

Carlsbad 1819

Like another Chouannerie

The Eighteenth Brumaire of Fritz Pendleton

July 23, 2017 by Nulle Terre Sans Seigneur

[The original title was going to be “The Napoleonic Touch of Death,” but surely this is better.]

Fritz Pendleton has implored reactionaries to take note of a well-known Corsican, believing his significance to a hypothetical restoration to be unjustly downplayed. His essay “[The Napoleonic Touch](http://www.socialmatter.net/2017/07/13/the-napoleonic-touch/) (<http://www.socialmatter.net/2017/07/13/the-napoleonic-touch/>)” (also linked from [his blog](https://datedways.wordpress.com/2017/07/13/the-napoleonic-touch/) (<https://datedways.wordpress.com/2017/07/13/the-napoleonic-touch/>)) asks us to reconsider the Napoleonic legacy. I shall take up his challenge.

Interpretations of Napoleon still largely converge on one of two axes: Adolphe Thiers’ and Hippolyte Taine’s. A republican admiration for Napoleon the liberator juxtaposed to contempt for Napoleon the egoist, leveller and adventurer.

An interesting synthesis position is that of Frederic May Holland, a 19th century Unitarian minister, in his *Liberty in the Nineteenth Century*. Napoleon was an egoistic autocrat, but at least he wasn’t an Austrian Catholic conservative, and at least he blessed his German, Swiss and Italian subjects with equality before the law (although that was dialectically inevitable anyway). He concludes that “Napoleon’s despotism had the awful and baneful grandeur of an eruption of Vesuvius; but his despicable enemies merely kept up the oppression of his empire without its glory.” *Glory*, of carrying on the mantle of *egalite*, no doubt.

Pendleton, himself struggling with the distinction between patrimonial and despotic authority due to his Bodinian conception of sovereignty inherited from Moldbug, latches on to that word “autocrat” and shouts out: “Goyim, Napoleon was *our guy!*”

Pendleton’s essay is filled with constant reassurances that Napoleon’s actions were always primarily concerned with the maintenance of *order*, even when they seem egalitarian. To Pendleton order is something of an ill-defined fixation.

Before I go further, I would like to quote Camille Jordan, a deputy of *monarchiens* convictions, [from his protest](https://books.google.com/books?id=DG8PAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA7) (<https://books.google.com/books?id=DG8PAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA7>) against the 1802 measure for making Napoleon a Life Consul:

Let us hasten to understand each other, profound statesmen, learned interpreters of opinion; the people are disgusted with liberty; Yes, we believe it without difficulty, of this Liberty which most of you sought to give to it; Of that liberty which was founded on the principles of a mad democracy, which exaggerated all rights, forgot all duties, admitted crime as a means, executioners for apostles, who soon converted into a frightful despotism, to the Convention, to the Directory, all these laws of execrable memory, fills France with ruins, Europe with terror, and no longer offers itself to our imagination, surrounded by the apparatus of death! She is too just that horror of a whole people, so cruelly disappointed! Hey! Who has felt it more strongly than us? Who has more fought such excesses, at the peril of his days? What do we have in common with a guilty party, who perhaps meditates its return?

Oh! Some of the men of this party, who were only astray, and seem to acknowledge their errors, who deplore the arbitrary acts of which they have set an example a hundred times, have tears to pour over so many wounds? How, at the same time, that they have a right to the full protection of the law, they must resolve to efface themselves in public opinion, to avoid reproducing an odious opposition, the fear of which is constantly exaggerated, to be the surest instrument of absolute power!

Some of these defectors of demagogy, now exaggerating all the maxims of order, as they exaggerated yesterday all the principles of independence, and pretending to compensate for the fury of their present abjection.

[...]

Some haughty men, who, from the bosom of their honors, speak to you with disdainful pity for this human race, and the necessity of governing it. The danger of philosophical abstractions; who imagined that they were statesmen, because they were men without principles, and that the secret of governing a people was only that of despising it!

The coup of 18th Brumaire is traditionally marked as the end of the Revolution, but Jordan here notes the fundamental continuity from the National Convention to the Consulate. This is an important historiographic contention: is Napoleon the culmination of the Revolution, or is he the bearer of an independent epoch? The sympathies of his nephew Louis-Napoleon and the Bonapartists are clear, but more on this below.

Felicité de Lamennais, at the time a premier ultramontanist, suffered a noticeable shift in his opinions on Napoleon between 1808 and 1814. In his *Réflexions sur l'état de l'Église* of 1808, he praises Napoleon as a defender of the rights of clergy with his Concordat. In his *Tradition de l'église sur l'institution des évêques* of 1814, however, he is harsh. On multiple points, he says (<https://books.google.com/books?id=0sxGAAAACAAJ&pg=PA307>):

“Napoleon has faith only in strength, and employs all of his to overthrow the religion of his fathers.”

“Napoleon claimed this authority as an attribute of the crown which the Pope put on his head: he snatched from his seat the Supreme Pontiff, inhumanly dragged him from prison to prison, scattered the sacred college, and held the successor of the saint Pierre, as a brigand is separated from his accomplices, in order to draw more easily the confessions which will convince him.”

(This is in reference to Pope Pius VI's captivity following the invasion of Italy during the Directory.)

“Napoleon assembled the bishops of his empire, and their command to abrogate the old custom, in order to establish against the express will of the Pope a new, unheard-of, destructive discipline of the laws of the Church and the primacy of its chief. Some cowardly prelates dishonor themselves fruitlessly by serving his purposes. The greater number of the Bishops resist, and, stupidly atrociously, are punished for their fidelity, which is its [the Church’s] safeguard.”

(This is in reference to the highly Gallican Organic Articles (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organic_Articles).)

One can reasonably presume that Lamennais’ true opinions (pre-July Revolution) had to be concealed in 1808 due to the activity of Joseph Fouché’s police.

Fouché recounts a speech (<https://archive.org/stream/josephfoucheduke01foucials#page/108/mode/2up>) from Sieyes, the Second Consul, shortly after the 18th Brumaire, where he says that “Severity is necessary to prevent public opinion from being left to the royalists and anarchists. These must be struck first. It is always in its *debut* that a new power must show its force.” Such it is with Bonapartists, who cannot tell a king from a caudillo.

