# CHARIVARIS, REPERTOIRES, AND POLITICS

Charles Tilly

University of Michigan

April, 1980

CRSO Working Paper No. 214

Copies available through:
Center for Research on Social Organization
University of Michigan
330 Packard Street
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109

# CHARIVARIS, REPERTOIRES, AND POLITICS

Charles Tilly

University of Michigan

April 1980

Draft of paper for a volume on nineteenth-century cities, edited by John Merriman and scheduled for publication by Hutchinson (London) in 1981

## Mardi Gras and Metaphor[1]

In the little merchant city of Cholet, south of Angers, Mardi Gras of 1826 brought the usual public skits and satires. One of the tableaux of that year contained enough liberal politics to alarm the prudent subprefect. "A feudal lord," he reported

> who took the name of Prince des Ténèbres, arrived with a large entourage. They all wore hats in the shape of candle-snuffers. They bore two signs. On the one was painted an ass bearing a torch covered with a snuffer; on the four corners were painted bats. On the other one read LONG LIVE THE GOOD OLD DAYS. Others carried nighthawks and a gallows. Finally the bust of Voltaire appeared.

The players of Cholet put on two scenes. The first was the lord's marriage, at which the crucial ceremony was the reading of a long list of his feudal rights. The second, the trial of a vassal for having killed a rabbit. The vassal hanged. And the royalists of Cholet were reported "unhappy" with this insult to their cause and to the Restoration regime (A.D. Maine-et-Loire 21 M 162, report of February 1826).

Cholet's Mardi Gras tableau was quite ordinary. So far as I know, it aimed at no particular lord, and brought on no prosecution. The symbols -- the torch of liberty snuffed out by feudalism, and so on -- were clear and commonplace. Similar skits, parades, and displays of readily identifiable symbols were standard components of nineteenth-century popular festivals.

---

1. This is a revised version of a paper presented to the Fourth Annual Colloquium on Nineteenth-Century French Studies, East Lansing, Michigan, October 1978. Under the title "The Routinization of Protest in Nineteenth-Century France," the earlier version appeared as Working Paper 181 of the Center for Research on Social Organization, University of Michigan, September 1978. The National Science Foundation and the Canada Council supported the research reported in this paper. I am grateful to Ronald Aminzade for the communication of notes concerning events in Toulouse, and to Sheila Wilder for help in producing the paper.

Yet to eyes which have become accustomed to the concrete, disciplined protests of our own time, the play of metaphor in such nineteenth-century political statements is odd, rather folklorique.

As Alain Faure has recently reminded us, the folklore of Mardi Gras survived the urbanization and industrialization of the nineteenth century. In 1830 and, especially, in 1848, Carnival and Revolution linked arms to dance in the streets. In the case of 1848, Faure recounts the parade through Paris streets of sixteen cadavers of citizens killed during the first street-fighting of February. He narrates the antic invasion of the Tuileries, which ended with the parading of the royal throne through the streets and its burning at the foot of the July column in the Place de la Bastille. He tells us of the hanging or burning in effigy of landlords who refused to delay collection of the second quarter's rent (Faure 1978: 114-121). Pageantry and metaphor were very much alive.

Nor did they die with Louis Napoleon's snuffing out of the Second Republic. Faure describes the washerwomen's colorful floats, with decorations, costumes, and elected king and queen; these things thrived with the growth of Parisian washhouses after 1850, and continued to grace the Parisian Carnival up to the end of the nineteenth century. Then, however, they did disappear, despite the continuation of spectacular Mardi Gras parades. What happened? In essence, Faure argues that Parisian merchants and authorities appropriated the popular festival to make it safe and profitable for themselves, while parties and unions provided new opportunities for working-class collective action. The public life of the metropolis divided increasingly along class lines. The festival, Faure concludes

> lost its feeling of being a special event, a solemn or scheduled gathering of the collectivity, an immense show without audience or actors, without staging or spectators, where each individual plays

his role and social classes reveal their character (Faure 1978: 167).

The passage is reminiscent of Emile Durkheim's analyses of religious ritual and of the passage from mechanistic to organic solidarity. It parallels Michelle Perrot's argument that during the last decades of the nineteenth century the strike surrendered its popular spontaneity and creativity to the demands of bureaucrats and organizers. Protest, they tell us, routinized.

