see.” (“voilà déjà trois révolutions que je vois; à la première je mets un faux à l’envers et nous verrons.”). See also trial report’s version of this exchange (n° 61), p. 28.

to sanction the sale of grain at three francs. In the end, the soldiers downed their weapons and withdrew; the Prefect decided against quashing the engagement. He even handed over his purse and its money to women demanding help and insisted that the mayor do the same. Then, authorities retreated into the town hall. Later that night the Prefect and his band returned to Châteauroux, leaving the people of Buzançais to work out their troubles by themselves.

During the night and next morning, bands went door-to-door to demand charity of local elites (a logical consequence of elites' long-standing attachment to private, face-to-face charity). But the worst of Buzançais's riot had spent itself. That afternoon, authorities offered the confiscated grain for sale at the promised lower price. A National Guard unit finally organized itself²⁹ and, together with the gendarmes, timidly patrolled the turbulent town until reinforcements finally returned on Sunday.³⁰

Although rumors circulated in Buzançais that "all the bourgeois had been pillaged,"³¹ not all had merited the same treatment. Not surprisingly, rioters resented most those bourgeois who controlled subsistence and access to it through their political, economic, and social power. Rioters treated more respectfully those who acquiesced to their demands swiftly and sympathetically, who employed them fairly, such as Ratier, a manufacturer and *propriétaire*,³² and those who took their paternalist responsibilities seriously, such as the former magistrate, Montenon.³³ Of course the people did not always agree. For example, one large crowd hotly debated whether to include an *épiciier* (Flaubert's quintessential bourgeois), among their targets.³⁴

²⁹ Despite efforts to rally the *garde nationale*, nothing happened until the worst of the rioting was over, a pattern common to many food riots. This hesitancy was exacerbated by the fact that the *garde's* weapons were not only sequestered, but without ammunition. Indeed, the July Monarchy had largely deactivated them. The reorganization of the National Guard after 1835 widely disarmed their members in order to diminish their political menace. On this see, most recently, Georges Carrot, *La Garde Nationale (1789-1871). Une force publique ambiguë* (Paris, 2001), 260-1.

³⁰ However, by this time, the disorder had spread. Other riots erupted throughout the region: at Châteauroux, Niherne, Villedieu, Mézières, Vandoeuvres and beyond.

³¹ Procès-verbal de transport à Buzançais, flagrant délit, par Paul Français Edouard Patureau Mirand, juge d'instruction de l'arrondissement de Châteauroux (14 Jan. 1847), AD Indre, 2 U 70.

³² When a group of people escorting the "engagement" to reduce grain prices arrived at the house belonging to M. Ratier, they backed off when women cried out "don't go in, M. Ratier has always employed us fairly." He signed the document and they left him and his family in peace. Information: Etienne Geay de Montenon, 64 ans, propriétaire, Buz., n° 9 (25 Jan. 1847). In French: "n'entrons pas chez M Ratier qui nous a bien fait travailler." Buzançais documents refer to five different Ratiers, all living in proximity to each other. Two of these list their occupations as "wool merchant" while the others designate themselves as "proprietors." Of course, neither title necessarily represents all of the possible occupations performed by these households. It seems most likely that the women were referring to the wool merchants, who continued to conduct a significant business in the first half of the nineteenth century in this region.

³³ The household that held the largest quantity of grain (750 hectoliters), headed by M. Burnin, does not figure in any record from this period. He emerged unscathed. Another large holder (500 h.), M. Turquet, a lawyer on the electoral lists, also avoided trouble. The second largest holder, Ratier-Pinault *fils* (with 730 h.), part of a veritable dynasty of Ratiers in town, signed the engagement, as did his father, and the rioters left him alone. See the father's testimony: Information: Jean-Baptiste Ratier-Pinault, propriétaire, 75 ans, d. Buz, n° 40 (23 Jan. 1847). The former magistrate, M. de Montenon (and the largest tax payer in town, with 500 h.) signed and the group left. That evening he invited back the man who had carried the engagement. De Montenon thanked him for his behavior and gave him five francs. Information: Etienne Geay de Montenon, 64 ans, propriétaire, Buz., n° 9 (25 Jan. 1847).