Fouche also honestly speaks of his participation in deception (<https://archive.org/stream/josephfoucheduke01foucials#page/114/mode/2up>): “The maxims and interests of the Revolution had, however, still too much life to be injured with impunity. I thought it my duty to cool the hopes of the counter-revolutionists, and to raise the courage of the republicans. I observed to the Consul that he still acted a part of great delicacy; that, having manoeuvred with men sincerely attached to the republican forms and to the liberties of the public, and the army itself having imbibed the same sentiments, he could not separate himself without danger, either from his own party or the army; besides that, it was necessary for him to quit a provisional and create for himself a permanent establishment.”

The “permanent establishment” in question would constitute the legislative work of the Consulate from 1799 to 1804, with it indeed being the formalization of the permanent revolution.

How did the “cool[ing] the hopes of the counter-revolutionists” take place? I will let Chateaubriand narrate from *De Buonaparte et des Bourbons* (1814):

Buonaparte did not openly announce his plans; His character developed only by degrees. Under the modest title of consul, he at first accustomed the independent minds not to be afraid of the power they had given. He reconciled the true French, proclaiming himself the restorer of order, laws, and religion. The wisest of them were caught, the most clairvoyant deceived. The republicans regarded Buonaparte as their work and as the popular leader of a free state. The royalists believed that he was playing Monk, and was eager to serve him. Everyone hoped for him. Brilliant victories, due to the bravery of the French, surrounded him with glory. Then he intoxicated himself with his successes, and his inclination to evil began to declare itself. The future will doubt whether this man has been more guilty by the evil he has done than by the good he might have done, and which he has not done. Never did the usurper have an easier and more brilliant role to fulfill. With a little moderation, he could establish him and his race on the first throne of the universe. No one disputed this throne; the generations born since the revolution did not know our old masters, and had seen nothing but troubles and misfortunes. France and Europe were weary; They sighed only after repose; He would have been bought at any price. But God would not permit such a dangerous example to be given to the world, that an adventurer might disturb the order of royal successions, make himself the heir of heroes, and profit in one day from the spoil of genius, Glory and time. In default of the rights of birth, a usurper can legitimize his pretensions to the throne only by virtues: in this case Buonaparte had nothing for him, except military talents, equaled, if not surpassed, by those of several of our generals. To lose it, it was enough for Providence to abandon it and give it up to its own folly.

A king of France said that "if good faith were banished from the midst of men, it should be found in the hearts of kings", this quality of royal soul was lacking especially at Buonaparte. The first known victims of the perfidy of the tyrant were two chiefs of the royalists of Normandy. De Frotte and the Baron de Commarque had the noble imprudence of going to a conference where they were attracted by a promise; They were arrested and shot.

Soon a more famous murder consternated the civilized world. It was believed that these barbarous times of the Middle Ages were reborn, those scenes which are found only in the novels, those catastrophes which the wars of Italy and the policy of Machiavelli had made familiar to the Alps. The stranger, who was not yet a king, wished to have the bloody body of a Frenchman for a footstool of the throne of France. And what a Frenchman, great God! Everything was violated to commit this crime: right of the people, justice, religion, humanity. The Duc d'Enghien was arrested in full peace on foreign soil. When he had left France, he was too young to know it well. He saw the land of his country, as it was for the first time, from the bottom of a post-chaise, between two gendarmes. He crosses to die the fields illustrated by his ancestors. He arrives in the middle of the night at the donjon of Vincennes. In the light of the torches, under the vaults of a prison, the grandson of the great Conde is convicted of having appeared on battlefields; convicted of this hereditary crime, he is immediately condemned. In vain he asked to speak to Buonaparte (oh so touching as heroic simplicity!), The brave young man was one of the greatest admirers of his murderer; he could not believe that a captain wanted to assassinate a soldier. Still exhausted by hunger and fatigue, he was sent down to the ravines of the castle; He finds a newly dug grave there. He is stripped of his coat; A lantern is attached to the chest to see it in the darkness, and to better direct the ball to the heart. He asks for a confessor; He begs his executioners to transmit the last marks of his memory to his friends: he is insulted by rude words. The fire is commanded; The Duc d'Enghien fell: without witnesses, without consolation, in the midst of his country, a few leagues from Chantilly, a few paces from those old trees under which the holy King Louis rendered justice to his subjects, in the prison where the prince: the young, the handsome, the brave, the last offspring of the conqueror of Rocroy, dies as the great Conde would die, and as his murderer will not die. His body is buried furtively, and Bossuet will not be reborn to speak on his ashes.

De Frotte (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_de_Frott%C3%A9), a Chouan. De Commarque, also a Chouan.

The Duke of Enghien was falsely implicated in a royalist plot with British assistance to restore the Bourbon monarchy in 1803 [the British themselves cared not for the Bourbons, and their interest was always first and foremost to defend the Low Countries from Napoleon as a bulwark of their naval supremacy], and was arrested and ignominiously shot a year later. His death not only ensured to the extinction of the House of Condé, but immediately preceded Napoleon's coronation as Emperor. Hence, the opening act of Napoleon's coronation was founded on the blood of legitimists.

Exactly as Sieyes would have it. "These [royalists and anarchists] must be struck first." The anarchists still live among us, however.

In the meantime, the "Corsican mountebank" (one of the many epithets used by William Vincent Barré, an early and fierce anti-Napoleonic writer; he also made sure to always include the "u" in "Buonaparte" to emphasize the ethnic roots of the Corsican upstart) and his associates set out on building the institutions of the 18th Brumaire.

Pendleton makes much ado about Napoleon's haphazard restoration of nobility (really nothing of the sort) in the form of the Legion d'honneur. As Pendleton calls it, it was "a means to give the most talented and capable men in France a chair at the aristocratic table." Moreover, that the resulting "surge of upstarts among the aristocracy kept the upper-crust honest by reminding them of their potential replaceability."

Barré says of it that "the only duty of that *legion of honour*, is to defend the government (Buonaparte) against all its enemies; and which they are bound to do by a very particular oath... On this select body of troops, well paid, well dressed, and well fed, that insolent upstart rests his hopes; taking always care to promise still greater rewards to the military, if they are ready to second his future undertakings."

Title I, art.8 of the Law for Organizing the Legion of Honour (1802) confirms this (http://www.napoleon-series.org/research/government/legislation/c_legion.html): "Each person admitted to the Legion shall swear upon his honor to devote himself to the service of the Republic, to the preservation of its territory in its integrity, to the defence of its Government, its laws and the properties which they have consecrated; **to combat with all the means that justice, reason and the laws authorise, every undertaking having a tendency to re-establish the feudal regime, or to reproduce the titles and qualities which were symbolical of it; lastly, to assist with all his power in the maintenance of liberty and equality.**"

Indeed, the Legion had seldom to do with any traditional conception of a nobility (by intention), being simply a civic order of merit. Rather than enshrining aristocracy, it was a reminder of republican equality before the law. Pendleton himself evidently has a very utilitarian and desacralized view of the matter, what with defending Napoleon's comment that "it is by baubles that men are led." Give the goyim their circuses.