For all its plausibility, Alain Faure's conclusion is not the only one possible. From the perspective of a superb connoisseur of the seventeenth century, for example, Yves-Marie Bercé has treated the decline of the festival as the result of a two-sided change: on the one side, the religious and civil authorities who wanted to impose decorous uprightness on the common people; on the other, the disintegration of the solidary rural community whose shared beliefs and daily routines served as bases for fêtes, for révoltes, and for both at once. Unlike Faure, what is more, he considers the twin processes to have been well underway during the eighteenth century. The nineteenth century, in his view, saw no more than survivals of the rich old customs, survivals in the distant countryside alone. Despite a common belief (shared with Michel Foucault, Norbert Elias and other sages of our time) in the imposition of discipline by sour-faced authorities, then, Bercé and Faure disagree on the timing, locus and mechanisms of the popular festival's disappearance.[2]

---

2. Nor are these the only possibilities. To take only one more, Eugen Weber sees the disappearance of customary forms of celebration and daily practice in the nineteenth century as a consequence of the incorporation of many local peasant cultures into a common urban, national culture.

At the risk of appearing to be an incorrigible ditherer, I suggest that both and neither are right. The nineteenth century did, indeed, wreak a remarkable transformation of popular collective action, a transformation which did involve a certain sort of routinization. The forms of rebellion did separate from the forms of celebration. An important source of these changes, however, was the decline of small, loosely corporate, communities which had previously provided the chief frames within which ordinary people had formulated and acted on their grievances. Faure states the first part correctly, while Bercé gives us the second part. As both agree, capitalists, officials and organizers collaborated in creating larger, more specialized, more predictable and more impersonal means of collective action. As both suggest, France's growing cities formed the leading edge of these transformations of public life.

Nevertheless, these generalizations resemble the impressions of urban street life a traveler gets from a hovering helicopter: panoramic, and correct in many respects, but missing essential details -- especially those which tell us how and why the participants are getting into the action. Beyond a certain point, furthermore, the idea of increasing rationalization, routinization and control misstates the changes which were actually occurring. For the essence of the nineteenth-century transformation was not a downward slide from spontaneity to discipline but a shift from one organizational base to another. With the growing nationalization of political power, ordinary people fashioned new means of acting together on their interests. They created a new repertoire of collective action.

The metaphor is obvious, once stated: any group who have a common interest in collective action also acquire a shared repertoire of routines among which they make a choice when the occasion for pursuing an interest or a grievance arises. The theatrical metaphor draws attention to the limited number of performances available to any particular group at a given time, to the learned character of those performances, to the

possibility of innovation and improvisation within the limits set by the existing means, to the likelihood that not only the actors but also the objects and the observers of the action are aware of the character of the drama that is unfolding and, finally, to the element of collective choice that enters into the events which outsiders call riots, disorders, disturbances and protests.

Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Repertoires

The eighteenth century had its own repertoire. The anti-tax rebellion, the movement against conscription, the food riot, the concerted invasion of fields or forests were its most distinctive forms of revolt. But a great deal of relatively peaceful collective action went on 1) through deliberate (although sometimes unauthorized) assemblies of corporate groups which eventuated in declarations, demands, petitions or lawsuits, or 2) via authorized festivals and ceremonies in the course of which ordinary people symbolized their grievances. As compared with other repertoires, this eighteenth-century array of performances had some special characteristics worth noticing:

-- a tendency for aggrieved people to converge on the residences of wrongdoers and on the sites of wrongdoing rather than on the seats of power (Sometimes, of course, the two coincided.)

-- the extensive use of authorized public ceremonies and celebrations for the acting out of complaints and demands

-- the rare appearance of people organized voluntarily around a special interest, as compared with whole communities and constituted corporate groups

-- the recurrent use of street theater, visual imagery, effigies, symbolic objects and other dramatic devices to state the participants' claims and complaints

-- the frequent borrowing -- in parody or in earnest -- of the authorities' normal forms of action; the borrowing often amounted to the crowd's almost literally taking the law into its own hands.

Note the political core of such apparently "non-political" or

"pre-political" actions as riotous festivals. Access to land, control of the food supply, precedence among corporate groups, and payment of taxes were the sorts of issues about which the users of the eighteenth-century repertoire were typically contending; they were the politics of the day. Crowd actions, furthermore, frequently aimed at the local or regional authorities, and usually took them somehow into account. The politicization of the Revolution did not really alter these characteristics. Instead, it increased the directness of the connection between local collective action and national politics. For a time, every food riot became an occasion for stating or using affiliations with political actors on a national scale. The eighteenth-century repertoire certainly differed importantly from the repertoire which emerged during the nineteenth-century era of national electoral politics. But it was only "pre-political" by a standard which dismisses everything but national politics as insignificant.

The nineteenth-century repertoire looks more political to twentieth-century observers for two reasons: first, because it built on the national governments, parties and special-interest associations with which we are now so familiar; second, because once formed, that repertoire survived, with relatively little alteration, into our own time. To twentieth-century eyes, it therefore appears to be a "natural" vehicle for political action. The repertoire which emerged during the nineteenth century included the electoral meeting, the demonstration, the strike, the rally and the complex of actions we call the social movement. None of these was a standard way of struggling for power in the eighteenth century. All became standard during the nineteenth, especially during the years around the Revolution of 1848.

