CHAPTER III

THE THEORY OF THE STATE
"LEGITIMACY, SOVEREIGNTY, AUTHORITY"

I

From the conception of society, there followed almost logically the Saint-Simonian political authoritarianism. Paradoxically, despite their condemnation of the critical spirit of the age, the political views of the Saint-Simonians, set forth in the Doctrine, were elaborated less in systematic exposition than by implication in the criticism of existing political ideas and institutions.

In the editorials of the Globe, there appeared an evaluation of liberal institutions which was to recur in a great deal of later antidemocratic thought. One is struck by the similarity of argumentation between the Saint-Simonians and Mussolini's essay on The Doctrine of Fascism. This antiliberalism, though deeply indebted to the Catholic traditionalists, yet differed in spirit in its concern about the relation of political leadership to the masses. Liberal institutions, parliamentary government, the multiplicity of political parties, civil rights, inevitably spelled inefficiency and corruption. Yet even further, representative government, the Saint-Simonians agreed with Fascists and Marxists, was government by privilege, the domination of capital. The solution to the "muddling" and injustices of liberalism lay only in the restoration of authority and of the systematic unity of the people, in the establishment of a leadership, not the outcome of the ballot box but yet the expression of the will of the masses.

The years 1814 and 1815 meant the restoration of the Bourbons, brought back in the baggage train of the Allies. But it also meant the first extended experiment in French history with parliamentary institutions. Louis XVIII, more aware than the majority of the returning émigrés that the survival of the mo-

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narchy rested upon compromise with the revolutionary settlement, granted to the people a charter of liberties, the *Charte*. On paper, the *Charte* seemed to imply the English compromise of 1688: an elective lower house checked by a largely hereditary House of Peers. A heavy property qualification, based on a direct tax of 300 francs on land, restricted the suffrage to the landed aristocracy and the *haute bourgeoisie*, excluding most of the smaller middle class. While maintaining an established church, the *Charte* guaranteed freedom of religion. Freedom of the press was granted although press laws were to establish a fairly rigid censorship which did not prevent the appearance of a quite outspoken opposition press.

Yet if Royer-Collard, the leader of the *doctrinaires*, a parliamentary party representing the interests of the *haute bourgeoisie*, hailed the *Charte* as an "indissoluble union between the royal power from which it emanates and the natural liberties that it recognizes and consecrates," ¹ and even liberals like Charles Comte and Dunoyer, not to forget Henri de Saint-Simon, had been favorable in 1815, the French Parliament enjoyed little of the prestige of its British model. The Chamber of Deputies was not a national institution with deep historical roots; it was rather an arbitrary creation of compromise and expediency. As one historian commented, the king regarded the parliament as a concession to the wealthy bourgeoisie, the aristocracy considered it as an obstacle to the restoration of their privileges, and the lower classes constantly looked at it as a political organ of the *haute bourgeoisie* to protect its class interests. Parliament was both unrepresentative of the nation and ineffective. Out of a population of about 32,000,000 only about 90,000 were enfranchised. The Revolution was still too recent and its wounds too deep for the aristocracy on the whole to accept representative institutions or for the nation to accept the aristocracy. Moreover, in the process of emigration and confiscation, the economic power of the nobility was sharply reduced; the sold national lands were not returned, although some monetary indemnities were granted. Neither the bourgeoisie nor the aristocracy were as close to the masses of the people or as respected as in Britain. For the