Why would he, when in Napoleon's proclamation the day after the coup (19th Brumaire), he described himself as having "the zeal of a soldier of liberty, and of a citizen devoted to the republic." He wasn't playing 4D chess, as will become clear.

According to Barré's report, when the Constitution of the Year VIII establishing the Consulate was subjected to popular plebiscite, General Lefebvre had told his men: "We are now again in the glorious days of the revolution; the robbers will no longer be employed, and the acceptance of the constitution will put an end to all divisions. Only factious men can reject it; let us swear that our bayonets shall exterminate them."

In 1800, the Consulate laid the groundwork for the modern administrative division into prefectures with mayors and councils: "The European territory of the Republic shall be divided into departments and communal districts." The *pays d'élection* and the *pays d'état* of old, the latter with their estates provincial, were declared gone for good in a triumph of the Revolution. Now, of course, the rise of absolutism had suppressed many of the estates provincial already, but the surviving pays were all given the same treatment in 1789, and the order of 1800 signified their permanent end.

Napoleon also took care that no child was left behind, imposing a new system of secondary education in 1802. Most notable was the introduction of the lycées (http://www.napoleon-series.org/research/society/c_education.html), the advanced stages of secondary schooling:

Every appeal court district was to have a lycée, and they were to be completely supported, and controlled, by the state. Scholarships were provided, with about one-third going to sons of the military and government, and the rest for the best pupils from the secondary schools.

The lycées had a six year term of study, building on the work of the secondary schools. The curriculum included languages, modern literature, science, and all other studies necessary for a "liberal" education. Each lycée was to have at least eight teachers, as well as three masters (a headmaster, an academic dean, and a bursar). In a reflection of modern debate on the subject, the government provided a fixed salary for teachers, but also provided bonuses for successful teachers. They were also provided a pension. Teachers were, incidentally, chosen by Napoleon from a list of recommendations provided by inspectors and the Institute. The inspectors were given over-all responsibility for inspecting the schools on a regular basis.

Most revealing, however, was the Imperial University reform of 1808 that hierarchically subsumed all forms of schooling. Title V of the act establishing it lists among its principles (http://www.napoleon-series.org/research/government/legislation/c_education.html#title5a):

Fidelity to the Emperor, to the Imperial Monarchy, the depository of the welfare of the peoples, and to the Napoleonic dynasty, the conservator of the unity of France **and of all the liberal ideas proclaimed by the constitutions...**

Clearly, even in his reactionary imperialist mode, the Emperor could not resist associating himself as the "conservator of liberal ideas."

How about we turn to the sister republics? These were started under the National Convention, to be sure, but the Empire perfected them.

The Peace of Pressburg in 1805, following victories against the Austrians in Austerlitz and Ulm, would ultimately lead to the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire. This alone is terrible enough, but the wounds would also be salted. The Confederation of the Rhine established in 1806 from former imperial states had guilds, cathedral chapters and the Landstaende (provincial diets) abolished and Francophone civil servants installed.

Fouché confides in his memoirs of Napoleon's intentions and his own gleeful reaction (<https://archive.org/stream/josephfoucheduke01fouciala#page/254/mode/2up>): "In a privy council Napoleon had announced to us that he intended to dispose of his conquests in a sovereign manner by creating grandees of the Empire and a new nobility. Shall I confess that when, in a fuller council, he proposed the question, whether the establishment of hereditary titles was contrary to the principles of equality which almost all of us professed, we replied in the negative? In fact, the Empire, being a new monarchy, the creation of grand officers, of grand dignitaries, and the supply of a new nobility appeared indispensable to us. Besides, the object was to reconcile ancient France with modern France, and to cause all remains of feudality to disappear, by attaching the ideas of nobility to services rendered the state."

Napoleon's reactionary credentials were on display in one of the client states of the Confederation of the Rhine. So, Title 4, arts.10-13 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Westphalia (1807) read (http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/docpage.cfm?docpage_id=3644):

"Art. 10. The Kingdom of Westphalia shall be governed according to such basic laws as determine the equality of all subjects before the law as well as the free exercise of worship specific to the various religious societies.

Art. 11. Both the general and the provincial estates of the states comprising the kingdom as well as all political corporations of this sort and all privileges of these corporations, cities, and provinces are abolished.

Art. 12. In the same way, all privileges of individual persons and families are, insofar as they are incompatible with the stipulations of the above article, abolished.

Art. 13. Any serfdom, whatever the nature or name of it may be, is abolished, so that all inhabitants of the kingdom shall enjoy the same rights."

Art. 11 had to hurt, I'm sure. But it was par for the course of our Emperor. Equality has to have its sacrifices! But does not our dear Pendleton tell us that "it is unusual for revolutions to be led by the middle class, but if they are, the results are often catastrophic"? And does not Pendleton say that "France needed a builder"? Well, I will say this: I don't know how much the Corsican upstart was a builder, but his governance was distinctly *Mittelstand*, and the results were indeed catastrophic.

But, on the other hand, the Slovenes really enjoyed it. Indeed, the period of 1809 to 1813 when Napoleon annexed the Slovene lands as the Illyrian Provinces to his Empire, is regarded with great fondness by the Slovenian intelligentsia, both then and now.

Why?

Well, I'll let the Slovenian government explain. Or, at least, their official magazine (<http://www.ukom.gov.si/fileadmin/ukom.gov.si/pageuploads/Sinfo/2009-05.pdf>), oriented toward tourists:

By introducing the Slovenian language as a school subject in educational institutions, the new French government – whose actions were dictated by the great civil revolution from which it ensued – recognised the equality of this language and culture and in this way placed the Slovenians on the map of European nations. The spontaneous and amiable response by the Slovenian intelligentsia therefore created a cultural foundation which could no longer be relegated to anonymity, so many cultural and other reforms remained even after the Illyrian Provinces had ceased to exist. This lucky coincidence, which is of the utmost importance for the beginnings of a firm national identity and the considerably greater self-confidence of Slovenians, is very much responsible for the traditional inclination towards and attachment to French culture which can be observed in Slovenia. This culture brought into force the principles of liberty, fraternity and equality which at the end of the 19th century also made it possible for smaller human communities and less populous nations to survive and develop. Thanks to them, we Slovenians, too, found the way to our neighbours and into the family of European nations.