With respect to changes of repertoire, the 1848 revolution mattered more than its great predecessor of 1789 and thereafter. Much of the earlier Revolution's popular collective action borrowed from the classic eighteenth-

century repertoire: the price riot, the collective rejection of the tax collector, the invasion of fields or forests where use rights were contested, the ritual punishment (in effigy or in the flesh) of a malefactor, the turning of an authorized celebration or solemn assembly into an expression of popular support or opposition all continued into the conflicts of the Revolution. To be sure, the Revolutionaries innovated. In terms of form, for example, the marches of various revolutionary militias against their enemies and the turbulent meetings of popular committees, societies and assemblies had few pre-revolutionary precedents. In terms of content, the parades, festivals and ceremonies of the early Revolution so altered the character of their old-regime counterparts as to constitute a new creation. Yet the durable contribution of the Revolution to the French repertoire of collective action was slight. Perhaps the main change in the repertoire from the 1780s to the 1820s was a general increase in the directness and explicitness of the connection between national politics and previously local forms of action such as the food riot and the charivari.

Charivari in Transition

The charivari? Social historians of France have recently paid plenty of attention to the old custom. I need only remind you of its main elements: the assembly of a group of local young people outside the home of an accused moral offender; the whistles, catcalls, mocking songs and thumped pots and pans; the payment of some sort of penalty by the offender. The "young people" in question were often the same company of unmarried males which took responsibility for public celebrations such as lenten bonfires, and which exercised control over the courtship and marriage of local youths. The offenses were typically violations of rules concerning proper sexual behavior, correct husband-

wife relationships and appropriate matches, although many a charivari began when newlyweds neglected to treat the local young people to a celebration. The penalties imposed normally took the form of payoffs to the assembled youths. But they could, in the case of grave moral offenses, extend to being obliged to leave town.

The charivari twinned with another widespread practice: the serenade. The serenade was, in essence, an approving charivari; the same young people assembled outside the home of the object of their attention, but now they made a joyful noise, and asked no penalty. One could become the other: if the targets of a charivari made proper amends, the occasion could well transform itself into a celebratory serenade.

Do not file charivaris under Quaint Customs or Trivia. The people involved took them seriously, authorities watched them closely, and the actions of the charivari rested on well-established rights and privileges. Like other established forms of collective action, the charivari lent itself to maneuver and bargaining. In February, 1836, the prefect of the Somme reported an interesting case in point:

> Last December some rather serious disorders took place in the commune of Mailly, arrondissement of Doullens, when M. Goubet, a local landowner, was going to marry the tax-collector's daughter. Following a time-honored local custom, the young folks offered the groom a bouquet, for which he declared he would pay 200 francs. These young folks weren't satisfied with that substantial sacrifice, and claimed that they should get 600 francs. M. Goubet turned them down. Outraged by that refusal, the young people insulted the future spouses with repeated charivaris, despite the fact that M. Goubet had shown his honorable and disinterested intentions by asking the commune's mayor to give to the poor the offering which the young people had refused. In order to prevent the charivaris planned for

his wedding day, M. Goubet promised 395 francs. The disorders didn't stop until he had paid that sum (A.D. Somme, Mfv 80926, letter of 6 February 1836).

The final price, 395 francs, split the difference between the two sides' initial offers. No doubt the "young folks" of Mailly drank away a major share of the tax they had levied on the marriage; in such cases, the money often paid for a gala bachelors' party. But the payment did have some attributes of a regular tax; like many French taxes, it became subject to negotiation concerning the assessed person's liability. The charivari operated within a web of mutual obligation.

Under these circumstances, as Eugen Weber remarks in his chapter on charivaris, "It is hardly surprising that they were also connected with politics" (Weber 1976: 402). He might have said the same thing for the serenade. Yet from an eighteenth-century point of view, the political use of the charivari comes as something of a surprise. Before the Revolution, the practice remained within the limits set by domestic morality. The heyday of the political charivari, so far as I can tell, ran from the 1820s to the 1850s, from the Restoration to the beginning of the Second Empire. Then it faded fast.

Let us look at a characteristic case or two. In April, 1830, Mme. Lazerme, wife of a deputy, returned to Perpignan. The previous month, her husband had voted against the Chamber's address to the king; the Address had, you will remember, stated the majority's objections concerning the king's veiled threat to dissolve the Chamber and arrange the election of a group of deputies more to his liking. "Many young people of an extreme Liberal persuasion," wrote the regional prosecutor, imagined that Mme. Lazerme had gone to see her husband, and that she was bringing him back to town.

> A charivari had been organized to punish him for voting against the Address. A large crowd went to his house. One heard innumerable rattles, bells, cymbals and whistles; for a long time they shouted wildly: A BAS LAZERME, VIVE LA CHARTE, VIVE LA LIBERTE!

