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Iconography of the Labour Movement.
Part 1: Republican Iconography, 1792–1848

Abstract: This is the first article in a two-part study of the background and development of the iconography of the international socialist labour movement. With the breakthrough of modern political ideologies after the American and French revolutions, the symbols of freemasonry long remained an important point of reference for new iconographic systems serving secular propagandistic needs. The virtues and vices of classical moral education were replaced or combined with new ones, and old symbols were invested with altered meanings in the context of political satire and allegory. The human and especially the female body retained prominence as a vehicle for conceptual personification in official display and in the minds of common people. After September 21, 1792 (the abolition of the French monarchy), the attempt to replace Christian religion with a cult of the Goddess of Liberty and other associated entities proved, however short-lived, to be of lasting iconographic significance. The rise of liberal democracy and the modern nation state meant that *le peuple* (the populace) was now seen as an organic entity with a common will. Between 1792 and 1848, republican iconography provided allegorical representations of how this relationship between state and population was conceived. It offered symbols and personifications that later became integral to the political and agitational practises of the labour movement. This heritage was double-edged, however. Elements signifying governmental stability were combined with those associated with revolt and dissent. Symbols of rational progress were combined with religious or metaphysical symbolism.

Keywords: Socialism, Labour Movement, French Revolution, Freemason Symbolism, Republican Symbolism, Personification, Composition

Fig. 1. Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863), La Liberté guidant le peuple, 1830. Oil on canvas, 260 x 325 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris, acquisition number RF 129. Wikimedia commons (1st-art-gallery.com).

Iconography of the Labour Movement

Part 1:
Republican Iconography, 1792–1848

Fred Andersson

That there has been an iconography of the labour movement would seem rather self-evident considering the pictorial memories easily conjured up in anyone's mind when socialism is discussed. However, the genealogy of modern political imagery and its roots in religious or mystical iconography is much less known, except among specialists. There are certainly international authorities who have dealt with this problem, including Maurice Agulhon (1926–2014) and Ernst H. Gombrich (1909–2001). Still, iconography is as marginal a topic in labour history as labour history is in iconographic scholarship. One of the most substantial previous studies of interest in this context, Maurice Agulhon's *Marianne au combat* from 1979 (translated into English in 1981) was merely intended as a preliminary attempt to trace the development of one single symbolical type: the female personification of the Republic. In the preface to his book, which covers the period 1789–1880, Agulhon explains that his account was to reach a more detailed *érudition* in a companion volume.[1] The plan was changed, however, and he later continued in the same vein to study the 1880–1914 period (*Marianne au pouvoir*, 1989) and the years from 1914 to the present (*Les Métamorphoses de Marianne*, 2001).

A scholar who wants to study the iconography not merely of a specific revo-

lutionary situation, but rather the whole "iconosphere" of a political force such as the labour movement, will have to face some initial problems of conceptual nature.[2] How is one, for a start, to define a phenomenon of such historical complexity and ideological diversity as "the labour movement"? Is it possible to avoid the trap of reducing the variety of local struggles and popular protest to some grand narrative of the historical mission of the working class? How could one do justice to local and popular use of labour symbolism and labour imagery, not necessarily related to dominant practices of socialist state ideology?

A second problem concerns the very concept of "iconography". What is to be considered a proper "iconographic" case? Is it enough, for example, with a portrait of Marx or some freely chosen Soviet kolkhoz scene of the 1930s? Or is the term "iconographic" and the instruments of iconographic analysis applicable only when a picture – apart from realistically evoking the character of specific individuals and events – also represents general themes and concepts in a manner akin to the permanence and repetition of grammar? In that case, much of what has been written during the past century on depictions of labour, industry and manual labourers would be categorized as studies of labour *imagery*, but not of labour movement *iconography*. The simple point of this distinction is that the notion of a "labour movement" includes not simply concrete situations of labour and struggle, but also a collective and historical dimension, and that the continuity of iconographic repetition has a unifying and consolidating function.

Iconographic attributes such as the hammer and the sickle, personifications of collective bodies such as State or Party, allegories of the relationship between impersonal forces such as Town and Country, and more general or abstract symbols such as the colour red and the red star, are all of interest here. In addition, a more structural analysis of how such iconographic elements are arranged in allegorical compositions, and how the compositional schemes are repeated, often reveals interesting parallels with how political values are described and contrasted in related public discourse. It would therefore be unwise to focus too narrowly on the naming function, on the significations which might be listed in *Iconclass* or any other iconographic dictionary. As previously shown by Victoria E. Bonnell (b. 1942) in her book on Soviet propaganda posters (1997), the formal structure of a visual political message may contribute substantially to its meaning.[3]

The present investigation has resulted in two articles in *ICO, Iconographisk Post*, of which this is the first. The article provides some background regarding the modern and pre-modern iconography of *Libertas* and covers the development between the abolition of monarchy in France on 21 September 1792 and the revolutionary spring of 1848. Consequently, it will cover a period which at first sight would seem both anterior and alien to the labour movement in a proper or socialist sense. Differently put, it will be largely dedicated to the iconography of a victorious bourgeoisie. Why, then, is this long prelude necessary? Because already in this era, the political standpoints of extreme leftism were legitimised with reference to the sentiments of simple people, of *le peuple*, but in a manner which still lacked specification. Certain images and symbols became invested with extremist associations and were avoided in official contexts, but they reappeared in the iconography of socialism after 1848.

After its origin has been analysed in the first article, nine examples of the socialist iconography of the labour movement will be studied in the second article. These examples are taken from The United States of America, Great Britain, Finland, SFSR and USSR (before and after 1922), and finally Sweden. Admittedly the choice of countries and examples has been made from the perspective of our Nordic periphery, aiming at a comparison with other countries to which republican and socialist iconography spread from France and Germany. The whole survey will end with the example of the Hjalmar Branting monument in Stockholm, inaugurated on 2 June 1952. The aim of both articles is not to present unexplored examples or previously unknown sources, but rather to summarize how earlier research in the fields of social history, art history and visual rhetorics could help us draw some preliminary conclusions about modern political iconography in general, and the iconography of the labour movement in particular.

