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AND THE AUTONOMY OF POLITICS:  
THE DOCKWORKERS OF NINETEENTH-  
CENTURY MARSEILLE

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The dockworkers of Marseille constitute a highly exceptional case in the history of the nineteenth-century French working class. Between the Restoration and the Second Empire, when labor organizations were regarded as illegal "coalitions" under the penal code, Marseille's dockworkers were nevertheless openly organized in a mutual aid society that was actually a reconstitution of their old regime corporation. By means of this society, they tightly restricted entry into the trade, minutely controlled all work done on the docks, and maintained wages superior not only to those of other unskilled laborers, but to those of virtually all skilled workers as well. In a working-class world populated by repressed, fragmented, and struggling labor organizations, Marseille's dockworker corporation was supremely unified and self-confident, and was tolerated -- sometimes even encouraged -- by the merchants and the political authorities.

This paper attempts to explain how the dockworkers gained this extraordinary position and sustained it over some four decades. It is obvious that any phenomenon so singular must be explained largely by local and particular causes, and much of this article will concentrate on peculiarities of Marseille's history. But my aim is broader. I want not only to explain this particular case, but to do so in a way that simultaneously contributes to a broader rethinking of nineteenth-century labor history. An exceptional case like that of Marseille's dockworkers lends itself to such a rethinking surprisingly well, for what was once deemed exceptional by nineteenth-century labor historians has increasingly turned out to be the rule.

Before the early 1960s, labor history was dominated by a monolithic model of capitalist development. The rise of capitalism meant the growth of the factory system of production, and the growth of factories meant the expansion of a proletariat -- and therefore the development of radical and class-conscious labor movements. In spite of research that chipped away at the edges of this monolith, it was only with the publication of E. P. Thompson's The Making of the English

Working Class in 1963 that it began to crumble. Since then, new research has made capitalist development seem more and more multiform. Thompson and his many followers have emphasized the penetration of capitalism into the handicrafts -- by means of intensified division of labor, subcontracting, sweating, and other exploitative practices that undercut the artisans' skills and their control of labor markets and workplaces.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, research on textile factory workers and coal miners has found that these supposedly paradigmatic proletarians were by no means the regimented and uniformly exploited masses posited by the classical account -- that they formed tightly-knit, kin-based communities, that they prized their skills, that they maintained remarkable workplace autonomy, and that their relations with employers often took the form of some kind of commercial subcontracting rather than straight-forward wage labor.<sup>2</sup> Sabel and Zeitlin have even suggested that the factory itself was a contingent rather than a necessary product of industrial capitalism, and that alternatives to mass production may yet win the day against the "classic" satanic mill.<sup>3</sup> Across the entire range of industries, nineteenth-century capitalist development turns out to have been a most untidy affair.

Perhaps the most heroic effort to catalog the diversity of the impact of capitalism on nineteenth-century workers has been Raphael Samuel's essay "Workshop of the World: Steam Power and Hand Technology in Mid-Victorian Britain."<sup>4</sup> This article documents in staggering detail the intimate cohabitation of new mechanical techniques, old handicraft skills, and backbreaking manual labor. In his effort to bring some conceptual order to the diversity of nineteenth-century British industrial practices,<sup>5</sup> Samuel relies on Trotsky's notion of "uneven and combined development."<sup>5</sup> This concept was originally invented to explain the deviations of backward Russia from the supposedly orderly sequence of Western European development, but Samuel transports it from the underdeveloped margins to the very core of the nineteenth-century capitalist system -- to the "Workshop of the World." Unevenness, in Samuel's formulation, occurs not only in macro-relations between nations, but in micro-relations between different economic sectors within a national society, or even between different processes within the same industry.

This notion has much to recommend it. Capitalism has a unitary logic -- the relentless accumulation of capital through the pursuit of profit. But if the abstract logic of capitalist development is always the same, opportunities for the pursuit of profit vary enormously over time and space, and evolve as the capitalist economy itself evolves. It is notorious that capitalist development proceeds not by uniform incremental growth and innovation in all economic sectors or industries simultaneously, but by industry-specific spurts -- booms in cotton textiles, or shipping, or railroad development, or automobile manufacture, or micro-electronics. And even within the booming industries, innovation or dynamism rarely effects all processes at once: the timing of innovation was different in cotton spinning than in cotton weaving, in manufacture of locomotives than in manufacture of sleeping cars. One of the consequences of this unevenness is a species of combined development in the labor force. Growth in the dynamic sector often creates new highly-mechanized classically "proletarian" industrial specialties. But it also inevitably stimulates employment in less technologically advanced auxiliary sectors -- either pre-existing or new. The rise of factory spinning multiplies both hand-loom weavers and field slaves; the development of the locomotive calls forth hordes of navvies; automobile factories give rise to repair shops, taxi drivers, and filling stations; computers create key-punch operators and programmers. In nineteenth-century conditions, the establishment of any kind of factory industry led to a multiplication of handicraft workers: masons, carpenters, and joiners to build the factories; builders, tailors, shoemakers, bakers and the like to house, clothe, and feed their workers. The most advanced techniques developed hand in hand with the most archaic.

Samuel is concerned above all to demonstrate that the advance of machinery in mid-nineteenth-century Britain also meant a concomitant advance in physical toil. But in this respect Samuel's article is one-sided; uneven development also created (and continues to create) significant pockets of privilege in the working class. The famous "golden age of the handloom weavers" was an early and obvious example. Weavers had very high wages and enviable working conditions in the era between the development of machine spinning and the adoption of the power loom because the flood of cheap machine-spun yarns caused a sharp decline in finished cloth prices, which

caused a prodigious expansion in demand for cloth, which in turn caused a scarcity of the as yet irreplaceable labor of weavers -- who consequently had very high earnings until the power loom destroyed their temporary advantage. The case of the handloom weavers has been recreated over and over in the history of capitalism -- with infinite variations -- from the mule-spinners of mid-nineteenth-century Lancashire, to the skilled engineers of the nineteenth-century machine industry, to the computer programmers of Silicon Valley. Such pockets of privilege are not permanent; they may last for only a few years or for several decades before the unpredictable lurches of capitalist development wipe them out. But the same lurches that destroy existing privileged categories also create new ones. Although the net effect of uneven development is far from directionless,<sup>6</sup> neither does it result, as Samuel's account seems to imply, in a relentless increase in toil. Instead, its effect on the labor force is a richly varied, continually changing, kaleidoscopic mixture of exploitation and privilege.