The local prosecutor and a royal judge who lived nearby tried to calm the crowd but, reported the regional prosecutor, "it was necessary to use threats and armed force to stop the charivari and break up the crowd" (A.N. $BB^{18}$ 1183, letter of 22 April 1830). Two supposed chiefs of the gathering were arrested and committed for trial on misdemeanor charges. Two nights later, posters appeared in Perpignan, with tones of 1793: MORT AU TIRAN . . . PAIX AU PEUPLE . . . LIBERTE ET EGALITE . . . AU NOM DU PEUPLE FRANCAIS (A.N. $BB^{18}$ 1183, letter of 24 April 1830). When the accused ringleaders were convicted on the 30th of April, some of their friends posted a notice in these terms:

> SUBSCRIPTION. All the young people of the city of Perpignan, motivated by feelings which are both honorable and patriotic, and wanting to show their whole-hearted commitment to the cause which led to the conviction of their Comrades, have opened a subscription to pay their fines. You can contribute any amount, no matter how small; every offering placed on the fatherland's altar is of equal value. The time has come for our unjustly insulted people to make known its feelings and the honor it bestows on those who make an effort to speed the complete development of our institutions and fulfill the great destiny of our beautiful country, orphan of its glory and widow of its liberties (A.N. $BB^{18}$ 1183, enclosure in letter of 2 May 1830).

The local prosecutor's attempt to convict the organizers of that collection, however, disintegrated when the chief prosecution witness

changed his story. The prosecutor consoled himself, and his superiors, with the soothing thought that

> the prosecution must have had a good effect, Monseigneur, in the sense that the defendants and the huge audience that attended the trial saw clearly that justice is ever alert and that if its efforts did not have the most desirable results this time, they would another time, if a few demagogues should again take a mind to incite disorder, by whatever means, in contempt and hate of the royal government (A.N. $BB^{18}$ 1183, letter of 30 May 1830).

The Perpignan dossier contains the standard stuff of nineteenth-century political control. Its opening event was unquestionably some sort of charivari, right down to its organization by the city's "young people". Yet the whole series was just as unquestionably an everyday sequence in which an opposition group states its position and shows its strength by means of a public gathering, the authorities use the crime-control apparatus to strike at the opposition group, and the opponents then mobilize around and against that attack on their position. In short, the charivari had become a means of conducting politics as usual in Perpignan.

Not far away, in Toulouse, a similar transformation was occurring. In late December, 1831, crowds gathered near the house of the deputy, Amilhau. "That riotous assembly (attroupement)," wrote the prefect, "was the consequence of a plan for a charivari developed a few days ago when the news began to circulate that M. Amilhau was coming here." The prefect was confident that the "disorder" was "the result of incitement by radical hotheads; Amilhau was the subject of a violent article published yesterday in Le Patriote de Juillet. The participants came mainly from the faubourg St. Etienne" -- that is, from an old, comfortable

inner-city area (A.D. Haute-Garonne, 4 M 49, letter of 22 December 1831). Again the deputy stayed away. Nevertheless, the crowd stoned the troops sent to disperse them, and the troops arrested three ringleaders. Later the same day the prefect was promising to prosecute any further offenders "with inflexible severity" (A.D. H-G 4 M 49, second letter of 22 December 1831).

Nothing more, to my knowledge, came of Amilhau's aborted charivari. During the next few years, however, the authorities of Toulouse were often busy snuffing out political charivaris. Political, or politicized: some began as standard moral confrontations, but rapidly became occasions for the statement of political opposition. A case in point happened in April 1833, when a widower of the Couteliers quarter remarried and began receiving raucous visits night after night. "Most of the people who took too active a part," reported the police inspector

> were sent to police court. But that sort of prosecution was not very intimidating, and did not produce the desired effect. The disorders continued. One noticed, in fact, that the people who got involved in the disturbances no longer came, as one might expect, from the inferior classes. Law students, students at the veterinary school, and youngsters from good city families had joined in; seditious shouts had arisen in certain groups, and we learned that the new troublemakers meant to keep the charivari going until Louis Philippe's birthday, inhopes of producing another sort of disorder. It was especially on the evening of Sunday the 28th of April 1833 that the political nature of these gatherings appeared unequivocally. All of a sudden: the song La Carmagnole and shouts of VIVE LA REPUBLIQUE

> replaced the patois songs that were usually sung. It was all the clearer what was going on, because the majority of the agitators were people whose clothing itself announced that they weren't there for a simple charivari (A.N. BB$^{18}$ 1215, letter of 2 May 1833).

The city's young bourgeois, according to the police inspector, had taken over the plebeian form of action, and had transformed it in the process.