The old iconography of Government and Liberty

The gradual introduction of republican values and symbols in France can be observed in such "iconologies" as *Iconologie ou traité de la science des allégories à l'usage des artistes*. The emblem pages of this work in four volumes were printed as early as in 1791, but binding and publication was then delayed until 1796.[4] Visually, the work was largely based on original designs by the famous book illustrator Gravelot (Hubert-François Bourguignon, 1699–1773). These

had been engraved by Charles-Nicolas Cochin the Younger (1715–1790) and his collaborators. Cochin also added many original designs of his own. After Cochin's death in 1790, Charles-Etienne Gaucher (1741–1804) completed the *Iconologie* and wrote both its preface and most of its emblem descriptions. As a work completed during some of the most turbulent years of the post-1789 period and incorporating older images and notions, it combines in an interesting manner the values of *l'ancien régime* and those of the beginning of a new era.

In the second volume of the *Iconologie*, we find an emblem by Cochin representing the concept of *gouvernements* (fig. 2). The accompanying description, probably written by Gaucher (or at least revised by him), lists eight different kinds of governments: Aristocracy, Democracy, Theocracy, Monarchy, Universal Monarchy (here the personification sits on a globe instead of on a throne), Despotism, Tyranny and Anarchy.[5] The emblem represents, however, only the three kinds of governments which implicitly are recommended as the moderate or good ones: Monarchy, Aristocratic rule (*aristocratie*) and Democracy.

Monarchy, seated on her throne, wears a headgear described as "a crown of sun's rays" ("*une couronne de rayons*") and holds a sceptre in her left hand. She is accompanied by the lion of domination and the snake of prudence; on the floor close to the throne are attributes of military power. Aristocracy is associated with material wealth and the unity of many; she has a plain golden diadem, holds both a lictor's *fasces* with laurel leaves ("*symbol de l'union*"), a helmet and an axe, and from the folds of her garment emanate coins that litter the ground below her.

Democracy has a plainer habitus; she is associated with fertility and the simple pleasures of commoners. Her head is adorned with wine leaves, she carries a pomegranate in her left hand, her left breast is revealed, and she stands barefooted directly on the soil with its harvested ears of corn (by contrast, Aristocracy stands on a carpet). According to the description, the bundle of four snakes which Democracy holds in her right hand supports the idea of Unity, "the basis of Democracy" ("*base de la Démocratie*"), together with the pomegranate and the wreath of wine leaves. These attributes are all "more proper civic substitutes for the crown" ("*il seroit mieux de substituer des couronnes civique*"). Behind Democracy is an odd arrangement described as a rudder supported with "a lot of sticks" ("*soutenu pour une grand nombre de baguettes*"); it apparently symbolizes how the government is elected with the support of

Fig. 2. C. N. Cochin (E. del.), "Gouvernemens", in Gravelot, Cochin & Gaucher, Iconologie ou traité de la science des allégories à l'usage des artistes *(1791–1796).*

a popular multitude. Another interpretation is added by Agulhon; it is quite likely that the precarious position of the rudder was also supposed to signify the inefficiency of democratic rule.[6]

Here we recognise a multitude of symbols and attributes which were to reappear in later allegories of Liberty, Unity and the Republic: the crown of light as a symbol of Government, the lion as a symbol of State power, the snake which continued to oscillate between its positive meanings (harking back to
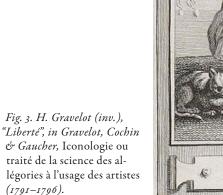
the *agatho daimon* of antiquity) and its negative ones (especially in Christian contexts), the common symbols of Unity and plenty, and the rudder as a symbol of strong and steady rule (but only if firmly held by ruling entities). Absent from this emblem are, however, any signs indicative of anti-monarchist sentiments. In the author's recommendations for how other principles of Government should be depicted, Despotism and Tyranny are just as invested with negative associations, as is Anarchy.

As an example of Despotism, a depiction of an oriental sultan and his court is recommended. Anarchy, on the other hand, should be depicted as a woman with a furious appearance ("*d'une femme dont l'attitide annonce la fureur*"), with wild hair and torn cloths, holding a dagger and a burning torch, trampling the code of law under her feet. This image is certainly intended as a warning, but as Agulhon remarks it was to provide the basis for many future representations of radical insurrection.[7] With increasing historical distance, female fury was to become an accepted feature of patriotic representations of the Republic, such as the one in François Rude's *Le Départ des volontaires de 1792* (1833–36) on the *Arc de Triomphe*.

It is characteristic of the traditional stance of Gravelot's and Cochin's *Iconologie* that the civic virtue most prominently associated with the French revolution – Liberty – has a separate emblem unrelated to topics of State and governance (fig. 3). It is based on Gravelot's design and described as depicting a goddess venerated in the temples of antiquity. In her right hand this youthful goddess of Liberty carries a sceptre. It expresses the power with which she is capable to grant "Man" control of his own life and destiny ("*exprime l'empire que par elle l'homme a sur lui-même*").[8] In her left hand she holds a headdress ("*un bonnet*") vaguely similar to the Roman *pileus*. According to the author, Liberty is the mother of knowledge and of higher arts – by association to the concept of liberal arts – and therefore attributes of arts and sciences are heaped at her left side. A cat, "enemy of restriction" ("*ennemi de la contrainte*"), sits at her other side. Other elements depicted as fitting background motifs for the representation of Liberty are ships with raised sails and birds migrating with the seasons.