³⁴ The *épiciier*, named Lecomte, was also a small time grain trader, or *blatier*. In the end, most decided he merited harsh treatment. In another example, workers for a tile-manufacturer, Richard, (a man they openly classed "bourgeois") left his factory untouched, but departed en masse to join the tumult, toting some of his tools. Another crowd threatened the forge owner, Tourangin, with pillage if he did not

In the end, sixty-seven townsmen signed the “engagement,” but only nine experienced a significant degree of violence. In effect, rioters not only knew who the “bourgeois” were more generally, they distinguished specifically—using the criteria of the crisis of 1846-47—between them. This distinction required a nuanced judgment based on normative standards other than simply wealth, property, local political power and even proximity to the grain trade.

The rioters’ words and deeds thus identified the Buzançais bourgeoisie. Most were non-noble property owners (usually of agricultural property), who lived in town; some lived on their *rentes*, some engaged in commerce, the professions, public office, and manufacturing. Many combined several functions: manufacturing and agriculture, or agriculture and the professions, for example.³⁵ Obviously, the Buzançais bourgeoisie identified by rioters in 1847 resembled their ancien regime predecessors: landed and further empowered by public office. Indeed, some families had venerable ancien regime bourgeois antecedents. For example, the Huards (Chambert’s mother’s family) had long supplied municipal *officiers*.³⁶ And, of course, attacks on bourgeois property—what William Beik has called “retributive violence”—had often occurred during earlier protests.³⁷

Yet, this bourgeoisie also differed from its predecessors in significant ways. For all its apparent similarities with the past, it had none of the legal privileges of corporate status that had given its non-noble bourgeois predecessors their particular identities (and security) in the ancien regime. A bourgeoisie of “profit, rente, and talent,”³⁸ it had to maintain and advance its status in new ways. Moreover, Buzançais’s bourgeoisie shared not only the benefits of a position sheltered from immediate need, but also the exterior signs of the “bourgeois life style:” bourgeois houses, personality (including pianos, a quintessential bourgeois symbol, which rioters targeted specifically), servants, and cultural capital (such as education).³⁹ This bourgeoisie especially united around the enjoyment of private property as capital, and lots of it, property that empowered them over others: as employers, of course, but also as gatekeepers to subsistence through the market, paternalism, wages, and through public assistance. July Monarchy electoral law also put departmental and municipal office and jury duty firmly in their control.

Although Buzançais protesters did not cast their struggle as a clash between workers and the owners of the means of production (as a few workers and their spokesmen did at mid-century),⁴⁰ they did see it as a struggle between the propertied and the propertiless, the rich and poor, and in this they proclaimed the bourgeoisie of

close shop so that his workers could join them. Although a few downed tools, most refused. Work continued and trouble passed Tourangin by. Alexandre Pamphile Tourangin, *maitre des forges* à Bonnau, d. Bonneau, commune de Buzançais, n° 17, (24 Jan. 1847).

³⁵ These included commerce (the miller Cloquemin), the professions (the former magistrate and property owner Montenon, as well as Cloquemin’s sons, one of whom was a notary, another a lawyer), public office (Chambert’s mother’s family supplied many an adjunct mayor to the town) and manufacturing (the wool merchant Ratier). Many large-scale *propriétaires* owned grain-producing properties on which they also had working tile ovens, forges, and tanneries.

³⁶ Another Huard currently served as adjunct to the mayor, and another as priest. The Gaulins had supplied several generations of *procureurs fiscaux*. Eugène Hubert, *Le Bas-Berry. Histoire et archéologie du département de l’Indre*. Vol. 3, *Canton de Buzançais* (Paris, 1908), 405, 425-31.

³⁷ See William Beik, *Urban Protest in Seventeenth-Century France: the Culture of Retribution* (Cambridge, 1997); and Julius Ruff, *Violence in Early Modern Europe 1500-1800* (Cambridge, 2001).

³⁸ As Jean-Pierre Chaline describes for Rouen, *Les Bourgeois de Rouen. Une élite urbaine au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1982), 378.

³⁹ Only the *tuilier*, Richard, claimed he could not sign his name.

⁴⁰ See early work by William Reddy and William Sewell. (Sewell, 282).