It took police, National Guards and line troops to break up the crowds that evening. The unpopular wedding took place the next day, but on the day after (the 30th), the same people gathered at the Place du Capitole to jeer the fireworks set off to celebrate the King's birthday. Broken up by the police, they rushed to the Place St. Etienne, then sped to the Prefecture to demand the freeing of participants who had been arrested earlier. The police got the gates closed just in time to prevent the demonstrators from breaking in. Arrests made that night proved, according to the regional prosecutor, that Carlists and Republicans had joined together in the "seditious demonstrations": "Among six prisoners, there were three from each party" (A.N. BB$^{18}$ 1215, letter of 3 May 1833).

1833, as it happens, became a vintage year for political charivaris in Toulouse. By the end of June the police inspector was preparing for the arrival of three deputies in the city by organizing a "charivari service" whose task was "to prevent both serenades and charivaris" (A.D. H-G 4 M 50, report of police to mayor, 27 June 1833). On the 30th of June, despite these precautions, a troop of students and workers marched through the streets of Toulouse, accompanied by musical instruments, singing the Marseillaise, and shouting VIVE LA REPUBLIQUE. "It is all the more urgent to repress these disturbances," the police inspector advised the mayor, "because they could link up with the charivaris and celebrations at the end of the month" (i.e. with the anniversary of the July Revolution: A.D. H-G 4 M 50,

report of 2 July 1833). And, in fact, both the Carlists and the Republicans of Toulouse continued to promote their causes by organizing serenades and charivaris.

The charivaris of Perpignan and Toulouse were not Great Events. Nevertheless they have a twofold importance. First, they show us local people using familiar means to accomplish new ends, and transforming the means in the process; by pushing the existing repertoire to its limits, the people of Perpignan and Toulouse were helping to create a new repertoire of collective action. Second, the authorities themselves feel hampered by the partial legitimacy of the old forms; within limits, we hear them saying, people have the right to serenades and charivaris; the problem is to keep serenades and charivaris from becoming something else, something political. That constraint of the authorities, in its turn, became an invitation to charivariser instead of turning to riskier forms of action such as the full-fledged demonstration. The same sort of advantage encouraged people of the July Monarchy to take advantage of funerals, festivals and public ceremonies.

The nineteenth century's middle decades saw many more such occasions. At the time of resistance to the controversial census of 1841, another variant appeared in Caen. Guizot, then both Minister of Foreign Affairs and member of the Calvados departmental council, came to Caen to consult with his colleagues on the 23d of August. That night the colleagues held a reception for Guizot at the Prefecture. "For several days," reported the local prosecutor,

> people had been spreading the idea of a charivari. Toward nine o'clock a number of groups crossed the square at the Prefecture, let out scattered whistles and shouted -- now and then when they were under cover -- A BAS L'HOMME DE GAND, GUIZOT A LA POTENCE. Then they sang the Marseillaise, Ça Ira, etc. Two persons were

arrested shouting A BAS GUIZOT. They were Lecouvreur, a baker's helper, and Legout, student pharmacist in the shop of M. Decourdemanche. They were to be tried for "public outrage" (A.N. BB[18] 1395A, letter of 25 August 1841). More crowds gathered in Caen's public squares the next two evenings, but the conspicuous stationing of troops around the city kept them under control.

What happened in Caen? Another banal encounter between the political authorities and the local opposition. This time, however, the prosecutor bemuses us by his adoption of the word charivari; we would be less surprised if he called the event a manifestation. After all, the young people gathered at a public building rather than a private house, left their rattles and pans at home, and failed to state either the offense or the penalty they had in mind. Now, it is possible that the prosecutor wrote the word charivari in gentle irony. I suspect, however, that the word was deliberate and, in its way, accurate: this was, indeed, a charivari on its way to becoming a demonstration.

One more case will clarify the transformation that was going on. We move forward to 1860, and another letter to the Minister of Justice from a regional prosecutor based in Montpellier:

> A regrettable demonstration (i.e. manifestation) occurred in the commune of Mayreville, arrondissement of Castelnaudry (Aude), on the 22d of July. About twenty people, professional marauders and poachers, got together at the news of the transfer of the communal game warden, the object of their dislike, and for good reason. They went through the streets of the village and stationed themselves in the main square, especially in front of the warden's house, singing the Marseillaise and other songs of

seditious character, notably an anti-national and anti-patriotic patois hymn composed during the reaction of 1815 to celebrate the fall of the First Empire. They added verses stating a desire for the return of the Republic and making threatening references to the local authorities (A.N. BB$^{30}$ 423, letter of 2 August 1860).

No mention of the charivari in this account, yet some of the lineaments of the old form of reprobation are still visible. The celebrants take their places outside their enemy's home and sing proscribed songs to make their opposition unmistakable. Whether the participants were really professional poachers or simply run-of-the-mill village hunters, however, they now put their private hostility to the game warden into the idiom of national politics. If they had carried banners, signs or symbols of their political affiliation, in fact, we would have no trouble recognizing the event as a full-fledged political demonstration.