A “lucky coincidence.” The wonders of national liberation! You start with the oppressed Slovenes, and move on to the oppressed Arabs and Bantus. Enjoy the hordes!

The Slovene poet Valentin Vodnik would pen a little ode titled *Ilirija oživiljena* (Illyria Reborn) in 1811 opening up with the line “Napoleon said: Illyria, rise up!” (“Napoleon reče: Ilirija vstan’!”).

Rise up, rise up! Just like Switzerland rose up. To crush the Catholic cantons of the Sonderbund, I mean. Yeah, that was a while later, but let’s not forget the precedent (https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/md/zegk/histsem/mitglieder/the_1848_conflicts.pdf):

As it is impossible to go into too much detail here , I will just mention the most important aspects [of the Swiss Federal Constitution of 1848] : a national executive, the federal council : a bicameral parliament according to the American system , thus guaranteeing a considerable influence to the small cantons ; several freedom rights , such as – to some extent – universal suffrage for men and freedom of settlement ; unification of customs , post, coinage , measures and weights; further unification in military issues; federal competence to promote the commonwealth, through public enterprises or a national university. It is clear that even besides the obvious model of the USA, many foreign ideas influenced the Constitution of 1848. **Yet, it was declared a ‘home-grown’ Swiss creation from the beginning to avoid the hated memory of the Helvetic Republic of 1798.**

Great men always leave a mark on history, don’t they? Now, Napoleon would indeed pass the Act of Mediation in 1803 to restore Switzerland to a confederacy with the privileges of such a constitution. Until the Federal Diet started eroding them piece by piece when it didn’t suit Napoleon’s military interests. But, as Pendleton tells us (also quoting Castellane-Novejean), conscription “was a principle as timeless as the rivers and the trees.” Don’t send priests to war? To hell you, we want equality before the law.

Such benevolent concession did (at the time) Bonaparte general in chief of the Italian army grant to the Cisalpine Republic in 1797 (https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Constitution_of_the_Cisalpine_Republic_%281797%29). also: “Many years have passed away since the existence of a republic in Italy. The sacred fire of liberty was extinguished, and the finest part of Europe was subject to a foreign yoke. It belongs to the Cisalpine Republic to show to the world, by its wisdom, its energy, and the good organisation of its armies, that modern Italy is not degenerated, that it is still worthy of liberty.”

The “foreign yoke” in question being the House of Austria.

The Southern Netherlands (Belgium) were also blessed by the presence of the Corsican mountebank. The Code Napoleon was imposed everywhere. (Pendleton again raises a ruckus over its relatively traditional stipulations on women and marriage, when this was an import from the old regime, moreover one weakened by provisions allowing for an opting of “separation of goods” in the community (joint pool of marital assets) where women could dispose of their movable property at will, and also from it being written like a social contract.)

The Corsican also made the bishops and priests preach personal devotion to himself, as well as adherence to French policies including conscription. Merely a moderate continuation of what the Directory had already started (http://www.napoleon-series.org/research/government/Belgium/c_BelgiumRevolution.html), in 1795:

Although the looting ceased, social conditions worsened for the Belgians as the French directly challenged several important institutions, including the Catholic Church and the Dutch language. The Church, which in the Habsburg era had been the largest landowner in Belgium, saw its property confiscated by French authorities. Clerical robes were forbidden in public as was the ringing of church bells. Crosses were also removed from churches and any monastic orders not tied to education were immediately disbanded. Priests were forced to take oaths of “hatred” against royalty which many refused and in turn faced deportation. In 1797, the University of Leuven was closed and its rector died in captivity in French Guiana.

Dechristianization, the radical way; versus dechristianization, the Bonapartist way. I suppose the latter is more imperial, swearing fealty to a liberal caudillo but keeping the robes.

The proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy in 1805 would truly be the most horrific, however. I have mentioned the wretched taxman (<https://carlsbad1819.wordpress.com/2017/03/30/x-post-thermidor-balzac-on-the-tax-gatherer-mentality/>). Giuseppe Prina before, so I will simply repost my prior comments...

Half of the state budget was devoted to maintaining Napoleon’s Crusaders on Italian soil. In the name of “just equality among taxpayers,” Prina had uniform land assessments imposed for the levying of a property tax, which he placed under direct ministerial control. Church estates were expropriated, and clergy were forcefully turned into mouthpieces for conscription. The Napoleonic Code was imposed, along with an administrative system based on departements, wiping out customary law. Civil marriage was introduced and ecclesiastical marriage made legally void. Tax collection authority was removed from local communes and given to the Finance Ministry. Repressive personal income taxation (originally imposed in much lighter form during Austrian rule of Lombardy) was forced on the rural population. A wide variety of duties were imposed on consumer goods (most notably salt), leading to price hikes on staple foods that burdened the peasantry further. License fees imposed on millers sparked an insurrection in July 1809 that left approx. 2000 dead.

The madness ended on April 20, 1814, shortly before the dissolution of the Napoleonic client state. Prina was hounded by a mob who dragged, beat, mutilated and ultimately killed him as he was subjected to a protracted lynching. The afrancesado had met a similar fate to those that Jacobinism had slaughtered before and that made his career possible in the first place.

Quite.

What is it with Bonaparte and the taxman?

The Revolution, with its assignat policies and its mass confiscations, had rendered France's position as a creditor totally barren in terms of public confidence. Thus, France financed its war effort almost entirely by exorbitant taxation, whereas Britain pursued a "tax smoothing" strategy of relying primarily on borrowing through the Bank of England and reallocating budget surpluses to a sinking fund for debt payments. Most of the taxes fell on France's sister republics and imperial peripheries, of course. *Bellum se ipsum alet.*

The Continental Blockade, Napoleon's combination of national development policies with the military objective of isolating England, had great repercussions for both France itself and its sister republics.