Buzançais their foremost enemy. This discourse is new to the history of subsistence movements, and is further evidence of how working-class consciousness developed through the “bread-nexus” before organizing around the wage-nexus. For centuries, food rioters had denounced and rioted against “hoarders,” “speculators,” and “egotists;” they had specifically mentioned bakers, millers, merchants (*blatiers*), and producers (the ancien régime’s *fermiers* and *laboureurs*). During the Revolution, they sometimes lumped these targets with “aristocrats.” It is true that they had occasionally targeted specific “bourgeois” for attack. But, to my knowledge, they had never before associated their distress with the bourgeoisie generally. This marks a significant shift in conceptualizing social relations and identities and contextualizing the politics of provisions, what Marc Steinberg has called a “discursive repertoire for collective action.”⁴¹

The rioters’ negative assessment of the Buzançais bourgeoisie had its counterpart in the critiques by the July Monarchy’s magistrates. In the eyes of neither rioters nor the government did local elites meet the standards expected of them. To the rioters’ denunciation of bourgeois “hardness,” Assize Court magistrates found bourgeois behavior “not very charitable.” That criticism proved only the first of many in a trial that the government clearly hoped would educate the local bourgeoisie, jurors, and the trial’s national audience in both proper character and solidarity in the face of disorder as much as it aimed to punish the rioters who had inflicted it.

In fact, in the Buzançais Affair, national spokesmen for the “Bourgeois Monarchy” (effectively Tudesq’s *grands notables*)⁴² tasked themselves with teaching the bourgeoisie—specifically cowardly, egotistical bourgeois men—how to be correct bourgeois. In this they used public shame (gendered shame) to drive their lesson home, a shame broadcast by the public forum of a trial, reinforced by the national political press, which spread the message well beyond Buzançais and the department of the Indre, to all of France.

From the outset of their investigation of the Buzançais affair, the magistrates recognized that more had transpired than in a traditional food riot. They worried, of

⁴¹ Marc Steinberg, “The Roar of the Crowd: Repertoires of Discourse and Collective Action among the Spitalfields Silk Weavers in Nineteenth-Century London,” in *Repertoires and Cycles of Collective Action*, ed. M. Traugott (Durham, 1995), 57-87; and his *Fighting words: Working-Class Formation, Collective Action, and Discourse in Early Nineteenth-Century England* (Ithaca, 1999).

How this new interpretive scheme emerged is an important question, and a subject of my work in process. Contemporaries thought it the work of external forces. One local notable hypothesized that constant communication with people in Tours (with its “prédications communistes”) might have influenced local workers. Information, Etienne Geay de Montenon, 64 ans, propriétaire, Buz., n° 9 (25 Jan. 1847). On another occasion this same notable worried that the miller, Cloquemin, had been responsible for disseminating “dangerous ideas,” probably anti-clerical ones. Finally, Raynal reported that he had information that a mysterious man, “dressed as a bourgeois,” had turned up, predicted the riot, and handed out money to encourage workers to participate in it. Lettre de Le Raynal, Le Premier avocat général en mission du parquet de la cour royale de Bourges au garde de sceaux, 25 Jan. 1847. “Un homme jeune, vetu en bourgeois, coiffé d’un chapeau rond, de bonne mine, occupé à ranger des papiers sur le parapet d’un pont; que cet homme l’avait engagé à retourner à Buzançais où devaient passer dans la journée des voitures de boé venant de Châtillon-sur-Indre, qu’il lui avait annoncé que ces voitures seraient arrêtés et qu’il y aurait du bruit, qu’il lui avait offert une poignée d’écus pour le décider à revenir sur ses pas, qu’il s’exprimait avec facilité, qu’il plaignait la misère du peuple, mais qu’il ne disait de mal ni du gouvernement ni des propriétaires.”

⁴² A.-J. Tudesq specifically includes among his *grands notables* these types of magistrates, from the Minister of Justice to the magistrates of the Royal Court at Bourges. *Les Grands notables en France (1840-1849). Etude historique d’une psychologie sociale*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1964).

course, about profound class hatreds and the possible influence of communism,⁴³ as well as the context, triggers, and consequences of such an explosion. They especially fastened on the issue of the obvious break-down of authority. This concern appears first throughout the correspondence between the prosecutors of the Royal Court at Bourges who investigated the case and the Minister of Justice. It continues throughout the trial, particularly in comments from the judge's bench itself.