## A New Repertoire

The demonstration belonged to a new nineteenth-century repertoire. Before the nineteenth century, ordinary Frenchmen had often stated grievances or demands by assembling in some public place and displaying their commitment to their cause. If that were all it took to make a demonstration, then a host of food riots, tax rebellions, invasions of fields, actions against conscription and, yes, charivaris would qualify as demonstrations. But the specific form of action known in France as the manifestation differed from any of these elements of the old-regime repertoire in several ways: happening in a symbolically important public place, growing from an assembly which was called in advance by the spokesmen of some special interest, explicitly identifying the affiliations of the participants, broadcasting demands and grievances by means of placards, banners, pamphlets and other written communications.

Manifestants, in other words, rarely gathered at private residences or at the sites of protested evils, seldom acted in the course of authorized festivals and rituals, did not usually involve a whole community, and employed colorful symbols and tableaux much less regularly than their eighteenth century predecessors. The new way of acting together showed some signs of crystallizing during the Revolution, but only became a significant and regular way of doing political business under the July Monarchy, and only displaced its eighteenth-century predecessors around the time of the Revolution of 1848.

The mid-century shift toward the demonstration paralleled the rise of other characteristic nineteenth-century forms of collective action: the strike, the electoral rally, the formal meeting, and others. Together, these changes constituted the creation of a new repertoire -- essentially the same repertoire of collective action which prevailed in the twentieth century as well. In this repertoire, self-selected special interests and formal associations played a prominent part. The forms of action in the repertoire overlapped or mimicked the forms of electoral politics: stressing the numbers and the commitment of a cause's supporters, enunciating whole programs for change, rarely producing violence except when another part resisted the demands or attempted to block the show of strength. The authorities, in their turn, interpreted the repertoires in the light of electoral politics: anxiously scanning a demonstration, strike or protest meeting for signs of the involvement of major political blocs, counting the number of participants with care, maintaining voluminous dossiers on militants and ringleaders, attempting to divide the potential users of the emerging forms of action into acceptable and dangerous, into legitimate and criminal, and then to

use force, espionage and the threat of prosecution to eliminate the unacceptable actors from the arena.

Over France as a whole, this reorganization produced a notable shift in the occasions on which collective violence occurred. In Anjou, for example, a partial inventory of major violent events over the century beginning in 1830 runs like this:

1832: battles between Chouans and troops, National Guard or officials in Beaupréau, St. Laurent du Mottay, Montrévault, Montjean, Bois de Freigné, and la Chapelle Rousselin

1839: food riots of various forms in le May, St. Rémy-en-Mauges, Beaupréau, St. Pierre Maulimart, la Chapelle-du-Genêt and Jallais

1842 food riot in Beaufort

1846 demonstrations at the conviction of food rioters

1847 food riots and demonstrations about food shortages in Candé, Pouancé, Cambrée, Armaillé

1848 a journeyman's fight in Bécon and railroad workers' brawls in la Poissonnière

1855: a republican demonstration in Trélazé and Angers

1897: a demonstration of striking slateworkers in Angers

1904: mass resistance to the expulsion of the Capucines from schools in Angers [3]

A similar compilation for Toulouse and the rest of the Haute-Garonne takes the following shape:

1830: at the news of the July Revolution in Paris, groups in Toulouse take to the streets, threaten the prefect, and fight the police

1831: at the news of Warsaw's fall to Russia, groups attack printers and shout anti-governmental slogans in Toulouse

---

3. The events in question consist of every occasion involving at least one group of fifty or more persons in some minimum of violence (seizure or damage of persons or objects over resistance) encountered by trained readers of two national newspapers for each day from 1830 through 1860 and for a random three months per year from 1861 through 1929. For more details, see the appendix to Tilly 1978.

1834: a violent charivari in Toulouse

1839: a fight between two groups of workers, and an audience's tearing up of a theater, both in Toulouse

1840: invasion of communal woods by inhabitants of Pointis-Inard

1841: two violent demonstrations against the census in Toulouse

1846: another theater riot in Toulouse

1848: battles of inhabitants with forest guards in la Barousse and St. Béat, barricading of mayor and purchaser of the forest in Signac, invasion of public building by radicals in Toulouse, parade of Legitimists in Toulouse, attacks on tax-collectors in Boissède and St. Médard

1849: attack on troops transporting prisoners and left-wing demonstration by National Guard company, both in Toulouse

1850: left-wing demonstrations in Toulouse and Carbonne

1851: a politicized charivari in Aspet, and a linked demonstration for the release of prisoners in St. Gaudens

1861: violent strike in Gaud

1891: violent strike in Toulouse

1898: fight at a public meeting in Toulouse

1904: violent strike in Toulouse

1922: demonstration blocking the tramway in Boulogne

The regions of Angers and Toulouse provide an instructive contrast. Before mid-century, Anjou produced nothing but guerrilla attacks and food riots, while in Languedoc primitive demonstrations oriented to national politics coupled with older forms of action oriented to local issues -- notably the conversion of previously communal forests into private property. After mid-century, in both regions, strikes and full-fledged demonstrations became the principal occasions for collective violence. In both Anjou and Languedoc, violent events concentrated increasingly in the cities.