Eli Heckscher's definitive treatment tells us of the Kingdom of Italy's fate (<http://www.econlib.org/library/YPDBooks/Heckscher/hksrCS19.html#Part%20IV,%20Chapter%20III>), particularly its isolation from its customary trading partners:

Napoleon's egoistic policy was most clearly framed with regard to the Kingdom of Italy (North Italy), which he was anxious to transform entirely into an economic dependency of France. Hermetically sealed to the sales of the industrial products of all other countries, it was open to receive French goods and to provide France with needed raw materials (chiefly silk), but without any corresponding right to derive advantages from the French market; finally, it was designed as a barrier to prevent goods from the competitors of France from penetrating into Naples, Sardinia, and South Europe in general. Owing to the fact that Italy for hundreds and even thousands of years had been economically connected with Switzerland and Germany by close commercial ties, this policy involved a severe dislocation of the industrial life of these last two countries and compelled them to have recourse to other markets or to other branches of activity. Napoleon has never given his general principles relating to the treatment of allies and subordinate non-French territories a more intensive expression than in another famous letter which he addressed on August 23, 1810, to his faithful and reliable step-son, Eugene Beauharnais, who governed Italy in his name as Viceroy. The fundamental idea of this letter appears in the following extract, with Napoleon's own highly significant italics:

"My fundamental principle is, France first and foremost (*la France avant tout*). You must never lose sight of the fact that if English trade triumphs on the seas it is because the English are the strongest there. It is reasonable, therefore, that as France is the strongest on land, French trade should also triumph there. Otherwise all is lost.... Italy has France to thank for so much that she really should not mind if France acquired some commercial advantages there. Therefore, take as your motto: *La France avant tout.*"

#MakeFranceGreatAgain

So it was.

(<http://www.econlib.org/library/YPDBooks/Heckscher/hksrCS18.html#Part%20IV,%20Chapter%20II>). A France with a stagnating iron industry that was completely "protected" from technological advances in steelworking, in addition to a high reliance on charcoal for smelting furnaces. The cotton industry, on the other hand, was an artificially propped up farce dependent on foreign shipping (restricted by design) that chugged on with acute shortages and unemployment under the Empire, and collapsed dramatically when the Empire fell, like a malinvestment being thoroughly liquidated.

Nevertheless, it is often in the death rattles of a movement that it reveals its true colors. It would take the Republic of Salo for Mussolini to (more in a display of showmanship than actual influence given his role as a pawn of the Third Reich) unveil the fascist project in its purity.

So, it would take Napoleon's last stand in the Hundred Days for his radicalism to come out in the open. Given all his actions beforehand, we shouldn't simply assume he was bluffing it and that he was a crypto-reactionary all along.

The most striking phenomenon of the Hundred Days were the *fédérés*, the various brigands, volunteer troops and clubs that were formed to serve the Bonapartist cause.

The *Fédérés of Dijon* (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2639199>) afford us with a detailed portrait.

All of the *fédérés* had to swear the following oath:

I swear obedience to the constitutions of the empire and fidelity to the Emperor, to oppose with all my power the machinations which would tend towards the re-establishment of the Bourbons and of any prince of this family on the throne; the reestablishment of the feudal nobility, seigniorial rights, tithes, and a privileged and dominant worship, which could impair the irrevocability of the sale of *biens nationaux*.

The *biens nationaux* were the forcibly seized and sequestered church lands during the Revolution, of which a large enough portion of the *fédérés* had an economic interest in to put it in an oath.

A cult of popular Bonapartism had developed in Dijon, with busts of Napoleon a common fixture, also paraded on the streets. The imagery of Bonapartism was also combined with that of republicanism, Napoleon's bust paired with the tricolor.

Prof. Alexander emphasizes that the society was explicitly revolutionary:

In the official writings of the federation, revolutionary sentiment and Bonapartism are inextricably bound. The pacte of the federation tells us much of the role in which the *federes* cast themselves. The first thing to be noted about it is that it is virtually an exact replica of its Breton counterpart. It may well be that the founders of the Burgundian federation thought the Breton pacte so perfect an example that they dared not alter it, but it is difficult not to suspect that they adopted the original model so exactly in order to assure that their own plans to form a federation would be accepted by the government. Be that as it may, in adopting the Breton pacte the Burgundians made it their own and the constitution of the 'federation bourguignone' is an excellent statement of intent available to us. The third article of the pacte is especially interesting:

"The object of this confederation is to devote all its means to the propagation of liberal principles, to support the public spirit in the present circumstances, to oppose all the disorders in maintaining public security in the interior of the country."

The revolutionary potential of the association becomes apparent. That the first object was to propagate 'liberal principles' indicates clearly that the federation was not merely a defensive alliance. Although the federation recognised that it held no public authority, it meant to exercise over its members a police morale, which sounds very much like that of a Jacobin society. The federation would be egalitarian: membership was open to men of all ranks of society and no marks of distinction would be allowed. If a member failed to fulfil his obligations as a citizen, he would be banned from the association.

Napoleon also commissioned the French liberal Benjamin Constant to draft a new constitution during the Hundred Days, the *Act additional* of 1815, which "expanded the electorate, freed the press, dethroned the Catholic Church from its role of state religion, and granted the legislature control over the

executive,” as summarized by J.R. Ladick.

It would be his nephew, Louis-Napoleon, the future Napoleon III, who would continue the Bonapartist ideology in this not at all novel, but now explicit direction. In his *Des idées napoléoniennes* (1839), he gives us a shockingly blunt summary:

Napoleon, arriving upon the stage of the world, saw that he was to play the part of being the *testamentary executor of the revolution*. The destructive conflagration of contending parties was extinct, and when the revolution, dying, but not vanquished, bequeathed to Napoleon the duty of accomplishing her last wishes, she said to him:

“Secure upon solid foundations the principal results of my efforts ; reunite the French, now divided; repulse feudal Europe, now in league against me; heal my wounds; spread light among the nations ; complete broadly what I have commenced deeply ; be for Europe what I have been for France ; and even though you may be called upon to water the tree of civilisation with your blood, to see your plans misunderstood and rejected, and those who are dear to you condemned to wander in exile over the earth never abandon the sacred cause of France, but make it triumph by all the means which genius invents, and humanity approves.”

The two immediate conclusions here is that “testamentary executor of the revolution” has to be one of the greatest phrases ever coined, and also that the Revolution ought to have kept her filthy harlot mouth shut.

Louis-Napoleon also declares

(<https://archive.org/stream/napoleonicideasd00napouoft#page/30/mode/2up>) that “the centralization of power had been vital to French nationality,” a correct observation but not one with a particularly inspiring conclusion. He also presents a summary

(<https://archive.org/stream/napoleonicideasd00napouoft#page/44/mode/2up>) of his uncle’s liberal accomplishments. Most striking is that paragraph: “Especially [!] let us not overlook the fact that all which Napoleon undertook and accomplished, in order to effect a general fusion, was done without renouncing the principles of the Revolution.” His uncle’s fidelity to the Revolution is something Louis-Napoleon ceaselessly emphasizes.