Right from the start of his investigation, Louis Raynal, the Avocat-Général of the Royal Court at Bourges, held the Buzançais bourgeoisie in large part responsible for the tensions that seethed in their town. He wrote: "In Buzançais, a city of almost four thousand souls, there is a fairly numerous bourgeoisie, which is divided by miserable coteries and although quite rich not very charitable."⁴⁴

This assessment of the atomized character of provincial bourgeois society echoed a common trope of contemporary political discourse and literature.⁴⁵ Yet, this very failure of solidarity proved literally disastrous in Buzançais. Moreover, the absence of sufficient charitable impulses intensified tense antagonisms. Raynal emphasized that having belatedly organized charity workshops, municipal councillors had then undermined them by lowering the daily wage just at the time that grain prices had risen. Although consistent with current liberal thinking about public assistance, this strategy proved fatally counter-productive.⁴⁶ Raynal concluded that,

⁴³ See the debate over the communist threat in the correspondence in "Il ne vaut pas se le dissimuler, C'est la guerre du pauvre contre le riche, c'est le maximum imposé par la terreur, le pillage, la menace, c'est du communisme pratique," cited in AN, BB19 37, "Lettre du premier avocat général à Châteauroux sous le couvert du procureur du roi, M Raynal, à M le Garde de Sceaux," (21 Jan. 1847, 11 heures du soir); and in the testimony collected by the examining judges. A previous riot of November 1846 in Tours reportedly had ties to Etienne Cabet's communist movement and the revolutionary traditions of Auguste Blanqui. In this light, food riots threatened to lead to the abolition of property. On Tours see AD Indre-et-Loire, 1 M 174, "Lettre du maire de Tours au préfet de l'Indre-et-Loire," (24 Apr. 1847); AD Indre-et-Loire, 3 U 3 1732, Tribunal de Première instance de Tours, N° 475; AD Indre-et-Loire, 3 U 3 1732, *Le Voile soulevé sur le procès du communisme à Tours et à Blois* (n.p., 1847). The magistrate, Raynal, found the riot profoundly disturbing. He wrote to the Minister of Justice that Buzançais was: "un mouvement si curieux en lui-même, si peu attendu, si grave dans les conséquences pour l'avenir. ... C'est là assurément un des faits sociaux les plus importants de notre époque. ... il marque une phase nouvelle dans les questions sociales." AN, BB19 27, "Lettre du du Raynal le premier avocat général du parquet de la cour royale de Bourges au garde des sceaux," (Jan. 1847).

⁴⁴ AN, BB19 37, "Lettre (22 Jan. 1847) du Raynal, le premier avocat général du parquet de la cour royale de Bourges au garde des sceaux." The "coteries" were of several types. Religion divided them (Catholics around Montenon and anti-clericals around Cloquemin—Voltairiens), as did politics. The majority of municipal councillors—fifteen in all—were "adhérents du système de gouvernement," but a sizeable number—six—belonged to the "opposition démocratique modérée." One was simply designated "démocratique," and two (including the mayor) had no affiliation noted. AD Indre, M 1397, "Tableaux des conseillers municipaux de la commune de Buzançais (élections de 1843 et 1846)." Other communities managed to overcome such difficulties and undertake great acts of charity. See for example, Pierre Lévêque, *Une société en crise. La Bourgogne sous la monarchie de juillet. La Bourgogne au milieu du XIXe siècle (1846-1852)*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1983), 1: 33-35.

⁴⁵ This was a common theme in Balzac and Stendhal, just to mention the most obvious. Yet this denigration of provincial society also functioned to obscure real political divisions by characterizing all disagreements as matters of personal animosity and self-interest. On this point see Christine Guionnet, "Elections et apprentissage de la politique. Les élections municipales sous la Monarchie de Juillet," *Revue française de science politique* 46.4 (août 1996), 557. On this, see also Maza, *Myth*, and Priscilla Ferguson, *The Battle of the Bourgeois: The Novel in France, 1789-1848* (Paris, 1973).

⁴⁶ Both rioters and July Monarchy *grands notables* may have diverged sharply about the quantity, timing, and purpose of poor relief, but they largely agreed about its desirability and their paradigms emerged from similar origins. Roger Price and Timothy Smith have emphasized how French elites of many political persuasions clung tenaciously to an "ideology of charity" that recognized "certain

“the workshops assembled a large number of poor workers who, as is often the case, discussed the miseries of the poor and the hardness of the rich.”⁴⁷ Thus, investigating judges quickly located in the bourgeoisie of Buzançais a cause for the eruption that intersected with popular perception, *l'égoïsme*. This critique they directed not just against certain individuals, but against the bourgeoisie generally.