The history of Marseille's dockworkers in the nineteenth-century illustrates with particular clarity how uneven development could create, and in time destroy, a privileged category of workers. From 1815 to the 1850s, booming maritime capitalism, when combined with unchanging technical and organizational conditions on the docks, raised the dockworkers from obscurity to a privileged position unique not only in Marseille, but possibly in all of France. Then, in the course of a few years, a capitalist reorganization of dock work destroyed the dockworkers' privileged niche, reducing them to little more than unskilled laborers. Although the story of Marseille's dockworkers is unusual, it traces out a broad pattern that has been repeated over and over, with countless variations, during the history of capitalism.

The case of Marseille's dockworkers can also contribute to another trend in contemporary historical studies -- a growing recognition of the autonomy of politics. The classical conception of capitalism as the advance of the factory was always linked to a reductionist notion of the relation between economics and politics. It therefore makes sense that recognition of uneven development should be paralleled by a recognition of the autonomy (or relative autonomy) of politics. Yet the vast literature on artisans, which pioneered in documenting the complexity and unevenness of

nineteenth-century capitalism, has actually been dominated by a thoroughly reductionist explanatory strategy -- an effort to explain workers' politics by their economic experiences.

If artisans were radical, this line of argument goes, it was because their trades, no less than factory trades, were being penetrated and proletarianized by capitalism, albeit in a subtler fashion. Case studies of particular trades, for example Christopher Johnson's seminal article on French tailors in the first half of the nineteenth century, have shown convincingly that the piecemeal proletarianization undergone by artisans could be economically devastating and could have powerfully radicalizing consequences.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, varying forms of capitalist penetration -- increasing division of labor, substitution of unskilled for skilled workers in certain phases of the production process, the development of urban putting-out networks or sweatshops, exploitative forms of subcontracting, and so on -- have by now been documented for a wide variety of trades.<sup>8</sup> This widespread advance of capitalist penetration into the artisan trades in the nineteenth century seems to parallel the widespread advance of artisan radicalism.

But if capitalist penetration was widespread, it was certainly not universal, nor was it uniform in its effects on the working population. For such penetration to count as a sufficient explanation of artisan radicalization, it must be shown that radical artisans were drawn disproportionately from those specific trades that were being degraded by capitalist penetration. As far as I know, this has never been demonstrated. Moreover, the contrary can be shown for the case of Marseille in 1848, where politically radical workers were drawn not only from degraded trades, but also from trades that had not been much affected by capitalist penetration and even from trades that had been privileged by capitalist development.<sup>9</sup> The highly uneven effects of capitalist development in the nineteenth century probably created no path of working-class economic experience sufficiently general to account adequately for the very broad artisan revolts that occurred.

If this is true, then explaining working-class radicalism will require a close attention to the autonomous dynamics of political change itself. Besides asking what socio-economic experiences predisposed workers to radical politics<sup>10</sup>, we must also ask what sorts of political processes,

events, and ideologies induced workers to participate in radical political movements. Once again, Marseille's dockworkers serve as an illuminating case -- perhaps as a sort of counterexample to Christopher Johnson's tailors. Whereas Johnson's tailors epitomize artisans driven to revolutionary politics by a tragic degradation of their trade, Marseille's dockworkers represent a trade attracted to revolutionary politics in spite of their extraordinary privilege and prosperity. Their history indicates, in miniature, how political processes may produce a broad-based radical working-class movement even when the unevenness of capitalist development fails to produce an economically homogeneous proletariat.

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Marseille's dockworkers (portefaix) were a sufficiently extraordinary case that they were much remarked by the authorities and by other observers, especially during their "golden age" in the 1840s and 1850s. It is therefore easier to write their history than that of most nineteenth-century working-class trades. Nevertheless, the documentation, however ample for some purposes, is very scarce for others. This article, like most "history from the bottom up," will therefore contain a good deal of hypothetical reconstruction based on scattered, diverse, and fragmentary evidence. Given the incompleteness of the evidence, it seems best to begin with a portrait of the dockworkers in the 1840s and 1850s, which can be based on relatively complete documentation, and work backwards from there into the earlier and more obscure decades.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps the most obvious indication of the dockworkers' privileged position at mid-century was their high wage level. Estimates of dockworkers' earnings dating from the 1840s range from four to five-and-one-half francs a day. Dockworkers were actually paid on a piece-work basis, so the earnings might in fact vary considerably around these sums. Moreover, because work on the docks was subject to periodic unemployment these figures cannot simply be multiplied by the standard six-day week to derive an average weekly wage. But even taking unemployment into account, dockworkers were among the best-paid workers in the city. Their earnings were at least twice those of other men engaged in heavy manual labor (for example, ditchdiggers or masons'



laborers), and were well above those of most artisans, who usually received between three and three-and-a-half francs a day. In fact, dockworkers' wages were matched only by such highly-skilled workers as glass-blowers, shipwrights, machinists, watchmakers, and printers.<sup>12</sup>

These high wages were maintained in part by a strict limitation on entry into dockworking. It was very difficult to become a dockworker unless one's father already practiced the trade. Among dockworkers who got married in the years 1846 and 1851, no fewer than 70 percent were dockworkers' sons. This was by far the highest rate of inheritance of any occupation in the city, working-class or bourgeois; the next five occupations were fishermen with 58 percent, ropemakers with 47, tilemakers with 46, tanners with 43, and wholesale merchants (the top bourgeois occupation) with 42. The average rate for all occupations was only 23 percent.<sup>13</sup> These figures make it clear that the dockworkers' lucrative trade was a kind of hereditary possession of their families.

The dockworkers' high earnings and extraordinary levels of occupational inheritance would have been impossible without a powerful labor organization. The dockworkers were organized openly and unabashedly. Their "Society of Saint Peter and Saint Paul and of Our Lady of Mercy" was authorized by local officials in 1817, shortly after the defeat of Napoleon and the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy. Officially a mutual benefit society, it was actually a straightforward reconstitution of the dockworkers' corporation, or guild, from the old regime. The corporation dated back at least to the end of the fourteenth century, but its statutes were first written down in 1704. These had been amended in 1789, just before the French Revolution; the statutes of 1814, in turn, were an amended version of those of 1789.<sup>14</sup> In 1814, members of the old corporation and their sons could join the mutual aid society by paying a nominal fee of eight francs, while all other applicants would have to pay eighty francs -- equivalent to better than a month's wages for most manual workers. These entry fees were precisely the same as in the old-regime corporation.<sup>15</sup> In 1841, when the society's statutes were revised again, the entry fee charged for non-dockworkers' sons was increased to the impossible sum of a thousand francs.<sup>16</sup> Besides

erecting these high financial barriers to admission, the dockworkers' society could also simply refuse membership to men who attempted to enter, even if they could pay the fee.