During the July Monarchy in which Louis-Napoleon wrote this, the Napoleonic legend flourished like wild, tells us Philip Guedalla

(<https://archive.org/stream/secondempirebona00guediala#page/32/mode/2up>):

The enunciation of the Imperial legend rose, under official encouragement, to a crescendo. Poets and historians became incapable of other topics, and the Napoleonic illustrators flooded the bookshops with pictorial Bonapartism. The shadowy reign of Napoleon II. closed, as that dim light flickered out at Schonbrunn in 1832. But in Paris men were still quoting the full-mouthed eloquence of Victor Hugo’s *Ode a la Colonne*, and at half the theatres French audiences were staring open-mouthed whilst round-shouldered actors in grey overcoats took snuff, pinched ears, or raked the footlights with that single field-glass.

[Adolphe] Thiers passed from the history of the Revolution to the Consulate and Empire. The *Memorial de Sainte-Helene* appeared with Charlet’s drawings, and Raffet illustrated a mediocre *Histoire de Napoleon*. Whilst the King’s ministers were struggling with the Egyptian question, epic poets were collaborating to produce *Napoleon en Egypte* in eight cantos with decorations by Vernet and Bellange; and Heine found Napoleonic engravings on every wall in France.

When the Minister of the Interior and doctrinaire liberal, Charles de Remusat, gave a speech in 1840 in favor of returning Napoleon's ashes from Saint Helena to France, Adolphe Thiers remarked to a deputy on his left, Duvergier de Hauranne: "Isn't this a good gesture?". "Yes," he responded, "it is a good joke." In this instance, I support the left.

Well, let us wrap up.

The last thing I want to address is Pendleton's admiration for a so-called by him "reactionary" quote by Napoleon: "The life of a citizen is the property of his country."

First, he ought to quote what follows (http://www.napoleon-series.org/research/government/legislation/c_consulate.html#sectionc): "The people of France wish that the whole of mine should be consecrated to their service, and I obey. In giving me this new, this permanent pledge of their confidence, they have imposed upon me the duty of maintaining the system of laws and institutions of the republic. By my efforts, by your co-operation, citizen senators, and that of the constituted authorities, and **by the confidence and will of this immense people, the liberty, equality, and prosperity of the people of France will be secured from all the accidents which arise from the uncertainty of futurity.**"

Suddenly it is no longer particularly reactionary.

More than that, Pendleton's fundamentally absolutist and decisionist account of authority means that to him, the most reactionary state of affairs is for subjects to be treated like niggers.

In the English jurisprudence of the High Middle Ages, following the foundation laid down by Henry de Bracton, there are two main classifications for a person's status: they are either free or bond; and they are either *sui juris* or in the *potestas* of another. *Potestas* is primarily either that of a father or a seignor. Seignorial potestas end by manumission, death, deposition of the seignor, or by the seignor attaining clerical office. Being *sui juris* means being subject primarily to the king.

The king has no equal within his realm. However, he is not an absolute divine-right ruler like the way Frederick III of Denmark proclaimed himself to be in 1665.

He is, rather, the vicar and minister of God on Earth, who must distinguish equity from iniquity, and be an exemplar of justice and the keeper of peace. The king's will alone is not sufficient for an act to be *de jure*, with the deliberation and consultation of his magnates also being important. The title of *rex* is bestowed not upon simply reigning, but on ruling well through the precepts of natural and divine law. "Let him, therefore, temper his power by law, which is the bridle of power, that he may live according to the laws, for the law of mankind has decreed that his own laws bind the lawgiver," says Bracton. (<http://bracton.law.harvard.edu/Unframed/English/v2/305.htm#TITLE262>).

To say that a citizen is the property of his country is to say that he is a bondsman to some entity called a "country," which is rather nebulous to begin with as opposed to a living personal vicar who embodies the continuity and force of law. It's even worse because Napoleon's quote references equality, making the entire country a plantation of slaves without owners. Actually not a bad metaphor for republicanism, come to think of it.

In conclusion, I believe I have made a decent case that Pendleton is pursuing a dead end.

Oh, by the way, Napoleon emancipated the Jews. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleon_and_the_Jews).

BONAPARTISTS, JEWS ...



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28 thoughts on “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Fritz Pendleton”

1. Michael Rothblatt says:

July 24, 2017 at 7:50 am

Goyim, Napoleon only ended the accursed chaos of “libertarian” customary law, he only brought order to the feudal “anarchy” that was Europe!

When your sole measure of “reactionariness” is how kraterocratic and statist you are, then it’s hard not to view any totalitarian strongman as hyper-reactionary. It even makes it impossible to question the legitimacy of successful revolutions. If might makes right, and the sovereign is the sole onomastician who decides what is good, and what is evil, then on what grounds are Marxist-Leninist dictatorships to be criticized? After all, Filmer said that the concept of tyranny is meaningless because whatever sovereign does is only his prerogative... so I guess not only was Napoleon reactionary, but Stalin was too and much more so at that. After all, comrade Stalin not only did away with NEP (ebul capeethaleesm), he did away with the Synagogue, banned abortion, and strenghtened the traditional marriage. What’s there not to like comrade?

Reply.

- Nulle Terre Sans Seigneur says:

July 24, 2017 at 11:00 am

> If might makes right, and the sovereign is the sole onomastician who decides what is good, and what is evil, then on what grounds are Marxist-Leninist dictatorships to be criticized?

Thankfully, the neoreactionaries have successfully resolved this dilemma, comrade:

<http://www.socialmatter.net/2017/02/13/communism-fondly-remembered-longing-tradition/>

Reply.

2. fjwawak says:

July 24, 2017 at 9:21 pm

According to this theory <https://thejournalofneoabsolutism.wordpress.com/2017/05/02/36/> he was just securing and concentrating power. And maybe he was. He apparently was aware that pursuing liberty and equality concentrates power in his hands. I am just not sure he was an opportunist or sincerely believed in liberalism.

Reply.