Another emblem of Liberty, designed by Cochin and claimed to be directly derived from a "medal" of Heliogabalus ("*une médaille de l'Héliogabale*"), can more explicitly be contrasted to slavery and oppression (fig. 4). It is specif-

Fig. 3. H. Gravelot (inv.), "Liberté", in Gravelot, Cochin & Gaucher, Iconologie ou traité de la science des allégories à l'usage des artistes *(1791–1796).*

ically designated as "Liberty won through valour" (*La Liberté aquise par la valeur*).[9] The reference to the infamous Roman emperor Heliogabalus, who reigned 218–222 AD, is somewhat misleading. The *Libertas* of the Romans is indeed depicted as a female personification, holding a *pileus* in one hand and a wand or sceptre in the other, on many Roman coins. The earliest documented specimens of this kind are from the reign of Nerva (96–98 AD). The mo-

Fig. 4. C. N. Cochin (filius inv.), "La Liberté Acq" (Liberty won through valour), in Gravelot, Cochin & Gaucher, Iconologie ou traité de la science des allégories à l'usage des artistes *(1791–1796).*

tif refers to a ceremony in which slaves to be released were touched by a wand and given the *pileus* as a sign of their new freedom. However, the coins from the reign of Heliogabalus do not differ from the earlier ones. They show the traditional iconography, which was later repeated in various editions of Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* – even though in the 1603 edition *Libertà* is holding a simplified cardinals' hat instead of the *pileus*.

Gravelot's emblem of Liberty simply continues this tradition. Cochin's representation of "Liberty won through valour" is, however, differently conceived. Here, the goddess carries the *pileus* on a *spear*. This particular symbolical device is mentioned by the Roman chronicler Valerius Maximus in his account of the tribune Lucius Saturninus, who incited a rebellion among slaves in the second century BC.[10] It was revived in the late Renaissance, for example in Paolo Veronese's *Trionfo di Venezia*, painted for the Palazzo Ducale in Venice in 1582. Here the spear is merely a wand or baton, and the *pileus* is red. The cap/hat on a wand/spear became a popular iconographic attribute in Protestant Europe during the 17th century, especially in connection with the struggle of the Low Countries for independence from Habsburg rule. In these contexts, the *pileus* was often replaced with a contemporary brimmed hat (compare the cardinal's hat of Ripa), as in Gérard de Lairesse's allegory of the freedom of trade (1672), now in the Vredespaleis in The Hague.

Neither in Gravelot's nor in Cochin's emblem do we encounter anything similar to the red "Phrygian cap", the *bonnet rouge* of the French. As Gombrich has hypothesized, it is possible that the designation of the *bonnet rouge* as "Phrygian" was due to a confusion of two very different iconographic traditions: on the one hand the *pileus* as a symbol of freedom from slavery, and on the other the soft and folded headgear which already in antiquity was associated with both Mithraism and the ancient kingdom of Phrygia in Asia Minor. But, as Gombrich remarks, "[n]either of these ancient headgears were necessarily red".[11]

Red headwear can be found, however, in depictions of the woollen caps worn by French galley slaves (often dressed in red with "*un bonnet de mesme couleur*", according to a 17th-century account).[12] In September 1793, in the beginning of the second year of the republic and after the red bonnet had been officially sanctioned, galley slaves were forbidden to wear it.[13] This indicates that it had turned from a symbol of slavery to a symbol of liberation; it had thus become unfit as an attribute of slaves. A similar case in point is the colour red as such. Traditionally associated with divine providence and royal authority, it had been the colour of certain banners used to signal the force of law. In the function of a signal flag indicating martial law, a red banner was displayed at the Hôtel de Ville when the forces of Marquis de Lafayette crushed republican rebellion in Paris in July 1791. Already one year later, shortly before the down-

Fig. 5. "Le décadi 20e brumaire de l'an 2e de la République française une et indivisible, la Fête de la Raison a été célébrée dans la Cidevant Eglise de Notre Dame". (The tenth day of that week or the 20th Brumaire in year 2 of the French republic one and indivisible, the Festival of Reason which was celebrated in the former church of Notre Dame.) Révolutions de Paris, *No 215, Nov. 1793, p. 210, ed. Louis-Marie Prudhomme. Paris, Bibliothèque national de France, Département des Estampes et de la Photographie (Gallica: https://gallica.bnf.fr).*

fall of Louis XVI and the proclamation of the republic, the red banner had already been appropriated by the *sans-culottes* as their own sign, a demonstration that they had now taken the law into their own hands.[14]

When Cochin designed his emblem for "Liberty won through valour" he had to invent very little. As we have seen, the hat on a wand or spear was already an established element of the iconography of national freedom. The related custom of raising liberty poles had become a well-known feature of the North American struggle for independence. In the present context, the common symbols of oppression present in the emblem are of special interest. The

personification of Liberty tramples a yoke under her feet. She is surrounded by three mortals. One of these is female; she is naked except for a minimal cloth and is crowned with a wreath of wine leaves. This youthful representative of the simple *demos* (compare fig. 2) has managed to free herself from her chains, but the other two are still weighed down by their burdens. The specific meaning of the concept of "valour" in this context is of course interesting from an ideological point of view. As in the case of Liberty delivering self-governance to each liberated "Man" by means of the touch of her wand or sceptre, we here witness a pre-egalitarian conception of liberation. As in the gladiator's arena, freedom is won through endurance and bravery; slaves and serfs earn their freedom and are not "born free".

A revolutionary "goddess" takes shape

Let us now turn to the famous *fête de la Raison*, a celebration of the virtue of Reason, held at the cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris. The cathedral had been desacralized at the initiative of the *hébertiste* faction of the Jacobin club and proclaimed a "Temple of Reason". The *fête* was held on 10 November 1793 according to the Gregorian calendar, or the 20th *Brumaire* in Year 2, i.e. the 14th month after the proclamation of the republic on 22 September 1792. It was depicted in the equally famous engraving included in no. 215 of the newspaper *Révolutions de Paris* (fig. 5). Here we see the central scene of the celebration, enacted on and around an artificial mountain which was built in the choir of the church. With its connection to *les montagnards*, the dominating political force of the 1793–1794 period, the mountain acquired a specific significance as a symbolical image in this and similar celebrations.