Restrictions on entry into the dockworker's society also meant restrictions on entry into the trade, for the society maintained a monopoly over the loading and unloading of ships in Marseille's harbor. Under the old regime, members of the corporation had the exclusive privilege of carrying a special dockworkers' sack, and any man who worked on the docks without this mark of membership could be fined one hundred livres. This practice lost its legal standing after the Revolution, but it continued to be strictly observed. In fact the 1817 statutes of the dockworkers' society included as one of its regulations that "only dockworkers admitted into the society have the right to carry the sack."<sup>17</sup> Right down to the 1860s, it was impossible to work on the docks of Marseille without being a member of the dockworkers' society and carrying the identifying sack.<sup>18</sup>

The dockworkers' Society of Saint Peter and Saint Paul and of Our Lady of Mercy had a much more elaborate formal organization than most nineteenth-century mutual aid societies -- more elaborate, in fact, than many eighteenth-century guilds. It had a Grand Conseil of 60 that set general policies, and a Petit Conseil of 12 that managed its day-to-day business. The Petit Conseil was responsible, for example, for organizing celebrations on the festival day of Saints Peter and Paul, with masses, processions, and acts of charity. The Petit Conseil was composed of six "visitors of the sick" and six "priors" (prieurs). The visitors of the sick were charged with administering the society's generous sickness and retirement benefits, which amounted to six francs a week plus doctors' fees and medications in cases of sickness, and five francs a week in retirement benefits for men who had worked on the docks for thirty years or more. To finance these substantial benefits, the society required its members to pay three percent of their earnings as dues.<sup>19</sup> By 1852, the society had holdings of 232,666 francs, placed in various banks and in municipal bonds.<sup>20</sup>

The priors were responsible for all affairs of the society connected to work on the docks: mediating disputes between teams of dockworkers or between dockworkers and merchants, making sure that teams were not competing with one another so as to drive down wages, and

above all assuring that only members of the society were employed on the waterfront.<sup>21</sup> The priors also administered an institution known as the "muse" (la muse). Dockworkers who were not members of a regular team, or whose team had no job on a given day, would report to the muse, where they were placed on a register in order of appearance and were given daily work as they were needed. Any job not being handled by a regular team had to be channeled through the muse, and in addition the muse always handled certain types of unloading -- salt and grains, for example. By means of the muse, the dockworkers' society was able to apportion equitably the available work, and to cushion its members against unemployment.<sup>22</sup> Finally, the priors were also responsible for overseeing the nature and techniques of work. The society was resolutely opposed to any technical innovations, and in 1853 it adopted a regulation formally banning all wheeled vehicles from the docks, prescribing that all burdens be carried on the dockworkers' backs.<sup>23</sup> The society not only had a monopoly of work on the docks, it also determined how the work was to be done and, through its priors, enforced its own regulations. Its control of work was virtually absolute.

In the 1840s and 1850s, then, the dockworkers enjoyed an enviable position. Not only were they extremely well-paid, but they had unmatched job-security, a workable pension plan, and an equitable system of allocating work during periods of unemployment. Their elaborately organized society was tolerated by the authorities, and by means of their society the dockworkers themselves controlled the organization and pace of their work, kept interlopers off the docks, and saw to it that good wages and working conditions were maintained. Moreover, dockworkers knew they could pass all these advantages on to their sons. By comparison with almost any other workers in Marseille -- or in France for that matter -- the dockworkers had a very comfortable situation.<sup>24</sup>

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The privileges of the dockworkers' society were firmly established in the first years of the Restoration. But these privileges did not guarantee prosperity immediately; they became

genuinely lucrative only when the long capitalist boom of the second quarter of the nineteenth-century quickened the activity of Marseille's port. Explaining the rise of the dockworkers' to their "golden age" in the 1840s and 1850s requires two steps. First we must account for the initial establishment of the society's privileges in the early years of the Restoration. Then we must trace out the effects on the dockworkers of the sustained expansion of maritime commerce from the early 1820s to the late 1840s.

The dockworkers' society was established by a provisional decree of the Marquis d'Albertas, the prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhone, in 1814, only a few months after the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy. The statutes of the society were then officially approved in 1817 by the Marquis de Montgrand, mayor of Marseille. Existing documents do not make entirely clear the reasons for d'Albertas' and de Montgrand's support of the dockworkers. It was, of course, far from rare for officials of the Restoration to have sympathy for old regime guilds, which were viewed by many conservatives as a means of maintaining deference and discipline among the lower orders. But the Restoration's official policy was to maintain Revolutionary and Napoleonic legislation guaranteeing "libre echange," and no wholesale reestablishment of the guilds was undertaken. No other trade in Marseille was treated like the dockworkers, and few, if any, were so treated elsewhere in France. In both a national and a local perspective, the dockworkers' society was an anomaly. Official sanction for its statutes would have been impossible to obtain had not the authorities regarded the dockworkers' and their association as somehow exceptional.