- Michael Rothblatt says:

July 28, 2017 at 3:23 pm

Ah, I see you've found the online den of Esoteric Order of Kim Il-Sung. You see, they say leftism happens when central power is "insecure" (which they interpret as meaning not total and absolute), which makes it do the levelling action to erase competing power centers and gain more power. Their solution to this perceived problem is... wait for it... to level everything and give the central power absolute and total power (but isn't the endpoint of leftism I ask avail)! Then central power won't have reasons to invent feminism and LGBTQQIA+ rights to destroy the family, or invent excuses why crackdown on religious communities is necessary, or invent excuses why crapping up the economy is necessary. Well that much may be true. But, in that case, central authority will just abolish the family directly, and raise the subjects in State operated children farms where they'll be indoctrinated into submission and unquestioning obedience to the State from the young age. Instead of propping up egalitarian cults, dandy absolutist will just ban all conventional religion altogether and institute the cult of personality, to be worshipped himself as the god-emperor. And instead of crony capitalism i.e. mercantilism, the glorious leader will just nationalize everything and institute full communism. In hindsight Nick Szabo was right when he warned Moldbug what his system will lead to (as it so happens, in that discussion Moldbug was defending DPRK though not their policies).

Reply.

- Michael Rothblatt says:

July 28, 2017 at 3:25 pm

>but isn't the endpoint of leftism I ask avail

Faulty keyboard buttons, should say:

but isn't that the endpoint of leftism I ask to no avail

Reply.

- fjwawak says:

July 29, 2017 at 7:03 pm

Esoteric Order of Kim Il-Sung — LOL

Yes, this idea of absolutism looks like socialism applied to the realm of politics i.e. to avoid all the mess of competing “power centers” it is necessary to nationalize all power and put it to the hands of a single man.

That said, securing power is a real world phenomenon otherwise Machiavelli would have nothing to say. And to give the author of linked article his credit the patron part and esp. the history of “humanrightism” was interesting.

Reply.

- Michael Rothblatt says:

July 30, 2017 at 8:39 am

Well, I am not saying I disagree with everything they say, I am always up for genuine insight. What rouses my ire are malicious misrepresentations and slanderous lies. Well that, and I don’t think that world communism would be a big improvement over the current state of affairs (to say the least), and besides that’s where we’re heading anyway. Fnargl was a bad idea all around.

Reply.

- marcusmontisursinensis says:

July 30, 2017 at 2:58 pm

Considering old chap Nicky Machiavelli, he did not live enough to see Cardinal Alessandro Farnese becoming Pope Paul III, securing Parma for his son, having his grandson married to the eldest illegitimate daughter of Emperor Charles V, the descendants of the latter ruling that small monarchy for centuries. I am not sure he would be impressed. People fascinated with power prefer egomaniacs like Cesare Borgia or Napoleon, who both eventually lost and died in exile. Ferdinand “the Catholic” of Aragon should ne a prototype Machiavellian ruler... yet he was born a son of a king... which is not sexy enough.

Reply.

- marcusmontisursinensis says:

August 4, 2017 at 7:51 pm

Alphonse Lamartine, the poet-politician, the Catholic turned hodgepodge pantheist (or something) and the Bourbon legitimist turned “moderate republican” seems to have liked Mohammad. Not a reactionary, but a typical nice guy who hates no-one and likes almost everyone and everything (for each Jacobin, who shapes by open hatred and iconoclasm, there are ten Girondinists who buldoze for the Jacobin by their mere love, moderation and temperance for everyone except les ennemis de la liberte)

Reply.

- marcusmontisursinensis says:

August 4, 2017 at 7:52 pm

That should have stood as a response to Rothblatt.

Reply.

3. livrosnamesa says:

July 25, 2017 at 3:40 am

Carlyle had thought much of writing a life of Napoleon, or book of some kind upon him; “but the more I looked into him,” he said, “the more I perceived him to be of the Brigand species.”

(William Allingham, Diary, 1908).

Reply.

4. Imperial Energy says:

July 25, 2017 at 6:35 pm

A tremendous essay. Your use of primary sources is astonishing. We will pen a reply shortly.

Reply.

5. Pingback: Napoleon: Hot or Not? (1.) – IMPERIAL ENERGY

6. marcusmontisursinensis says:

July 26, 2017 at 4:55 pm

Your brief chapter on the Slovenes reminds on their illustrious ruler, Emperor Joseph II, elder brother of Queen Marie Antoinette, grand uncle to Napoleon's bride Marie Louise, a true proponent of liberty and equality, a philosopher king.

Joseph was the great leveller, the father of the nation-wide standardized schooling system, the abolisher of contemplative Catholic orders, but also those that had too much influence over pre-university schools, such as the great Pauline order of Hungary. The central monastery of the order on Lepoglava, Croatia, was turned to barracks, then to prison (Tito, bl. Cardinal Stepinac, Tadjman being all incarcerated there). Joseph is the founder of Prussian-style bureaucracy, being a great fan of his mother's greatest enemy Frederick the Great (a great soldier, but a hereditary king, therefore not as sexy as the upstart Buonaparte). Bureaucracy and state schools (the later aimed to produce good peasants for levee-en-masse) needed a standard language. German. Which produced frustration among the Magyars, Croats, Slovenes, Czechs, Slovaks... Hungarians and Slavs did not have bourgeoisie. Most cities were inhabited by German-speaking majority, descendants of Austrians or Germans who moved there decades, even centuries before. War and agriculture were the business for Magyars and Slavs. While Magyars and Croats their independent Kingdom and Vice-Kingdom, their Estates made of noblemen identifying themselves with their Kingdom/Viceregency, poor Slovenes had only German nobility (e.g. Windisch-Graetz) that never felt attachment with Slovenian cause. With German speaking nobility, with Germans in towns, the national leaders were those several provincial lawyers and Jewish entrepreneurs. Too weak to produce a proper melee. The real problem occurred when the reaction to Joseph's germanization bore a bastard child among Hungarian (Magyar) magnates, such as Batthyany and Szecheny, who were in turn driven by the puritanist Brachmins like the notorious Kossuth, the good guy par excellence of all freedom lovers (general Hyena being the archetype of a bad guy). Croats, despite trying to turn to the left, were not as fast to-the-left swimmers as the Magyars, thus going to war on 1848 as allies of Vienna against Hungarians-are-Magyars Budapest. Most ironically, the most conservative elements in Croatia pleaded for pre-1848 Hungaria (which is not Magyar-land), for which they were held as traitors by Croat nationalists, and which they could not re-establish since the dominant political option in Hungary were girondinist-style liberals (the other option being Kossuth's nationalist jacobins). Joseph II and Frederick the Great. Two great predecessors of Buonaparte, Joseph being a true Brachmin, full of abstract principles, detached from reality and able to destroy any old-style institution.

Reply.