The depiction was accompanied by a detailed report, probably written by one of the organisers, the influential printmaker and self-proclaimed "printer of the republic" Antoine-François Momoro (1756–1794). It has often been assumed but never proven that Momoro's wife was chosen to perform the role of the "goddess" who is seen here, sitting to the left, on the "mountain". In front of her a flame burns on a small circular altar, and a group of maidens – dressed in white according to the descriptions – pay her their tribute. Which abstract principle was this "goddess" intended to personify? As the whole *fête* was announced as a *Fête de la Raison*, it would seem natural to interpret her as the goddess of Reason. But this interpretation obviously contradicts what we see

in the picture and what the reports tell. The "goddess" carries the two attributes which were henceforth to be consistently repeated in both French and North American contexts as the attributes of the principle of Liberty. She holds a spear and wears a cap which is folded in the manner of a "Phrygian mitre" or *bonnet rouge*. The inscription of the small "temple" at the top of the "mountain" mentions neither Reason nor Liberty but only Philosophy; in front of the "temple" are four busts that according to Gombrich "probably" represent Voltaire, Rousseau, Franklin and Montesquieu.[15]

This picture has indeed become emblematic of the ideological tensions leading to the "reign of terror" in 1793–1794 and the establishment of two successive secular cults: the cult of Reason and the cult of the Supreme Being (*l'Être Suprême*). The former quickly ended after its main propagandist Jacques Hébert was guillotined in March 1794, along with Momoro and two other *hébertiste* leaders. Robespierre then instituted his cult of the Supreme Being, to which a grand celebration was dedicated in Paris on 8 June 1794 (20th *Prairial* in Year 2), only 50 days before Robespierre's own execution. The cult of Reason has commonly been regarded as radically Atheist and the cult of the Supreme Being as merely Theist; this is probably an oversimplification.

In his important account of the cult of Reason in the provinces, Alphonse Aulard (1849–1928, editor of the historical journal *La Révolution Française*) refers to a *citoyen* of Auch, Pierre-Nicolas Chantreau (1741–1808) and his local journal *Documents de la Raison*. In his journal, Chantreau expressed a firm belief in the necessity of the cult of Reason for eradicating the "absurd idolatry" of the past. When in issue nr 14, late Spring 1794, he comments on the decree that temples should now bear the inscription *A l'Être Suprême* instead of *Temple de la Raison*, he reaches the conclusion that the cult of the Supreme Being is not contradictory to Reason, and therefore the temples will remain temples of Reason no less ("*mais le temple n'en restera pas moins celui de la raison*").[16] In Aulard's opinion, the manner in which such authors as Chantreau express their dedication is not Atheist at all. Moreover, it is clear from some of Chantreau's statements that he regards Liberty as the primary revolutionary virtue and the one most worthy of religious devotion: "If you blush at the thought of the absurd idolatry, you need only the sole image which is dear to our hearts; that is the *bonnet of liberty*, which crowns the very tree at the roots of which the good citizens gather to embrace each other as brothers, and to congratulate each oth-

er to their *liberated* existence."[17] With such quotes and such strong emotions in mind, it seems less contradictory that a goddess of Liberty should occupy the main role in a celebration dedicated to Reason.

The *fête* in Notre-Dame was to be followed by numerous similar celebrations all around France. Often local women were selected to represent the "goddess" and to be paraded in the streets, a practice which could be regarded as an origin of later enactments of political agency in public space, not least in the socialist countries. It is also important that the "goddesses" were intended to represent different republican virtues, among them Liberty and Reason, but probably with Liberty as the most popular one.[18] Nevertheless, a tendency to refer to these live personifications as goddesses of Reason, and of Reason alone, became more and more popular in public discourse in the 19th century. According to Agulhon, this was probably due to how counter-revolutionary propaganda focused on the cult of Reason as a particularly blasphemous phenomenon.[19]

Gombrich, however, is eager to point out that there was a certain confusion regarding the identity of the personification depicted in our print from November 1793. During the ritual at Notre-Dame, she was clearly referred to as the goddess of Liberty; after the parade to the Convention and at her reception there, she was addressed as embodying both Liberty and Reason.[20] However, and as Gombrich himself clarifies, Reason already had an established iconography of her own; she was to be depicted holding a sceptre equipped with the divine eye, and without the *bonnet rouge*.[21] It is indeed ironic that a cult with "Atheist" aspirations thus came to be associated with one of the most universal symbols of divine providence.

Numerous coins and medals from the period between 1792 and 1799 exemplify the rapid consolidation of revolutionary iconography. Quickly the personification of the Republic and that of Liberty tended to merge, a tendency visible already in the famous first seal of the republic from 1792, in which the female personification is equipped with both the spear and *pileus* of Liberty and the fasces and rudder of Government. A fundamental but difficult question addressed by Agulhon is the later equation of the Republic, being depicted as both a female and a liberator, with the popular name "Marianne". He presents at least some evidence that "Marianne" might originally have been a name used in counter-revolutionary circles in order to belittle the Republic or Liberty: "She is a common Marianne".[22]

Fig. 6. Pierre-Joseph Tiolier (1763–1819), Silver version of medal issued in the Summer of Year 2 (1794), probably June, 30 (according to Hennin 1829). Photo iNumis France (https://inumis.com, online auction 13 October 2015). Cfr Hennin 1829, item no 630, plate 62.

The role of masonic symbolism

Soon the Republic or Marianne also became equipped with a load of additional attributes and symbols; some were merely inherited from older representations of State power and Government, while the adoption of others were due to the influence of freemasonry. The builder's level as an attribute of Equality and the handshake as an attribute of Fraternity both derived from masonic emblems, as did the pair of compasses, the builder's square, the pyramid, the cube and the divine eye.

As Otto Karmin (1882–1920) pointed out already in 1910 in a short study of the influence of masonic symbolism, it is important to remember that given these origins, the symbols of the revolution were not necessarily alien to the old regime. Even though they were initially perceived as sources of unchristian evil, masonic lodges had powerful protectors in both the state and the church. The *Grand Maître* of the unified lodges in France was Louis Philippe, count of Orléans (1747–1793). He was first in line in the Bourbon-Orléans branch of the royal Bourbon family, and father of the future "bourgeois" king Louis-Philippe I (1773–1850). Karmin also importantly remarks that symbols derived from freemason practices should be distinguished from the neo-classical revival of properly antique symbolism.[23] The motif of the all-seeing eye is a case in

point. As Gombrich demonstrates, the eye as a symbol of divinity can of course be traced all the way back to pharaonic Egypt; it had an anachronistic revival in the "hieroglyphic" treatises of the Re-naissance, but the eye surrounded by sun-rays was a modern adaptation merely repeated by freemasons and revolutionaries.[24] The inscription of the eye within a triangle or a pyramid (most famously in the great seal of the United States of America) gave iconographers an opportunity to combine it with various trinities – not only the Christian one but also *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité* or *Liberté, Égalité, Raison*. We will soon return to these trinities or tripartitions, including the colours of the French Tricolour.