When de Montgrand proposed official approval of the dockworkers' statutes in 1817, the Comte de Villeneuve-Bargement, d'Albertas' successor as prefect, in fact questioned their legality. De Montgrand, who was the dockworkers' principal patron from 1814 until he resigned from office after the July Revolution in 1830, managed to overcome the prefect's misgivings. In a letter of 29 September, 1817, he claimed that even under the old regime the dockworkers' association had not had "the character of a privileged corporation;" its statutes had been "purely the result of mesures of public interest decreed...for the maintenance of an order necessary among the men of that profession." These reasons were as valid in 1817 as they had been before the Revolution; the

society's regulations would maintain "a discipline extremely favorable to tranquility, to public order, to the observation of principles of honesty and fidelity indispensable to the interests of commerce." Moreover, de Montgrand argued, regulations analogous to the proposed statutes of Marseille's dockworkers existed for work "on the quais and in the ports" of cities all over France. He even procured a copy of the recently enacted statutes of the dockworkers of Nantes to illustrate this argument.<sup>25</sup> Finally, de Montgrand argued that approving the statutes would have the additional benefit of assuring the dockworkers' loyalty to the new monarchical regime. "I will not speak, Monsieur le Comte, of the essential advantage there is for authority, from the political point of view, of keeping under a regular dependence, by its direct action on the heads of the association, a so numerous mass of men whose lapses or movements could in many circumstances be very disquieting."<sup>26</sup>

But this political advantage was incidental to the central point. Dock work, de Montgrand implied, had a special public character that distinguished it from other other trades, and it was therefore acceptable for the municipality to approve regulations that assured its orderly performance. Rather than working in enclosed private spaces subject to the private discipline of the proprietor or entrepreneur, dockworkers worked in an outdoor public space controlled by the municipality. A regulation of dockwork, therefore, could be seen as a simple exercise of the municipality's police authority -- which in this case was to be largely delegated to the dockworkers' organization itself. The dockworkers' society, then, was a kind of semi-public institution. As such, it was expected, under the old regime and under the new, to perform certain public functions for the municipality. The society was required by its statutes, both in 1789 and in 1817, to constitute itself as an emergency fire brigade at the command of the municipality.<sup>27</sup> In the eighteenth century, the dockworkers' corporation had frequently been called in by the municipality to help maintain order, for example in 1777 during an official visit of Louis XVI's brother, in 1781 to guard the door of the cathedral during a mass celebrating the birth of the Dauphin, in 1784 during a balloon launching, and in 1789 after the pillaging of the house of a tax farmer.<sup>28</sup>

In any case, the dockworkers' society was treated very differently from associations organized by other groups of workers -- whose attempts to limit entry into the trade, to control the nature and pace of work, or to maintain wage levels had to be carried on in secret. De Montgrand not only approved the charter of the dockworkers' society and defended it against the prefect, but was deeply involved in the day-to-day administration of its affairs -- intervening in disputes about work, fines, expulsions, and the like.<sup>29</sup> Until his replacement after the July Revolution of 1830, de Montgrand seems to have regarded the dockworkers' society almost as an auxiliary branch of the municipal government, one subject to his continual and benevolent oversight.

This persistent support from the mayor and the municipality enabled the dockworkers' society to establish itself firmly on the waterfront. Institutionally, the dockworkers' society seems to have functioned as effectively in the 1820s as it did during the dockworkers' golden age in the 1840s and 1850s. Although the dockworkers seem to have been involved in more disputes with other transport workers in the 1810s and 1820s than in succeeding decades, they successfully maintained their monopoly against all challenges. No satisfactory figures on wages are available for the early decades, but what evidence there is indicates that the piece rates paid to dockworkers were essentially the same in the late 1810s as at mid-century.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, evidence taken from the marriage registers of the early 1820s shows that the occupation of dockworker was passed on from father to son at essentially the same very high rate in the 1820s as it was at mid-century. Dockworkers who got married in 1821 and 1822 were sons of dockworkers in 73 percent of the cases -- once again the highest rate of inheritance of any occupation in the city. In all these respects, the dockworkers' control over their trade seems to have been as solid in the 1820s as it was the 1840s or 1850s.

But even with all these advantages, the dockworkers seem to have been far less prosperous in the late 1810s and the 1820s than they became in subsequent decades. During the French Revolution and the Napoleonic period, dockworkers had been decimated by the effects of maritime war and blockade, which had cut the traffic of the port to a trickle. Even after the revival of maritime commerce in the 1820s, their situation was by no means brilliant. It was only

the long capitalist boom of the French and European economies during the second quarter of the nineteenth century that made possible the prosperity of the 1840s and 1850s. Between 1821 and 1851, the population of Marseille nearly doubled, and the traffic of the port more than doubled -- with the precise figure varying according to the method of estimation.<sup>31</sup> This prodigious growth in the traffic of the port, which can be seen in Figure 1, was a consequence of several factors -- an absence of general European wars, an expansion of world trade, the development of industry in Marseille, in France, and in the rest of Europe, and improvements in communications from Marseille to the inland of France.<sup>32</sup> [Figure 1 about here.]

One would expect this rapid increase in the activity of the port to have brought about an equivalent rise in the number of dockworkers. But in fact the number of dockworkers in Marseille appears to have been virtually constant. There are no really satisfactory figures for the number of dockworkers employed in the city before the middle of the nineteenth century. But a rough estimate of changes in the size of the labor force can be derived from figures for the number of dockworkers who got married in a given year.<sup>33</sup> This figure averaged thirty-nine per year in 1821 and 1822, and remained essentially unchanged, at an average of thirty-seven per year, in 1846 and 1851. Thus, in a period when the amount of labor to be done approximately doubled, the number of dockworkers available to do it remained essentially constant. These figures seem to indicate an enormous change in the market for dockworkers' labor, one that, according to conventional economic theory, should have resulted in a steep rise in wage rates. Yet the evidence, which admittedly is thin, seems to indicate no important rise in the piece-rates paid to dockworkers in this period. What the available evidence suggests is a quite different development, but one no less favorable to the dockworkers.

By all reports, Marseille's dockworkers were able to handle the volume of goods that entered the port in the 1840s without either relaxing restrictions on entry into their society or allowing non-society men to work on the docks. This implies that there must have been a good deal of slack twenty or thirty years earlier, when the same number of men were handling only half as much work. This in turn suggests that unemployment and underemployment may have

been very common in the 1820s and early 1830s, and that the main effect of the commercial boom on Marseille's dockworkers was not to increase wage rates but to increase the level of employment -- by increasing either hours of labor, or intensity of labor, or both. Since dockworkers were paid by fixed piece-rates, the result of any of these increases in employment should have been a proportional rise in their earnings. Evidence bearing on this question is extremely scarce, but most if it is compatible with this picture of a constant labor force whose level of employment rose substantially over time.

The first piece of evidence -- hardly conclusive -- is literary in nature. It derives from the memoirs of Victor Gelu, a writer and singer of Provencal songs, who was born in a popular quarter of Marseille in 1806. As a young man in the middle 1820s, Gelu spent much of his time drinking, singing and gambling with young worker friends. Dockworkers were especially prominent among his drinking companions. When he was looking for entertainment, Gelu would stroll down to a neighborhood barbershop which had a back room where young men gathered to talk, to drink, and above all to gamble. There he was always sure of finding plenty of dockworkers temporarily out of work; according to Gelu, this particular barbershop had so many dockworkers that it "had become almost a branch office of the Muse."<sup>34</sup> From Gelu's account, it would appear that days of unemployment -- enlivened by drinking and gambling -- were a normal experience of dockworkers, or at least of young dockworkers, in the 1820s.