The first opportunity for educating the bourgeoisie in its proper duties presented itself at the trial in February. The police had arrested twenty-six rioters and the Royal Court at Bourges convoked a special session to try them collectively on various counts of murder and the destruction of property. From the first witness, the President of the Court, Claude-Denis Mater, castigated local bourgeois for their cowardly and dishonorable behavior. After Buzançais's brigadier of the gendarmerie, Désiré Caudrelier, revealed in his testimony that he had had to stand alone against the violence, the President declaimed: “My God, it emerges from the brigadier's deposition, that during the insurrection most bourgeois had hidden themselves.”⁴⁸ He observed to Caudrelier, the courtroom and the nation that: “if men of heart and honor on whom your city depends had acted like you did, we would not have to regret these great and irreparable miseries.”

He repeatedly asked witnesses where they had been during the riot and what they had done. Many simply watched from the street, but did not act. One man admitted he had hidden in his granary; another ran to his cellar; many rushed to hide behind closed doors.⁴⁹ The President flayed one man with: “you stayed on the second floor of your house while one of your fellow citizens was tracked [and] assassinated, and you did not budge! You lack humanity, sir, humanity, courage, and you did not do your duty.”⁵⁰

President Mater lectured Buzançaisen notables: “in moments of trouble, there is one place where all good citizens should rally, that place is the *Mairie*. If the notable inhabitants of Buzançais had acted this way, if they had rallied around the chief of the city, there would have been no pillage or murder in the town.”⁵¹

limited responsibilities towards the poor,” but that also insisted it should remain temporary and personal in character: temporary so as not to encourage dependency; personal so as to maintain networks of (hopefully deferential) dependents, and as Tocqueville explained, build a “moral tie” between “these two classes whose interests and passions so often conspire to separate them from each other.” Roger Price, “Poor Relief and Social Crisis in Mid-Nineteenth-Century France,” *European Studies Review* 13.4 (Oct. 1983), 424, 448; Timothy Smith, “The Ideology of Charity,” 1002-3; Alexis de Tocqueville, “Memoir on pauperism” (1835) cited in S. Dresecher, ed., *Tocqueville and Beaumont on Social Reform* (New York, 1968), 18, quoted by Smith, 1006. Traditions of face-to-face paternalism also profoundly informed nineteenth-century common peoples' demands for assistance, and unpinned centuries of food riots (and not deference) during subsistence crises. Indeed, despite efforts to assure that the “poor man never gets the idea that he can claim it as a right” (Smith (1997) quoting François-Marie-Charles, Comte de Rémusat, *Du paupérisme et de la charité légale, lettre adressée à MM les préfets du Royaume* (Paris, 1840), 57), food riots had generally evinced this attitude, even if rioters themselves had rarely used this precise language of rights. They did use it during the Revolution, when revolutionaries articulated the right to public assistance and to existence as basic rights.

⁴⁷ AN, BB19 37, “Lettre (22 Jan. 1847) du Raynal, le premier avocat général du parquet de la cour royale de Bourges au garde des sceaux.”

⁴⁸ Trial Report, témoin n° 1 (Désiré Caudrelier, brigadier of the gendarmerie), 12.

⁴⁹ Trial Report, témoin n° 12 (Louis Baguet), 16; témoin n° 13 (Jean-Baptiste Larry), 17; témoin n° 17 (Edouard Trotignon), 18; témoin n° 55 (Louis Willach), 27; témoin n° 76 (Joachim Thuilier-Fiot), 31.

⁵⁰ Trial Report, témoin n° 55 (Louis Willach), 27. When one witness asked if he could be excused from the proceedings to protect his 1000 franc *ferme* invested in a pottery establishment from possible assault, the President addressed him a strong rebuke: “no one opposes your departure, go hide yourself.” Trial Report, témoin n° 13 (Jean-Baptiste Larry), 17.

⁵¹ Trial Report, témoin n° 3 (Théophile Gaulin, justice of the peace), 13.