When Robespierre and the Committee of public safety were at the very height of their power, a medal was struck in which the dictatorship of the "people" was combined with universalism and spiritual Unitarianism in a most explicit manner (fig. 6). On the medal's obverse we read: "She will travel around the world" (*ELLE FERA LE TOUR DU MONDE*). "She" is a winged Liberty, flying over a portion of the terrestrial globe on which is written "Unity" (*UNITÉ*) together with the year (*L'AN 2*) and the engraver's name (F. Tiolier). The personification carries two attributes: in her right hand a spear with the Phrygian cap, and in her left the triangular level of Equality. On the reverse, we read: "Liberty, your sun, is the eye of the mountain" (*LIBERTÉ TON SOLEIL, CEST L'OEIL DE LA MONTAGNE*). Below the mountain with its radiant eye we read the motto which had by now become standardised in official records: "Republic, one and indivisible" (REPUBLIQUE UNE INDIVISIBLE).

Michel Hennin, collector and publisher of numismatic records of the revolution, remarks: "The allegory at the reverse side does not need much explanation. It evidently represents the faction of the Mountain, at the time in which the power was in the hands of its leaders. [...]It is to some time during year 2, and a time span before 9 thermidor this year (27 juli 1794), that it truly belongs; hence it is correctly classified to 30 June 1794."[25] Less than a month before Robespierre's downfall and execution on 27–28 July, we here see how the virtue of Liberty was explicitly identified with centralised control, executed through the party/mountain and in the name of the divine eye. The globe as a symbol of universal ambitions was later to reappear in labour union symbolism of international solidarity.

As mentioned above, the personification of Liberty was early conflated with that of the State or the Republic, and this also meant that the representation of

the Republic as a unity "one and indivisible" presented an iconographic dilemma. At the same time as being "one", the Republic had to be associated with a multitude of properties or "forces" according to the needs and dominant political factions of the day. Eventually, three such properties were brought forward as primary and as constitutive of the famous motto "Freedom, equality, fraternity – or death!" (*Liberté, égalité, fraternité – ou la mort!*).[26] As becomes evident already if one consults some common surveys of the prints and medals of the revolution, the property of Fraternity was, however, represented much less frequently and consistently than those of Liberty and Equality.[27] A natural solution for the representation of Fraternity was to show "children of the nation" clasping hands, as exemplified in a print reproduced by Henderson.[28] The handshake as a symbol of *Concordia* had Roman origins and could potentially replace the lictor's *fasces* as a generalised symbol of Unity.

The simplest and most longstanding solution to the problem of how to combine allegorical expressions of the will of the people, the strength of the State and the main revolutionary virtues was Augustin Dupré's (1748–1833) design for republican coinage. With some modification it was still used in the second and third republics.[29] Here, Hercules with his lion's skin represents both the French people and the strength of Unity, bringing together Liberty on his right side and Equality on his left (fig. 7). Through the joined hands of Liberty and Equality, Fraternity is implicitly included. As in similar allegories from the same period, the primacy of Liberty is indicated by placing her at the right-hand side of the composition.[30] In the example from Year 5 reproduced here, the property stressed in the inscription is, however, that of strength through unity: *Union et force*. Bonnell comments that the notoriety of the muscular male as a personification of the new Soviet citizen, sometimes endowed with superhuman capabilities, can probably be attributed to such earlier uses of the Hercules motif.[31] The representation of the "genius" of the people as male stands in an interesting relationship to female representations of the State or the Republic.

Republican iconography of 1830 and 1848

In his study of the development of the "Marianne" theme, Agulhon compares and juxtaposes a wide range of examples of how artists continued to struggle with the representation of the Republic. Was she to be shown as an abstract entity removed from political dissent and class interests, or was she to be identi-

Fig. 7. Auguste (Augustin) Dupré (1748–1833), 5-franc silver coin of Year 5 (1796–1797). Musée carnavalet, Paris, Cabinet des médailles, aquisition number NM 1421. Wikimedia Commons, Siren-Com (CC BY-SA 2.5).

fied with concepts of actual revolutionary change? The new revolutions of 1830 and 1848 brought back memories of the live "goddesses", now aging women, to which citizens used to pay *hommage* at Jakobin *fêtes*.[32] The success of Eugène Delacroix's (1798–1863) immortalisation of the streetfighters of 1830 in his *La Liberté guidant le peuple* (1830) was a sign of a strong wish to see the concept of Liberty incarnated in a living, contemporary individual (fig. 1). Later, many historians have tended to interpret Delacroix's rather theatrical painting as an almost documentary rendering of a real event. One among them, Eric Hobsbawm

(1917–2012), repeated the old claim that the Liberty of the painting is inspired by a real female streetfighter, Marie Deschamps (dates of birth and death unknown to the present author).[33] Still, the depiction of Liberty clearly follows earlier allegorical patterns; she wears a *bonnet rouge* and her bare breasts echo Cochin's personification of Democracy in the *Iconologie*. She is probably more serene than "furious", but she carries a weapon and her clothes and hair are in disorder, in a manner akin to Gaucher's recommendations for how the threat of Anarchy should be depicted.