The second piece of evidence -- suggestive, but not much more conclusive than the first -- is the pattern of contestation on the docks. The period of the largest number of disputes seems to have been the late 1810s and the early 1820s, and from what little we know of these disputes, they usually seem to have involved the problem of unemployment in some way. Thus, in 1819 and 1821 the dockworkers protested that sailors were being used to unload ships, thereby depriving them of work; and in 1824 dockworkers registered at the Muse complained to the Priors that some of the masters were bypassing the Muse and taking on new men of their own choice. And throughout the period there were troubles between dockworkers and "robeirols" -- laborers who waited around on street-corners, ready to undertake assorted carrying tasks.<sup>35</sup> In principle,



these robeirols were easily distinguishable from dockworkers by the baskets they wore on their backs, which they used for carrying their loads -- as opposed to the sacks of the dockworkers.<sup>36</sup> This pattern of contestation -- frequent disputes involving issues of employment in the 1820s, followed by a virtual absence of disputes in the 1830s and 1840s -- seems to fit the hypothesis of initially high levels of unemployment, followed by increasingly full employment in the 1830s and 1840s. One might have expected a rather different pattern of contestation had the rise in demand for dockworker's labor been met mainly by changes in wage-rates. In such circumstances one might have expected relative quiescence in the early period, when high unemployment rates would have put workers in a weak bargaining position, and increasing contestation over wage levels as the workers took advantage of their increasing relative scarcity to force a raise in their rates.

The third piece of evidence -- in my opinion somewhat more conclusive than the other two -- concerns changes in the number of workers employed in other heavy transportation trades. Although the number of dockworkers appearing on the marriage registers remained constant, the number of men identifying themselves as "carters" or "loaders" rose very sharply, from only fifteen per year in the early 1820s to fifty-three per year at mid-century. If these carters and loaders are added to the thirty-nine and then thirty-seven dockworkers, the rise in heavy transportation workers as a whole was from fifty-four in the early 1820s to ninety at mid-century -- not as steep as the rise in the traffic of the port, but nearly so. (See table 1.) These figures seem to indicate a major change in the employment pattern of dockworkers. [Table 1 about here.] In the 1820s, dockworkers may have been supplementing the earnings they gained from loading and unloading of ships by engaging in assorted other carrying and hauling jobs which they picked up on a day-labor basis. By the late 1840s, dockworkers seem to have concentrated exclusively on loading and unloading ships, leaving other heavy carrying work to much less well-paid loaders and carters -- who were recruited mainly from migrants to Marseille, and above all from migrants of peasant and unskilled backgrounds.<sup>37</sup>

Thus the available evidence suggests a marked change in the dockworkers' real conditions between 1830 and 1848, in spite of the surface continuity of institutions. The dockworkers'

society was no less elaborate in the 1820s than it became by mid-century, its monopoly of work on the docks was no less complete, and men were every bit as capable of passing their occupations on to their sons. But these privileges -- and privileges they were in the 1820s -- were far less lucrative than they became by the 1840s. Unemployment and underemployment were endemic. Wages were good as long as work was available, but days without work were all too common. Thus dockworkers spent many daylight hours drinking and playing cards in the local bistros and caf;s, and -- it appears -- often took low-paying jobs doing assorted hauling and carrying to make ends meet. And in a time when work on the docks was scarce, conflicts about its allocation -- among dockworkers, between dockworkers and sailors, or between dockworkers and robeirols -- were frequent. Dockworkers were by no means desperate or impoverished in the 1820s or early 1830s -- their wages were good when they were working, and income could be supplemented by occasional day labor. But they were by no means so prosperous as they had become by mid-century.

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By the 1840s, some prominent Marseillais had begun to denounce the dockworkers' society for its restrictive practices. The most notable was Jules Julliany, premier adjoint to the mayor under the July Monarchy, and the author of a vast compendium on the commerce of the city. Writing in the early 1840s, he proposed that the city's merchants act to rid themselves of "this monopoly [which has] always weighed on the commerce of Marseille" by simply ignoring the regulations of the dockworkers' society and hiring other workers of their choice. This, Julliany implies, would probably be met by violent resistance from the dockworkers' society. But if the merchants' chosen workers "were troubled or menaced, judicial authority, aided if necessary by military authority, would not fail to arrest and punish those who made themselves guilty of assaults or threats."<sup>38</sup> Julliany was almost certainly right that the state, if called in to a dispute, would have backed the merchants and broken the dockworkers' monopoly by force: the restrictive practices of the dockworkers' society were a blatant violation of both the le Chapelier law and the

criminal code. Moreover, dock work did not require a long period of training, and there were always plenty of badly paid and underemployed men in the city -- particularly Italian immigrants -- who could have been recruited to load and unload ships at rates far below those maintained by the dockworkers' society. Yet the merchants ignored Julliany's suggestions and continued uncomplainingly to accept the society's restrictive regulations and pay its high rates. Given that Marseille's merchants had a reputation for being astute businessmen, it is puzzling that they continued to submit to this costly monopoly, especially after 1830, when the mayor who had been the dockworkers' patron had resigned and the officials of the July Monarchy were loudly declaiming the virtues of laissez faire.

There are reasons to think that the merchants knew what they were doing, but explaining the merchants' toleration of the dockworkers' society requires a closer look at the organization of work on the docks. The loading and unloading of ships was carried out by teams of dockworkers, which might consist of ten to twenty men, headed by a master dockworker. The masters were named not by the dockworkers' society, but by the merchant whose goods were being handled. The master was the merchant's representative on the docks. He recruited, organized, supervised, and paid his team of workers, and often handled such formalities as customs clearance as well. According to tradition, each dockworker, the master included, was to get an equal share of pay for the work accomplished. The master, however, could work for more than one merchant, and could have more than one team working at a given time; he also probably benefited from various bonuses and gratuities from the merchant.<sup>39</sup> A few of the master dockworkers actually became well-to-do; twenty of them (out of perhaps 100) met the substantial property qualifications required to become electors of the July Monarchy in 1844.<sup>40</sup> But the masters and simple workmen were equal in the eyes of the dockworkers' society: no privileges attached to the position, and dues, fees, obligations, and benefits of membership were the same for all. There was a tendency for masters to be overrepresented among officers of the society, but they never monopolized offices and there seem to have been very few complaints of prejudicial treatment by the ordinary workers. For whatever reasons -- and the sources unfortunately are virtually silent

on relations between masters and workers -- teams of dockworkers seem generally to have worked together in harmony.