The people of both regions were shifting toward the nineteenth-century repertoire, but Anjou lagged behind Languedoc. The nationalization and formalization of collective action occurred earlier in Toulouse and its region. The differences, I think, followed directly from Toulouse's greater and earlier integration into national electoral politics.

The experience of Paris and the Seine confirms that sense of a shift in the forms of contention during the nineteenth century. Too much happened in Paris for a simple catalog of the kind I have presented for Anjou and Languedoc; according to my best estimate, well over 500 major violent events occurred in the Seine from 1830 through 1929. Table 1 therefore presents a rough but relevant breakdown of the events. It classifies the major action out of which the violence grew: 1) a demonstration, strike or meeting, 2) an insurrection or rebellion -- a direct effort to displace national powerholders from their power, 3) all other actions. Such a classification is bound to generate controversy, if only because it requires some judgment of the intentions of the actors, and banishes indirect efforts to make revolution from the category of insurrection and rebellion. As a rough indicator of change, nevertheless, it deserves examination.

Table 1. Percent Distribution of Chief Occasions for Large-Scale Collective Violence in the Seine, 1830-1929

| DECADE | DEMONSTRATION, STRIKE, MEETING | INSURRECTION, REBELLION | OTHER | TOTAL | ESTIMATED NUMBER OF EVENTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1830-39 | 47 | 16 | 37 | 100 | 32 |
| 1840-49 | 47 | 4 | 49 | 100 | 51 |
| 1850-59 | 50 | 17 | 33 | 100 | 6 |
| 1860-69 | 68 | 0 | 32 | 100 | 48 |
| 1870-79 | 25 | 33 | 42 | 100 | 48 |
| 1880-89 | 63 | 0 | 37 | 100 | 64 |
| 1890-99 | 78 | 0 | 22 | 100 | 36 |
| 1900-09 | 83 | 0 | 17 | 100 | 96 |
| 1910-19 | 73 | 0 | 27 | 100 | 60 |
| 1920-29 | 75 | 0 | 25 | 100 | 96 |

NOTE: Since the count from 1861 onward comes from the reading of materials from a randomly-selected three months per year, I have multiplied the actual count by four to estimate the total number of events for those decades.

What does the tabulation tell us? First, that -- as gauged by the sheer number of violent events -- violence did not fade away with the strengthening of the state and the formalization of political organization. On the contrary: the trend runs mildly upward. Second, that insurrections and rebellions nevertheless disappeared from France's collective violence after the Commune of 1871. (To be sure, if we ran the time line forward to the 1940s and 1950s, we would see that the insurrection's death was only temporary.) Third, that the proportion of large, violent events which began as demonstrations, strikes or meetings was already substantial by comparison with Languedoc or Anjou in the 1830s, and rose to become the great majority by the end of the century. The cluster of insurrectionary actions (and of attacks on troops and authorities, hidden in the "other" category) around the Commune makes the only important break in that trend.

The third point is the one to which the earlier discussion had already led us: the emergence and conquest of a new repertoire of collective action. Concretely, the public meeting, the demonstration, the strike, the electoral rally and related forms of action became the standard means by which people gathered to make claims and voice complaints. At the start of the nineteenth century, these forms had been rare or non-existent. As in so many other things, Paris led the way to their creation and adoption. The focal point of national politics, the metropolis provided the central stage for the new repertoire.

Yet the transformation was national in scope, more complex and comprehensive than simple invention at the center and diffusion from there. We have seen the same process working through the temporary politicization of the charivari in widely separated parts of France. The evidence concerning the charivari is precious. French contenders took a form of action which had long served

the purposes of moral control, and employed it in the arena of national politics. The charivari as such did not survive as a political instrument, but gave way to the manifestation -- more or less the demonstration we know today. The shift from the classic charivari to the classic demonstration entailed important changes: a move from the home of an offender to a symbolically significant public place, the creation of a public identity for the demonstrators, the explicit display of demands and complaints in words, songs, placards and symbols, the deliberate dramatization of the numbers and determination of the demonstrators, and so on. In its few decades of prominence, the politicized charivari had the advantages of familiarity, and of a quasi-legal existence. But it gave way to a very different form, one more closely aligned with a world of special-purpose associations, electoral politics and parliamentary decision-making. It gave way to a whole new repertoire.