While Mater sometimes harangued particular witnesses, he cast many of his moral judgments and aspersions at the broader audience. When a witness explained that he had been “passing down the street while rioters pillaged Chambert’s house,” the President retorted: “Everybody was passing through the streets while others pillaged houses. It was like a holiday! ... Better to get together to oppose evil.”⁵² During the second day of hearings, a witness’s testimony prompted him to declare: “many witnesses here attended [the riot] as spectators at least, because they can tell us what happened. Shouldn’t one be surprised to see so many inhabitants promenading in the streets and watching it take place, or even, hiding themselves to as not to be seen?”⁵³ He reminded them: “it is something to not do bad, but that is not enough. It is also necessary to do good, or at least to prevent bad from being done.”⁵⁴

While the court found many examples of craven conduct, it found few worthy of praise. Aside from the brigadier, it could identify only one other man who had fulfilled his civic duties by resisting rather than watching the riot. Charles Griffon, *maître d’hôtel* in Buzançais, tried to stop rioters from beating the miller’s son with a club. In response, they inflicted several blows and forced him to withdraw. The President applauded his efforts: “these blows honor you rather than dishonor you.”⁵⁵

The court did find laudable behavior in unexpected places, however. Indeed, to the shameful behavior of local bourgeois, President Mater contrasted the conduct of a female servant, Madelaine Blanchet, a domestic in the Chambert household, who proved undaunted by threats that had cowed the bourgeoisie. While blows rained down *chez* Chambert, Madelaine loyally flung herself athwart Mme Chambert’s prostrate body, declaring that she would rather die herself than see her mistress injured. Indeed, even after rescuing Mme Chambert from the tumult, she defied more bluster and blows to return to the house and salvage the few possessions that survived the assault. President Mater described Madelaine as a “poor girl who had courageously covered her mistress with her own body.”⁵⁶ He taunted the men, saying that “if twenty men in Buzançais had acted with as much resolution much evil would not have happened.” He told her that “the Court congratulates you on your courage and your devotion” and described her behavior as “noble and generous.”⁵⁷ The *procureur-général* Didelot continued the same theme in his closing statement. Her example, he stated, contrasted sharply with general cowardice. He continued:

Whether terrified or indifferent, so many citizens, so many young and vigorous men let the riot follow its course, and offered no resistance to the assassination; while most hid in granaries, in basements, there emerged a humble girl of nineteen, who alone showed more courage than all this overwhelmed population.”⁵⁸

President Mater further lauded the courage of several other women: a working-class mother and several *bourgeoises*. A day-laborer, Angélique Sallé, had plunged into the riot to try to stop her son from participating in it. For this, she received recognition

⁵² Trial Report, témoin n° 86 (Constant Prudhomme), 32.

⁵³ Trial Report, témoin n° 11 (Pierre Gauluet), 35.

⁵⁴ Trial Report, témoin n° 25 (Etienne Richard), 37.

⁵⁵ Trial Report, témoin n° 31 (Charles Griffon), 21.

⁵⁶ Trial Report, témoin n° 26 (Georges Coulon-Cormier), 10.

⁵⁷ Trial Report, témoin n° 70 (Madelaine Blanchet), 29-30.

⁵⁸ Trial Report, réquisitoire du procureur-général, 43.

from Mater who proclaimed that “she had shown more courage than most of the inhabitants of Buzançais.”⁵⁹ Examples of brave bourgeois women existed as well, such as Mme Gaulin, who had held off rioters long enough for her family to escape.⁶⁰ The day after the worst rioting, charitable *bourgeoises* braved caustic comments and physical threats to hand out alms to the needy poor. The magistrates emphasized these acts of “bravery” to the courtroom, sharply contrasting them to the pusillanimous male conduct.

The Magistrates exploited the opportunity presented by the trial, and the publicity it received, to make their case before a larger public: in the courtroom and before public opinion represented by the political press. In the courtroom, the President played to the many spectators—urban and rural, common and elite—who amassed each day to hear the trial.⁶¹ The trial record reported reactions in the courtroom. For example, when the President, Mater, praised the valiant efforts of brigadier Caudrelier, spectators responded with “general indications of agreement.”⁶² They emitted a “sharp sensation” when he lashed local notables for failing to rally around the Mayor,⁶³ “astonishment” when he demanded why the national guard had not rallied to the call,⁶⁴ “sensation” when he denounced a witness for his lack of humanity and courage in failing his duty to resist violence,⁶⁵ and even more “sensations,” “emotions,” and “movements” when he shamed individual witnesses and hounded local bourgeois for their lack of solidarity and refusal to perform their duties.⁶⁶ At other times, the courtroom “laughed,” sometimes “hilariously,” at the President’s acrimony directed at local cowardice, as when Mater told one departing witness to go hide himself away again.⁶⁷

During his closing speech, the *procureur-général* spoke to the nation as much as to the bourgeoisie of Buzançais, the jury, or even courtroom spectators:

We are distressed, but we are even more ashamed to see such crimes committed in an era such as ours, in a country that prides itself with legitimate pride on its civilization, its gentleness, and its humanity! ... How did such fatal events occur in the middle of a population of almost four thousands souls, without encountering any resistance, any obstacle from honest citizens? The inhabitants of Buzançais have forgotten that the government cannot send a garrison into each commune, and that the population that is the surest guardian of order is that which guards itself.