The master and his team of dockworkers were employed directly by the merchant whose goods were being loaded or unloaded. Marseille's merchants in the mid-nineteenth century carried on business much as they had in the eighteenth or seventeenth centuries. Down to the 1850s, it was typical for each voyage of a ship to be financed by a different group of businessmen. The ship's captain, merchants whose goods were to be carried, and perhaps a banker or a retired capitalist would become partners for a single voyage. When the ship returned, the profits or losses would be divided and the partnership dissolved, and a new partnership, normally including a different set of partners, would be established. A given merchant would be involved in several different ventures at once. He might have three or four ships coming in during a two-week period and then have none the next month.<sup>41</sup> A merchant's demand for labor was therefore extremely sporadic -- he wanted to be able to hire a team of men to load or unload a ship when he needed them, and he wanted to be sure that they would do the work efficiently and honestly with a minimum of supervision. Rather than having to hire a full-time assistant to supervise loading and unloading operations, merchants could count on the master dockworkers and their teams to take charge of the work when it needed doing. Moreover, the dockworkers' society itself guaranteed responsible and orderly work on the docks, mediating whatever disputes might arise, providing extra workers from the muse when they were required, and generally overseeing loading and unloading of ships. From this perspective, the high wages paid to the dockworkers begin to seem a much better bargain. When a merchant hired a team of dockworkers, he was getting much more than willing muscles; he was also, in effect, putting out or subcontracting the management of dockwork to the masters and the dockworkers' society.

The high wages paid to dockworkers thus paid for both physical labor and management services. But they also paid for something else: security of the cargoes. The dockworkers' society assured the honesty of the workers and effectively policed the docks. Pilferage is a chronic problem on the docks in all times and places, but it was -- at least potentially -- particularly acute

in nineteenth-century Marseille. Marseille's port basin was a rectangular inlet nestled between steep hills on the north and south. The old city of Marseille was built on the slope of the hill immediately to the north of the port, and by the end of the seventeenth century, the city surrounded the port on all sides. The old city neighborhoods to the north of the port, which were crowded, labyrinthine, poor, and dangerous, reached right down to the quais.<sup>42</sup> (See Figure 2.) The narrow quais -- never very ample even in the eighteenth century -- became extraordinarily encumbered with the explosive growth of maritime commerce in the nineteenth. In these circumstances a dishonest dockworker could disappear into the old city in an instant with valuable cargoes. This danger was multiplied by the fact that goods in entrepôt had to be carried to entrepôt warehouses scattered all over the city. The dockworkers' honesty, consequently, was a major financial consideration for merchants.

The dockworkers' society assured its members' honesty not only by its general tone of discipline and order, but by specific regulations. The statutes of the dockworkers' society stated that dockworkers convicted of theft by the courts were to be banished from the society -- and therefore from the docks as well. But the society also instituted its own proceedings against any dockworker denounced by the priors for having "permitted himself the baseness of embezzling, hiding or hoiding back some portion of merchandise" or for "lacking fidelity in whatever way." If the case against the accused was judged by the society's general assembly to be factual, he was expelled from the society and the outcome of the assembly's deliberation was sent to the Hôtel de Ville "so that no one will remain ignorant" of the expulsion. By this means, the society guarded itself and the docks against dishonest dockworkers even if the merchant whose goods had been filched declined to press charges in the courts.<sup>43</sup> One reason the merchants were willing to pay the high wages enforced by the dockworkers' society was that the society protected them against potentially large losses from pilfering.

The dockworkers' society, then, was an integral part of the maritime economy of mid-nineteenth-century Marseille. The society had grown up in tandem with Marseille's merchant community, and the relations they had established were mutually beneficial as long as no major

changes took place in the overall organization of commerce. Even the huge rise in demand for dockworkers' labor that resulted from the commercial boom of the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s failed to upset existing relations between dockworkers and merchants. Because the rising demand for labor was met by eliminating the dockworkers' irregularity of employment and by leaving other loading and carrying jobs to unskilled carters and robeirols, it resulted in no upward pressure on the dockworkers' piece-rate wages. Dockworkers' earnings rose substantially, yet the costs faced by a merchant hiring a team of dockworkers for a day in the 1840s or 1850s was virtually the same as it had been in the 1820s. For this reason, the dockworkers were able to gain an enormous advantage from the maritime boom without adversely affecting the profits of their employers, the merchants. Until the great transformation of the docks and the maritime economy that began to take shape toward the end of the 1850s, neither the merchants nor the municipality had any reason to challenge the power of the dockworkers' society. The society relieved the merchants of responsibility for supervising loading and unloading operations, it protected them against the danger of rampant waterfront theft, and its members' growing prosperity in the 1830s and 1840s did not increase the merchants' costs. Consequently, the dockworkers were secure and prosperous, for the time being, in a protected niche.

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If the expansion of commerce posed no immediate challenge to the customary organization of dock work in Marseille, it soon began to strain the physical capacity of the old port. The port was already overcrowded by the 1820s, and by the middle 1830s the situation became critical. Several stop-gap measures were undertaken, such as the razing of buildings along the northern edge of the port to expand the surface of the docks, and dredging the port's southeastern corner to make room for another twenty to thirty ships. But even after improvements, the docks measured only 3,200 meters for an annual traffic of seven to eight thousand ships in the late 1840s. By contrast, Le Havre, Marseille's chief French competitor, had 5,920 meters of docks for fewer than five thousand ships.<sup>44</sup> Minor improvements were insufficient to alleviate the problem; the traffic

of the port grew far faster than the available space. Crowding was further exacerbated in the 1830s by the appearance of steamships, which were much larger than sailing vessels and difficult to accommodate in the confines of the old port.