Delacroix's image has become imprinted in the collective mind as a model for later expressions of revolutionary romanticism. Compare it with the great seal of the second French republic, designed by Jacques-Jean Barre ("Barre the elder", 1793–1855) in November 1848 (fig. 8). What is especially striking with this seal is the complete absence of any attributes or other features signifying Liberty, Equality or Fraternity. Its main attributes are instead the lictor's *fasces* with the head of a spear – signifying a lawful Republic *une et indivisible* – and the rudder of Government. On the rudder the Gallic rooster is depicted. The urn inscribed "S.U." (*suffrage universel*) signifies the now extended right to vote. Parliamentary reform here replaces revolutionary upheaval, and a number of additional attributes accentuate stability and tradition: to the right, oak leaves for the strength of the State; to the left, painter's utensils and a ionic capital for the arts; in the background, ears of corn. A plough represents modern agriculture and a cogwheel, almost hidden by the ionic capital at bottom left, represents modern industry. In addition to the diadem made of ears of corn, the Republic is crowned with sunrays in a fashion later repeated by Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi (1834–1904) in his New York statue of Liberty. Agulhon reminds his readers that this was the traditional symbol of French monarchy (compare fig. 2), and continues:

> To crown the Republic now with the sun was to state emphatically that 'L'Etat c'est Elle' ('The State is Her'). Finally, however, we should not forget that as headgear for the Republic the Sun had the not inconsiderable negative advantage of filling a place where a whole historical and popular tradition called for a Phrygian cap…[34]

How the second republic was to represent itself was a problem of enough importance for artistic competitions on the theme of *La République* to be arranged. Both a painter's competition and a competition for public monuments

Fig. 8. Jean-Auguste Barre (1811–1896), Medal of the grand seal of the second French republic, November 24, 1848. Brass and resin. Archives nationales de France, Paris. After Agulhon 1981, p. 90.

were announced shortly after the abdication of Louis-Philippe on 24 February 1848. From the contributions submitted by many hundreds of painters and sculptors of varying fame and capability, Agulhon has selected his main examples of how two versions of the Republic or "Marianne" crystallized in these times of sharpened political conflict: the bourgeois Republic of social compromise and the popular Republic of radical revolt.

Referring to such competitors as Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824–1904) and his refined republican Spirit accompanied by a lion and a shining star, and Honoré
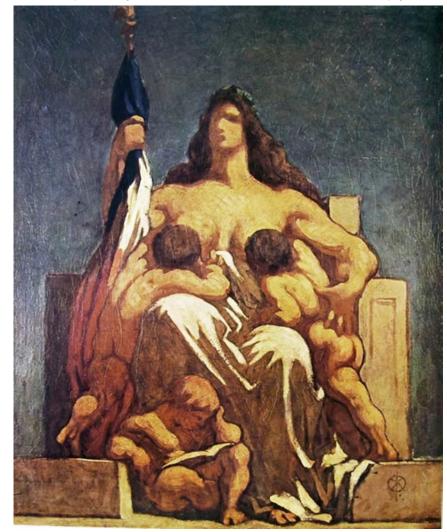
Daumier (1808–1879) and his muscular female partisan who breastfeeds two grown children, with a third reading at her feet (the Republic providing nourishment and enlightenment to its children; fig. 9), Agulhon arrives at an analysis in which he lists in an almost linguistic manner the distinctive features of each allegorical type. In the allegories characteristic of a bourgeois attitude he observes "an image of serenity", a posture "seated or standing but immobile", orderly hair, covered bosom, "a mature, even maternal figure", absence of the Phrygian cap and "a multiplicity of attributes with a didactic purpose". In the allegories of radical revolt the opposite features are observed, namely "an image of vehemence", a posture "always standing and sometimes on the march", free-floating hair, an uncovered bosom, "a youthful figure", presence of the Phrygian cap and "a simplicity (or smaller number) of attributes".[35]

A conclusion not mentioned by Agulhon, but rather evident from these premises, is that Daumier's Republic occupies a mixed or intermediary position (fig. 9). She is seated, but not immobile and definitely not "serene"; her hair is a diffuse tangle, her bosom is uncovered, she is maternal in a most literal sense, she has no Phrygian cap but rather a wreath of leaves (of what kind is difficult to determine), and her only attribute is that of the Tricolour, which she clasps rather vigilantly.[36] Significantly, Daumier's sketchy and highly original composition is the only one among those submitted to the contest which has acquired canonical status in art history. Daumier also seems to have largely ignored the contradictory instructions which other artists (such as Ange-Louis Janet, 1811–1872) tried to follow with rather disappointing results (the jury was never able to select a final winner). Some of these instructions emanated from a letter written by a person close to the Ministry of the Interior. It was published in the journal *L'Artiste* on 30 April 1848. Here Agulhon has found a rather striking quote which reads as follows in the English translation:

> I nearly forgot to mention the cap. I indicated above that the Republic should sum up the three forces of which her symbol is combined. You are therefore not in a position to remove this sign of liberty. Only do find some way of transfiguring it.[37]

As the author explains earlier in the letter, the "three forces" referred to here are Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. The Republic should be a "symbol" which should combine these "forces" as distinctive features. The principal colours of the allegory should be those of the Tricolour (i.e. another set of three distinc-

tive features) and the attitude of the personification should be "statesmanlike".[38] These requirements all reflect the high degree of abstraction artists were expected to realize for the task at hand, an abstraction not easily compatible with a visual medium.

Fig. 9. Honoré Daumier (1808–1879), La République, *1848. Oil on canvas, 73 x 60 cm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris, acquisition nr RF 1644. Wikimedia Commons, Web Gallery of Art.*

As the symbol of the Republic was supposed to be "one", it was no longer possible to show her combined "forces" as separate personifications, as in Dupré's coin design. Were they then to be referred to in a secondary manner – as inscriptions or pictures within the picture – or as conventional attributes among those carried by the personification, or piled up around her? Or could outer inscriptions and attributes be omitted in favour of implicit or inner characteristics of the representation? Along such lines, the two suckling children of Daumier's picture could well be interpreted as an image of both Equality and Fraternity, with their sturdy "mother" being Liberty. But, as will become evident in part 2 of this study, conventional symbolism continued to gain the upper hand.

Summary and discussion

In some sense the whole topic of my two articles on the "Iconography of the labour movement" is an impossible project. A full and comprehensive study of the diverse geographical and ideological contexts known as "the labour movement" is not within the reach of one single researcher and cannot be summarised in a few short articles. Any attempt at a brief overview of the development and culture of Chartist, Marxist, Social Democrat, Anarchist, Syndicalist, Communist and other left-wing political communities will scarcely avoid the trap of reductivism and bias. This is not only because of the sheer volume and complexity of the material, but also because of its ideological – and in some quarters controversial – nature. Regardless of whether we have been brought up in solidarity with the heritage and traditions of the labour movement, or have been taught to despise and mock it, we will face the difficulty of freeing ourselves from various preconceptions and projections when we approach the topic.