⁵⁹ Trial Report, témoin n° 15 (Angélique Sallé, femme Jean Bidault), 17.

⁶⁰ AD Indre 2 U 70, Pierre Frédéric Gaulin, propriétaire, 58 ans, d. Buz., n° 42, 23 Jan. 1847.

⁶¹ Trial Report (25 Feb.), 1, reports “even before the hour assigned for the opening session, the environs of the Palais de Justice was surrounded by a large crowd, composed in large part of people from the countryside. Animated groups stationed themselves in the former and new marketplace. [Inside], the place reserved for the magistrates, jurors, witnesses, and lawyers was increased at the expense of the part reserved for the public. Magistrates, functionaries, lawyers in their robes and several women occupied the space reserved. The space for witnesses and jurors was barely sufficient to contain them; approximately sixty people, mostly belonging to the working classes or country folk, pressed into the place left over.”

⁶² Trial Report, 12.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* See for example, responses, 27 and 40.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

We do not know what to be more surprised about, the audacity of the brigands or the spinelessness, the heedlessness, of men whose interest and duties were to rally against the riot that threatened their properties, their families.

Thus, the magistrates manipulated notions of honor, duty, and masculinity that contemporaries increasingly associated with the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie.⁶⁸ They invoked defense of property and law and order concerns to recall the bourgeoisie to their interests and, more generally, to foster solidarity among the propertied.⁶⁹

This shame the magistrates leveled at all who had failed or who might fail to do their duties, knowing that the political press would broadcast this message widely in their reports. Indeed, the press reported on the over 300 riots that offered a seemingly endless array to choose from; however, they focused on the Buzançais affair and recounted every dimension of it, from the riot through the courtroom trial to the final execution of three rioters. Many historians have highlighted the efforts of July Monarchy politicians, journalists, novelists and activists to “call consciousness into existence.”⁷⁰ Buzançais’s public trial and media dissemination furnished abundant material to support this argument.

Of course, the Buzançais bourgeoisie did not call themselves bourgeois. When pressed to self-identify, they usually referred to themselves as “notables.”⁷¹ More generally, they saw themselves as beleaguered defenders of property. Even the court magistrates encouraged local bourgeois to think more universally, invoking a language of citizenship, public service and humanism. I, myself, don’t find this surprising. As David Blackbourne and Geoff Eley found for Germany in the nineteenth century, the creation of an openly assertive, positive class consciousness becomes much harder to achieve when its exponents find themselves trying to imagine themselves in the face of a simultaneous and increasingly potent, articulate, and hostile set of negative images.⁷² I’m inclined to agree with historian of the

⁶⁸ And as described by Bonnie Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class: the Bourgeoises of the Nord in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, 1981); Vincent E. Starzinger, *The Politics of the Center: The ‘Juste Milieu’ in Theory and Practice, France and England, 1815-1848* (New Brunswick, 1991, 1965); Robert A. Nye, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France* (Oxford, 1993); William M. Reddy, *The Invisible Code: Honor and Sentiment in Postrevolutionary France, 1814-1848* (Berkeley, 1997); and Harrison, *Bourgeois Citizen*, among others.

⁶⁹ They clearly sought to buck up the jury in particular. The *avocat général* Raynal feared early on that “This class from which the jurors come has [already] shown itself so divided . . . that it is hard to trust them . . . jurors taken from here do not, by any means, present the conditions for an impartial and firm justice.” AN BB19 37, also cited in Bionnier, *Jacqueries*, 95.

⁷⁰ Jeremy Popkin, *Press, Revolution, and Social Identities in France, 1830-1835* (University Park, 2002), 2, 82, 102. On this see also André-Jean Tudesq, “Le journal, lieu et lien de la société bourgeoise en France pendant la première moitié du XIXe siècle,” in *Sociabilité et société bourgeoise en France, en Allemagne et en Suisse, 1750-1850; Geselligkeit, Vereinswesen und Bürgerliche gesellschaft in Frankreich, Deutschland und der Schweiz, 1750-1850*, ed. Etienne François (Paris, 1986), 261-73; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 2d ed. (London, 1991), 77; Pierre Rosanvallon, *Le Moment Guizot* (Paris, 1985), and Maza, *Myth*.