It was clear that a new basin comparable in size to the old port was needed. Given the geography of Marseille, this meant a gigantic program of construction. The old port is the only part of the coastline of Marseille which naturally has at once shelter against storms, good access to the shore and sufficient depth of water, all of which are required for a good port. The immediately adjacent coastline both to the north and to the southwest of the old port was so jagged, steep, and rocky as to make the difficulty and cost of construction almost prohibitive. (See figure 2.) For eight years, from 1835 to 1843, engineers, entrepreneurs, the Chamber of Commerce, and representatives of the local and national government haggled over dozens of rival plans for new port basins, finally agreeing on the area immediately to the north of the old port. Work on the project began in 1844, and the new basin was already usable in 1847, when it was crowded by vessels carrying wheat to provision France's exhausted granaries. Work on the new port was fully completed in 1853. But as early as 1848, the local director of the Ponts et chausées (the government civil engineering corps) had decided that a further northward extension was necessary.<sup>45</sup> The Revolution of 1848, and the financial insolvency and reduction in port traffic that it brought in its wake, interrupted plans for extension. By 1852, however, maritime commerce began to grow at its pre-1848 pace once again, and its expansion continued through the 1850s and 1860s. (See figure 1.) Thus, by 1856, work began on a series of three new port basins stretching northward along the coast. (The old and new port basins can be seen clearly in figure 3, a plan of Marseille in 1877.) [Figure 3 about here.]

The basin that had been completed in 1853 had no significant effect on the organization of dock work. The system that had been used in the old port was simply transferred to the new. But the basins begun in 1856 were a very different matter. The concession for building, equipping, and running these basins was awarded to a joint stock company called the Compagnie des Docks et Entrepôts de Marseille. This company, which was financed by Parisian capital,

totally revolutionized methods of handling cargoes.<sup>46</sup> First, the new dock was what was called a "dock a l'anglais" -- that is, it introduced labor-saving equipment, of which steam-driven hydraulic cranes and lifts were the most important. Second, the quais were physically set off from the working-class neighborhoods of the old city. Third, all goods in entrepôt would be concentrated in warehouses in the new basins, rather than being scattered through the city. Fourth, and most important of all, dockworkers were no longer to work in teams for the merchants whose goods were being unloaded: they would have to become employees of the Compagnie des Docks. Work was to be organized and policed not by the masters and the dockworkers' society, but by employees of the company.

The dockworkers quickly recognized that establishment of the new dock would gravely threaten their position. In 1858 they learned that all steam ships would be required to use the as yet uncompleted docks as soon as provisional operations began. The dockworkers' society sent delegations to the company, the mayor, and the prefect to protest this regulation, which would effectively put the rapidly growing steamship trade beyond the society's reach. In January 1859 the dockworkers' society even obtained an audience with Emperor Napoleon III, who answered their plea with vague, and in the end empty, promises of solicitude: "Messieurs, you have done very well to count on me. I will do for your interests everything that may be in my power."<sup>47</sup> When the docks began provisional operations in the summer of 1859, a number of dockworkers went to work for the company. The society forbade its members to do so and expelled all who did. In other words, it threatened to withhold labor from the company, demanding that dockworkers be allowed to handle work for their merchants as before, without becoming the company's employees. The company, as yet in a weak economic position, negotiated a compromise that allowed society members to handle some kinds of work without becoming employees.<sup>48</sup> But both sides knew that this was only a truce in a long battle, and that the real showdown would come in 1864, when the Docks were scheduled to go into full operation.

During its long struggle with the company, the dockworkers' society did its best to cultivate public opinion. It obtained the signatures of 850 merchants on a petition addressed to



the ministry of industry and commerce, and won the support of the Chamber of Commerce, the bastion of Marseille's merchant community.<sup>49</sup> That it succeeded in gaining the support of the merchant community is impressive, since the docks were able to offer considerably lower price-rates than the dockworkers' society. In part, this support is a measure of the longstanding ties between the merchants and the dockworkers, especially the master dockworkers. The dockworkers' society -- for example in a memorandum addressed to Marseille's merchants in 1859 -- made much of the paternal relations of "confidence" and "devotion" that existed between merchants and "their" dockworkers.<sup>50</sup> But the merchants also had parallel grievances of their own. In the 1850s and 1860s, the entire world of Marseille's maritime commerce was restructured.<sup>51</sup> One important development was the rise of steam navigation and joint-stock steamship companies. Steamships, which accounted for only ten percent of the cargoes entering the port of Marseille in 1840, accounted for 14 percent by 1850, 32 percent by 1860, and 44 percent by 1870.<sup>52</sup> The early steamships were often owned by individuals or simple partnerships, but these small operators were soon pushed aside by large joint-stock steamship companies. Between 1852 and 1865, four companies -- the Messageries Imperiales, the Societe Generale de Transports Maritimes a Vapeur, the Compagnie Marseillaise de Navigation a Vapeur, and the Compagnie de Navigation Mixte -- came to dominate steam shipping in Marseille, accounting for almost 90 percent of the city's steamer tonnage by 1869. Only one of these companies, the Compagnie Marseillaise, was controlled by local capital; the majority of the capital in the other three was from Paris or Lyon.<sup>53</sup> The rise of these steamship companies disrupted the traditional organization of commerce. Rather than forming a series of short-term partnerships for single voyages, merchants increasingly found themselves dealing with large bureaucratic shipping lines. Moreover, the steamship companies, together with the Compagnie des Docks, now rivaled the power of the traditional merchant community and its organ the Chamber of Commerce. Marseille's merchants, long the dominant force in the political and economic life of the city, were rapidly being displaced by "foreign" capital. "Marseille," as the scion of an old mercantile family put it in 1863, "no longer seems to belong to herself."<sup>54</sup> In these circumstances, the

dockworkers' struggle against the Compagnie des Docks could be seen as a battle against foreign domination. As such, it won the support of the merchants and the Chamber of Commerce.

If the battle against the company strengthened the bonds between merchants and dockworkers, it gradually opened a rift between masters and ordinary dockworkers. It was, of course, the masters whose position was threatened most drastically by the new dock. Ordinary dockworkers stood to lose their collective self-governance and to suffer a decline in earnings. But the master dockworkers risked the total annihilation of their peculiar function and status. The masters were willing to make dramatic gestures to gain the support of the merchants. In 1859 they offered a ten percent reduction in piece rates that would come entirely from their own profits, without reducing the rates to be paid to the workers.<sup>55</sup> But as early as 1859 some of the ordinary dockworkers regarded the victory of the company as inevitable and wished to negotiate with the company rather than refusing to work at the dock altogether. In this respect, it is interesting that the first thirty-seven dockworkers to sign up for work at the dock in August 1859 had previously been employed not by merchants, but by the Messageries Imperiales steamship company -- they had, in other words, already made their peace with the new bureaucratic capitalist order. Another 290 workers came to sign up with the dock shortly after; all of these were expelled from the dockworkers' society.<sup>56</sup> Throughout the struggle, it was always the masters who insisted on total non-cooperation, whereas at least some of the workers were willing to accept work at the dock if the terms were sufficiently favorable.