The case of the politicized charivari and the demonstration also reminds us to take the metaphor of repertoire seriously. On the one hand, we are dealing with learned behavior, with performances about which the performers care, with more or less self-conscious choices of means to defend or advance shared interests. While the participants may be passionate and the outcomes of their actions unanticipated, they know, in general, what they are doing. The vocabulary of "riot" and "protest", often applied to the sorts of collective action we have been examining, serves mainly to obscure and demean the interest of the actors in their action. On the other hand, the learning involved permits plenty of innovation and tactical maneuvering. The rough separation of meetings from demonstrations from strikes, and so on, should not blind us to the frequent combinations and compromises among elements of the repertoire. Nor should we ignore the trial and error by which ordinary people modify a well-known form such as the charivari only to drop it later when it proves ineffective or costly.

Repertoires include more than set pieces, fixed forever.

Does it make any difference, in the last analysis, what forms of collective action ordinary people have at their disposal? I think it does. The existing repertoire defines the room for maneuver people have between their own shared interests and the opportunities or threats presented by the surrounding world. The fit may be good or bad on either side -- the existing repertoire may, for example, be fairly effective for those who use it, yet poorly matched to a particular group's actual interests. The range covered may be narrow or broad; some groups and eras have impoverished repertoires, other very rich ones. The shift from the eighteenth-century repertoire to its nineteenth-century counterpart may well have cost ordinary French people some of their ability to articulate their interests at a local level in a differentiated, effective way, while enhancing their ability to make themselves heard in national politics. The shift seems to have entailed their abandoning common use rights and the priority of local communities in the control of their own resources. It appears to have committed them to a world in which numbers and formal organizations count. The nineteenth-century repertoire rests on the premises of possessive individualism, of capitalism, of a strong, centralized state, of electoral politics. The change in repertoire did not, to be sure, cause these profound alterations of social life. But it was both cause and effect of people's changing ability to exert control over the basic transformations affecting the quality of their lives.

REFERENCES

Yves-Marie Bercé

1974 Croquants et Nu-pieds. Les soulèvements paysans en France, du XVIe au XIXe siècle. Paris: Gallimard; "Archives".

1976 Fête et révolte. Des mentalités populaires du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle. Paris: Hachette.

Emile Durkheim

1960 Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Norbert Elias

1978 "On Transformations of Aggressiveness," Theory and Society, 5: 229-242.

Alain Faure

1978 Paris Carême-prenant. Du Carnaval à Paris au XIXe siècle, 1800-1914. Paris: Hachette.

Michel Foucault

1975 Surveiller et punir. Naissance de la prison. Paris: Gallimard.

Michelle Perrot

1974 Les ouvriers en grève. France, 1871-1890. Paris: Mouton. 2 vols.

Charles Tilly

1978 From Mobilization to Revolution. Reading, Mass: Addison - Wesley

Eugen Weber

1976 Peasants into Frenchmen. The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

## WORKING PAPERS OF THE CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The Center for Research on Social Organization is a facility of the Department of Sociology, University of Michigan. Its primary mission is to support the research of faculty and students in the department's Social Organization graduate program. CRSO Working papers report current research and reflection by affiliates of the Center; many of them are published later elsewhere after revision. Working Papers which are still in print are available from the Center for a fee of 50 cents plus the number of pages in the paper (88 cents for a 38-page paper, etc.). The Center will photocopy out-of-print Working Papers at cost (approximately five cents per page). Recent Working Papers include:

206 "Keeping the Navvies in Line: Variations in Work-Discipline Among Victorian Railway Construction Crews," by Samuel Cohn, October 1979, 27 pages.

207 "Demographic Origins of the European Proletariat," by Charles Tilly, December 1979, 105 pages.

208 "Contention and Peasant Rebellion in Seventeenth-Century France," by Charles Tilly, January 1980, 54 pages.

209 "A Study of Contentious Gatherings in Early Nineteenth-Century Great Britain," by R.A. Schweitzer, January 1980, 4 pages.

210 "Enumerating and Coding Contentious Gatherings in Nineteenth-Century Britain," By Charles Tilly and R.A. Schweitzer, February 1980, 84 pages.

211 "The Texture of Contention in Britain, 1828-1829," by R.A. Schweitzer, Charles Tilly and John Boyd, February 1980, 150 pages.

212 "How (And to Some Extent, Why) To Study British Contention," by Charles Tilly, February, 1980, 61 pages.

213 "States, Taxes and Proletarians," by Charles Tilly, March, 1980, 27 pages.

Request copies of these papers, the complete lists of Center Working Papers and other reprints, or further information about Center activities from:

Center for Research on Social Organization
Univeristy of Michigan
330 Packard Street
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109