⁷¹ Just before the trial in February, they published a “Rapport” in the departmental paper, *Le journal de l’Indre*, in which they referred to themselves as “notables habitants.” AD Indre, M 2565, “Rapport sur les événements accomplis dans la ville de Buzançais les 13, 14, 15 janvier 1847 et jours suivants.” The signatories were twenty-five *propriétaires*, eleven *entrepreneurs et commerçants*, and ten *membres de professions libérales*.

⁷² David Blackbourne and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German history: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford, 1984).

Parisian bourgeoisie, Adeline Daumard, who argued that “the representatives of the bourgeoisie knew themselves as bourgeois, but most of them would not have thought of presenting themselves as such.”⁷³ Indeed, the Buzançais notables clearly recognized that they were the flesh and blood “bourgeoisie” of rioter word and deed.

However, I’m not sure they had achieved in mid-century Buzançais the self-confidence Daumard ascribes to their Parisian counterparts.⁷⁴ I’m more inclined to see—through the lens of popular protest and the documents it generated—what Patrice Higonnet refers to as a “more cautious” bourgeoisie, even as late as 1847. Cautious in the wake of episodic eruptions of revolution (Buzançais elites equated the “engagement” with the Revolutionary *maximum*) and popular revolt that threatened their property and the empowerment that followed from having it, and cautious before a growing hostile rhetoric emanating from politics, literature and the common people.

The Buzançais affair also shows how unstable bourgeois solidarity could be and how much it required constant maintenance. During the first half of the nineteenth century, and the July Monarchy in particular, the French sought new ways to represent their society (“a new social imaginary” as Sarah Maza has most recently called it)⁷⁵ in the wake of the Revolution that destroyed ancien régime corporate paradigms. But collective identity was also forged in the fire of experience: revolutionary experiences, contentious political experiences, and in the everyday forms of resistance. Many historians have focused on how the experience of protest helped shape working-class or sans-culotte identities; fewer have considered its implications for the bourgeoisie.⁷⁶ Colin Lucas has suggested that after the Thermidorian repressions of the disorders of Germinal and Prairial, “the era of the property owners’ unadulterated fear of the ‘dangerous classes’ ... had begun ... and provoked the final defection of the bourgeoisie from a culture based on notions of community.”⁷⁷

Indeed, Raynal predicted what followed, when he told the Minister of Justice that this episode “would rally to central authority all men who have an interest in the maintenance of order. In this respect it could terminate or simplify political questions.”⁷⁸ In fact, the Indre became one of the most stalwart departments of “order.” An August 1847 departmental report asserted that the experience had furthered a “common agenda:” “We have seen men of all opinions ... put away their resentments and unite in a common front against disorder.”⁷⁹

The experience of Buzançais confirms calls by recent historians to consider how both experience *and* representation contributed to forging new social identities, and how these were not static, but constantly under construction. As Carol Harrison has observed, “class is a process and performance.”⁸⁰ In Buzançais in 1847, the performance of riot and trial exposed the difficulties involved in building bourgeois identity and solidarity.

⁷³ *La Bourgeoisie parisienne de 1815 à 1848* (Paris, 1963), xi.

⁷⁴ “La bourgeoisie est dans toute sa force, elle a confiance en son destin.” Daumard, xii.

⁷⁵ Maza, *Myth*, 10-12.

⁷⁶ More recent work on protest might help rebalance this, such as that by Jill Harsin, *Barricades: The War of the Streets in Revolutionary Paris, 1830-1848* (New York, 2002).

⁷⁷ Lucas, “The Crowd and Politics between Ancien Régime and Revolution in France,” *JMH* 60.3 (1988), 457.

⁷⁸ AN, BB 19 37, Lettre (Jan. 1847) du Raynal le premier avocat général du parquet de la cour royale de Bourges au garde des sceaux,.

⁷⁹ AN F1c VII Indre, Rapport du sous-préfet du Blanc au Conseil d’arrondissement, août 1847. Gras argued that during the plebiscite of 1851, the Indre proved itself more Bonapartist than the rest of France. “Crise,” 1: 549.

⁸⁰ Harrison, *Bourgeois Citizen*, 8.