Here the study of iconography could probably provide a method which helps us avoid such reductive projections. Exactly by focusing not on the realist representation of living individuals and actual events, but on the repetition of symbols and allegorical relationships, iconography can show how modern political language and propaganda sometimes incorporates concepts and symbols whose origins would seem contradictory to the causes with which they have later been associated. A decisive step has then been taken towards a destabilisation of the self-imposed consistency of any political ideology.

In this regard, the attention paid here to revolutionary and republican ico-nography *before* the labour movement, i.e. *before* the conditions were present for this movement to organise itself, should not be dismissed as a mere digression. There could be no labour movement before manual labourers and their spokespersons in the intelligentsia had identified their own cause and their own status as representatives of a distinct faction in society. But the organisational form and conceptual frameworks of this identification were a result of how the very notion of a "population" or "people" had been reinvented in Enlightenment philosophy and in the new constitutions of France and the USA.

Rather than being an undifferentiated multitude, devoid of history and without access to public life, the people were now seen as an organic entity with a will of its own. It was recognised that every human individual has certain basic rights simply because of being born as a human, and the ideal Republic was conceived as the execution of the will of the people through its representatives. Between 1792 and 1848, republican iconography provided allegorical representations of how this relationship between State and population was conceived. It offered symbols and personifications that later became integral to the political and agitational practices of the labour movement. This heritage was double-edged, however. Elements signifying governmental stability were combined with those associated with revolt and dissent. Symbols of material and technological progress were combined with religious or metaphysical symbolism.

In Gaucher's recommendations for the representation of *Gouvernements* in the *Iconologie* of Gravelot and Cochin, radical insurrection was still associated with the explicitly negative concept and image of *Anarchie*. In the printed emblem reproduced here as fig. 2, the personification of *Démocratie* was depicted as the youngest, plainest and weakest form of government. In the emblems reproduced as fig. 3 and fig. 4, *Libertas* is depicted in a manner close to pre-egalitarian notions of Liberty as a civic virtue rather than an innate quality or natural right. However, by the time of the publication of *Iconologie*, the personification of Liberty had already been reconceived as the "goddess" of popular liberation, especially during the period of Jacobin dominance in 1793–1794, and in public displays such as the one of the festival of Reason in November 1793 (fig. 5).

Between 1792 and 1794, the triad of revolutionary virtues – Liberty, Equality and Fraternity – was established though prints and coinage, and its attributes became fixed: the "Phrygian cap" or *bonnet rouge* for Liberty, the triangular

level for Equality, and the handshake for Fraternity. The influence of freemason symbolism, with its use of attributes of both manual labour and Christian mysticism, is evident from the prominence of the level and the handshake. Another iconographic element closely related to freemasonry, the all-seeing divine eye at the centre of the sun, is present in one of the most overt manifestations of the concept of power inherent in Jacobin rule, the medal struck in honour of Liberty at the end of June 1794 (fig. 6). The mountain of the ruling *montagnards* is here explicitly identified with the elevation of a political elite as representatives of not only popular but also divine will. As is made aptly clear on the obverse, with its winged Liberty traversing the globe, the new order is meant to encompass not only the French people but the whole world. Here fruitful comparisons could be made with how the dictatorship of the proletariat and the international solidarity of Communism were instituted as dogmatic principles and communicated visually after the proclamation of the first state of "actually existing socialism" on 7 November 1917.

The problem of how to represent the "common people" from which governments supposedly derived their authority was first solved by recourse to the Hercules motif. In Dupré's design for the coinage of the first French republic, from which an example is reproduced here as fig. 7, Hercules occupies the centre and joins the hands of Liberty to his right-hand side and Equality to his left, thereby implicating Fraternity. The prominence of the will of the people through its unity and strength (further accentuated by the inscription *Union et force*) is here stressed both iconographically and by means of the centrality and dominance of the Hercules figure.

In political imagination the Republic is, however, identical to its people. As the female personification of Liberty had already been established as a personification also of the Republic, the male Hercules motif therefore occupied an ambiguous position. In Delacroix's famous *La Liberté guidant le peuple* of 1830 (fig. 1, p. 154) the central youthful Liberty is not one of the people but is leading them (as indicated by the painting's title) towards a goal which is not entirely clear (Delacroix's own loyalty was Bonapartist rather than republican). However, the painting has been interpreted in ways reflective of a strong wish to see Liberty embodied in an actual, living representative of the people.

As Agulhon shows, the development of historical and republican iconography in France between 1830 and 1848 meant a consolidation of the representation of the Republic as a female "Marianne" and its differentiation into two quite distinct types. These types are possible to identify and analyse in an almost semio-linguistic manner through references to sets of fixed features and properties.

Here Barre's design for the great seal of the second French republic (fig. 8) is an example of the representational type associated with the traditional values of a "bourgeois" Republic, i.e. a Republic dominated by the interests of industrial capitalism. Barre's Republic is seated. She is surrounded by a great number of attributes signifying institutional stability and material progress, and there is a significant absence of both the three republican "forces" (Liberty, Equality, Fraternity) and the physical force of a standing or moving figure. By contrast, most things which are present in Barre's design are absent in Daumier's contribution to the contest for the painted representation of the Republic in 1848 (fig. 9).

This implies an absence of attributes of governmental authority (such as rudder and *fasces*) and of cultural and political institutions (such as painter's utensils and the urn of universal suffrage). To these absences are added two important presences: the presence of fully exposed breasts and the presence of the French people in the guise of three children. Two of these are feeding from the breasts of the Republic and the third is reading at her feet; this accentuates the role of the Republic as both a nourisher and an educator of her population. A most significant property, which is absent in Barre's design but highly present in Daumier's painting, is that of physical vigilance. Daumier has painted his Republic as seated on a throne, but it is easy to imagine that she has quite recently taken this throne by force from the puppet king of industrialists and profiteers. She has the bodily habitus of a woman of the people, born to endure all hardships of poverty and early motherhood. Hard physical work has made her more muscular and fearsome than many men; she embodies Liberty not as an anonymous impersonator chosen according to conventional criteria of female beauty, but as a representative of those who will benefit from a radical liberation. She has abruptly occupied a place where visitors of art exhibitions usually encountered women of a very different stature and appearance.