7. Pingback: Napoleon the Condottieri V Constantine the Caudillo (2/3). – IMPERIAL ENERGY

8. Pingback: Napoleon: Aristocratic, Militarist Reactionary. – IMPERIAL ENERGY

9. quaslacrimas says:

August 3, 2017 at 1:35 pm

Fun piece. A few of your Fr > En translations are a bit off — in particular, he needed to convict the pontiff, not convince him:

> PROCÉDURE JUR. (ou situations analogues). Convaincre qqn de + inf. passé ou subst. le plus souvent indéterminé. Administrer à quelqu'un la preuve irréfutable de son crime, de son délit. Convaincre qqn d'avoir volé; convaincre qqn de trahison, de vol, d'adultère

Enghien saw the fields made illustrious by his ancestors, not illustrated by them; in English the first Bishop of Rome was Saint Peter, not the saint Pierre

On the historical front, two points: (i) creates more smoke than light to conflate the treatment of the church circa 1795 with appraisals of the post-Concordat religious policy. (ii) More broadly, victory has a thousand fathers, failure is an orphan: who takes seriously anyone who was enthusiastic about Napoleon in 1804 and contemptuous in 1814? (The Vicar of Bray has his French cousin, M. le curé de Bray-sur-Somme.)

Regardless, don't take these suggestions amiss – impressive effort.

Reply

- Nulle Terre Sans Seigneur says:

August 3, 2017 at 2:33 pm

I was rushing out this piece at night, so it figures. The Gobineau piece had worse typos that Howard J. Harrison pointed out. Wait until I get to decoding heavy tomes written in Fraktur, then the party will really start...

> who takes seriously anyone who was enthusiastic about Napoleon in 1804 and contemptuous in 1814?

Nah, I agree. Lamennais was a total schizoid, jumping from throne-and-altar to full blown commie.

Reply

- quaslacrimas says:

August 3, 2017 at 3:35 pm

I am in complete sympathy, mon ami. Like I said, what is surprising is that you craft these pieces for us for the sheer joy of it, not that they have errors. (To say nothing of the number of languages you juggle.) The editorial comments are merely so that you can revise and let the piece stand in its best form; any substantive critiques are only so that your industriousness can be put to its best use. ("Iron sharpens iron", and all that.)

>Lamennais was a total schizoid

But we should not pillory poor Lamennais: greater men than he did the same thing. My point was not so much that Châteaubriand or Constant or Tracy or anyone else is discredited by his, hmm, "evolving" attitudes towards Napoleon, but rather that what is valuable in their thought is basic concepts and arguments, not their quotidian politics.

(Btw, the key with Fraktur – even 16th c Fraktur – is to read nothing else. If you read a page of Fraktur once a week for a year each page will be intolerable, but if you compress the 52 pages into a few days or a week it becomes familiar.)

Reply.

- o Michael Rothblatt says:

August 4, 2017 at 10:31 am

>Nah, I agree. Lamennais was a total schizoid, jumping from throne-and-altar to full blown commie.

As did Victor Hugo for example. I wouldn't hold it against him. Romantics (whether of right, or left-wing variety—and many did shift positions during their lifetimes) in general weren't a particularly stable bunch. Juan Donoso Cortés and William Blake were disappointed Rousseauans. Chateaubriand was infamous adulterer. De Custine was a sodomite. Carlyle was the first Western apologist for Muhammad. René Guénon converted to Muhammadanism! Etc. etc.

Reply.

- o marcusmontisursinensis says:

August 4, 2017 at 1:18 pm

John Stuart Mill, likewise, was an adulterer.

Before that, our dearest Rousseau thought an orphanage a better place for his five (?) children than to marry the mother of those children. The guy who wrote so much about the education of children.

Reply.

- o Michael Rothblatt says:

August 4, 2017 at 3:39 pm

Yes, but J.S. Mill is considered to be a proponent of Enlightenment, even as he was the chief subverter of classical liberalism. In general, apart from the proto-Romantics who were the worst of the left-wing crazies (Rousseau, de Sade, Diderot, etc.), Romantics tended to be staunch reactionaries, seeing it as the opposite of the Enlightenment. But, rather than being the opposite of the Enlightenment, I tend to think of Romanticism as being its culmination, when Enlightenment finally turned on, and devoured itself (it was, as Kant says "The Age of Criticism" rather than "The Age of Reason" and Reason itself was not beyond its critical eye). After all, philosophy of Enlightenment wasn't based on Rationalism (despite calling its politics "rationalistic"), which was a hated Medieval thing, it was based on Sentimentalism. Indeed, the subjects that would come to dominate writings of the Romantics, we can see in Enlightenment figures such as Adam Ferguson and Thomas Jefferson.

And where J.S. Mill was the subverter of classical liberalism, Marx was the subverter of classical conservatism. Adopting Romantic era criticism, he tricked everyone to think it "progressive" rather than "reactionary" thus making Marxists the biggest schizoids of all—extolling the greatness of science and technological advancement and being horrified by them at the same time.

Reply.

- o marcusmontisursinensis says:

August 4, 2017 at 7:54 pm

(wrote a response... then managed to post it somewhere above)

Reply.

10. marcusmontisursinensis says:

August 4, 2017 at 1:37 pm

Generally, how do all admirers of Buonaparte's military genius describe his "wonderful" expedition in Russia, where he was incapable to anticipate any of the major problems that was going to confront him (the scorched earth strategy by the Russians etc, etc.). After that, Leipzig was only the formality of pressuring him into the straits, regardless of his Pyrrhic victories in 1813.

Reply.

- o Michael Rothblatt says:

August 4, 2017 at 3:59 pm

He is certainly responsible for deaths of order of magnitude more Frenchmen than Robespierre, but that aside, it was he that ultimately ended the Old Order in Europe. Problem is that from the "absolutist" standpoint "reactionariness" isn't based on policies, but on how much power you are willing to concede to the central government. In "absolutist" framework, Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle are denounced as being filthy libruhls and caesaropapism reigns supreme. Thus figures such as Ambrose of Milan (or any other church father who stood up to the secular authority) are seen as being deranged anti-social degenerates, but figures such as Joseph II, or Napoleon as merely the leaders who are doing the right thing, namely securing their power.

Reply.

- o marcusmontisursinensis says:

August 4, 2017 at 8:00 pm

Well said. Currently, I am in doubt whether to study Savonarola or Joseph II as the next "Great Man of History". The former had more ardent followers, the latter was truly in power.

Reply.

11. Pingback: The Comte de Montlosier's swansong for the debased nobleman | Carlsbad 1819
12. Pingback: The Prince, The People, and Fritz Pendleton in Between | Carlsbad 1819

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