This implicit representation of the Republic as Liberty could be interpreted as also including the properties of Equality and Fraternity, as implied by the way in which the children equally share the nourishment that they are offered.

Compared to the Hercules motif of the earlier coin design (fig. 7), the female Republic/Liberty here occupies a similar central position as a unifier and as the main source of power and authority. The difference between these two allegories consists in the reversed relationship between Liberty and the people. If in the coin design Liberty is subordinated to Hercules in his function of representing the will of the people, she has in Daumier's version of 1848 become identical to this will as the guiding principle of the Republic. In this role she is also supposed to know, as is any good mother, the needs and wishes of a people who are represented as mere children.

More formally or even semiotically (in the sense of formal composition defined as a "semiotic resource" according to socio-semiotics), we can here observe that in spite of the allegorical reversion of roles, the coin design and Daumier's painting are formally similar. They are both tripartite, symmetric compositions with a central and dominant element, flanked on each side by a subordinate one. By contrast, the compositions of the grand seal of the second French republic (fig. 8) or Gravelot's emblem of *Liberté* (fig. 3) are both bipartite, or based on the simple opposition between one single personification and the surrounding inventory of attributes.

All mentioned examples are also hierarchical in their compositional structure; there is a vertical relationship between a central personification and subordinate ones, or between a personification and its attributes. The abundance and sometimes over-abundance of attributes which Agulhon mentions as a characteristic trait of the "bourgeois" type of personification of the Republic could then be defined as a semiotic choice on the compositional level, resulting in a specific type of hierarchically ordered composition.

If allegorical meaning is conveyed not only through the relationships between personifications, attributes and symbols, but also by means of the relative prominence and placement of these in the composition, then it will be interesting to see how such structures contribute to the visual messages constituting the iconographic tradition of the international labour movement. Which positions are occupied by male and female personifications in these visual messages, in which manner do their composition represent relationships between different forces or factions of society, and in which manner is the iconographic heritage of republicanism repeated and reinterpreted? These will be the main topics of the second article, to be published in the next issue of this journal.

Notes

1 Agulhon 1981, 6.
2 Sometimes and misleadingly attributed to Jan Białostocki, the art historical use of the term "iconosphere" was actually devised by Białostocki's compatriot Mieczysláv Porębski in his book *Ikonosfera* from 1972. Porębski was chiefly interested in 19th- and 20th-century art. I here take the term to mean the total amount of images known and recognizable by standard viewers at a certain point in time, implying that it would also make sense to talk of specific iconospheres of e.g. religious and political movements.
3 Bonnell 1997, 10.
4 Gravelot, Cochin & Gaucher 1796, vol. 1, preface.
5 Gravelot, Cochin & Gaucher 1796, vol. 2, 73–78.
6 Agulhon 1981, 12.
7 Agulhon 1981, 13.
8 Gravelot, Cochin & Gaucher 1796, vol. 3, 31.
9 Gravelot, Cochin & Gaucher 1796, vol. 3, 33.
10 Gombrich 1999, 171.
11 Gombrich 1999, 171–172.
12 Tavernier 1679, 356.
13 Gombrich 1999, 174.
14 For Swedish readers, the German emigré Ernst Pfleging wrote two learned and often-quoted accounts of how traditional symbols of law enforcement became symbols of the revolution (Pfleging 1948 and 1951).
15 Gombrich 1999, 162. The depictions are sketchy and Gombrich presents no further evidence for his identifications.
16 "Santhonax" 1887, 311–315.
17 Quoted from "Santhonax" 1887, 315. In original: "En rougissent de cette absurd idolâtrie, vous n'aurez plus qu'une seule image qui sera chère à votre cœur, se sera *le bonnet de la liberté* qui couronne l'arbre au pied duquel les bons citoyens se rassemblent pour s'embrasser en frères et se féliciter d'être *libres*." (Italics in original.)
18 Agulhon 1981, 27–30.
19 Agulhon 1981, 27–28.
20 Gombrich 1999, 162–165.
21 Gombrich 1999, 176–179.
22 Agulhon 1981, 30–34.
23 Karmin 1910, 183.
24 Gombrich 1999, 176–178.
25 Hennin 1826, 431. In original: "L'allégorie du revers de cette pièce n'a pas besoin d'explication. Elle se rapporte évidemment à la faction de la montagne, et aux temps où le pouvoir était dans les mains des chefs de cette faction. [...] C'est dans le courant

de l'an 2ᵉ., et quelque temps avant le 9 thermidor de cette année (27 juillet 1794), qu'est sa véritable place; ainsi elle est convenablement classée au 30 juin 1794."

26 The motto is sometimes attributed to Momoro or the hébertistes and sometimes to Robespierre himself; the origins are unclear.

27 See e.g. Henderson 1912 and Jones 1977.

28 Henderson 1912, 125.

29 Typically for the compromises of the second and third republics, Dupré's symbol of Liberty was replaced with the benedictory hand from the ancient sceptre of French kings. (Cfr. this sceptre as depicted in J.-A.-D. Ingres's stately portrait of Napoléon Bonaparte as emperor, 1806.)

30 Cfr. eg. the famous print by Fragonard and Allais, reproduced in Gombrich 1999 (179) and Henderson 1910 (112).

31 Bonnell 1999, 21. Cfr Seiter 1991, 80.

32 Agulhon 1981, 29–30 and 64–67.

33 Hobsbawm 1978, 122–124. For criticism, see Agulhon 1979.

34 Agulhon 1981, 86.

35 Agulhon 1981, 88.

36 Cfr Agulhon 1981, 78.

37 Agulhon 1981, 82.

38 Agulhon 1981.

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