In the summer of 1864, the dock began full-scale operation. Once again, the company insisted that anyone engaged in loading and unloading of ships be an employee of the dock, and once again the dockworkers' society responded by refusing to work under the company's conditions. This time the company was prepared; it simply manned the docks with unskilled laborers, especially Italian immigrants, and offered merchants lower rates than the dockworkers' society could match. Once again, a number of dockworkers took work with the company in defiance of the society, and were duly expelled. They brought suit, charging that the society had no right to exclude them for exercising their liberty to work where they wished. The court, as

Julliany had predicted some twenty years earlier, ruled on behalf of the expelled men, striking a mortal blow at the society's powers. Not long after this decision the Emperor passed through Marseille, and was greeted by a demonstration of some 5,000 dockworkers and supporters. One of the society's priors addressed the Emperor, reminding him of the promises he had made in 1859, and ended his speech with a cry of "Vive l'Empereur!" The Emperor once again promised to look into the affair, and a few months later the same prior went to Paris to negotiate a solution. But the solution he brought back to Marseille proved to be unacceptable to the society, and the effort ended in mutual recrimination.<sup>57</sup>

The outcome of the dockworkers' struggle was a total victory for the company. Most of the society's members eventually went to work for the company, and the society, stripped of its monopoly and its once vast powers, faded into an ordinary mutual aid society that administered sickness and retirement benefits. The merchants, in spite of their preference for the dockworkers' society, soon made their peace with the company as well. The company, after all, was able to offer them virtually everything the society had offered in the past. It provided workers, organized and supervised dock work, maintained a secure and efficient entrepot, and protected the merchants' goods against losses through theft -- a task made easier by the physical separation of the new docks from the labyrinthine neighborhoods of the old city. Moreover, it could offer all this at a lower rate than the dockworkers' old price schedule. The merchants lost the personal satisfaction of paternal relations with trusted master dockworkers and had to put up with the bureaucracy of the new company. But unlike the dockworkers, their own privileged and lucrative position in maritime trade was not genuinely damaged. A new level of capitalist organization had come to Marseille's docks; to the merchants it meant a change in the tone and character of their work and the loss of their once unchallenged supremacy in the city's maritime economy. To the dockworkers it meant much more: the destruction of the cherished privileges of their society and the reduction of its members to ordinary proletarian wage laborers.

The uneven capitalist development that had fortified the dockworkers' privileged niche in the first half of the nineteenth century destroyed it in the 1860s. The general development of

French, European, and world capitalism caused a massive expansion in Marseille's maritime trade in the nineteenth century. But for some decades, this advance in capitalist development did not cause a corresponding advance in the methods of dock work. On the contrary, it actually strengthened an archaic form of labor organization on the docks -- the dockworkers' society, which was in fact a carryover from the guild system of the old regime. In this case, the unevenness that characterized all capitalist development also gave rise to combined development -- the strengthening of archaic forms in symbiosis with an advanced sector. But in the end, the exigencies of continuing capitalist development -- the need for more space in the port -- shattered archaic forms and obliterated the temporarily privileged position of the dockworkers. Marseille's dockworkers were, of course, a particular case, but a case that fits a very general pattern. The intrinsic and inescapable unevenness of capitalist development promiscuously creates privileged niches for laborers who are advantageously placed in a particular phase of development. But it also, no less promiscuously, destroys the same privileged niches it had created in earlier phases.

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How did the economic vicissitudes of work affect the dockworkers' politics? At first glance, the role of dockworkers in the three great revolutionary crises of the nineteenth century -- 1830-34, 1848-51, and 1870-71 -- appears to correspond admirably to the evolution of their economic circumstances. The dockworkers seem to have been radical, or at least politically restive, in the first crisis, before their rise to the high prosperity of mid-century; to have been notoriously reactionary at mid-century, when their privileges were at their height; and to have been ardent revolutionaries at the time of the Commune, when their society had been crushed and they had been definitively reduced to the status of a proletariat.

During the crisis that extended from the July Revolution of 1830 to the suppression of the Lyonnais and Parisian workers' rebellions of April 1834, Marseille was not the center of a major radical movement. In fact, the local authorities of the new July Monarchy were at first much more concerned about the possibility of a popular uprising in favor of the ousted Bourbon

monarchical regime than about republican agitation. By 1833, however, a chapter of the revolutionary Society of the Rights of Man had been founded, and the police responded by infiltrating it with an informer. In April of 1834, at the time of the Lyonnais and Parisian insurrections, Marseille's society deliberated about launching a revolt of its own. According to the informer's report, among the most ardent advocates of violent action were three dockworkers, who claimed to be able "to direct at their will at least two hundred of their colleagues" in the event of a revolt. This claim may have been wildly exaggerated -- we will never know, because the Society of the Rights of Man finally decided against an insurrection. But it seems to indicate that at least a sizeable minority of the dockworkers had been touched by the radical agitations of the period.<sup>58</sup>

The dockworkers' growing prosperity during the following decade and a half seems to have wiped out any remnants of radicalism. By February 1848, when the July Monarchy was overthrown and replaced by a republic, any claim that dockworkers would join a radical insurrection would have been dismissed as ridiculous; all political factions assumed that dockworkers were unshakably conservative. This assumption explains the way they were treated by the the mayor of the fallen regime during his final hours in power. The news of the Parisian insurrection reached Marseille on February 24, but it was not until March 1 that the commissioner sent from Paris by the Provisional government could arrive and establish republican power in the city. During this interval, the mayor did what he could to strengthen the hand of conservatives. Most importantly, he called in supporters of the fallen regime, set them up as companies in the National Guard, and distributed to them all the city's available rifles. Nearly all the companies created by this maneuver were composed of merchants, professional men, shopkeepers, and clerks, but the dockworkers were armed to a man and allowed to form a special company of their own. This was in the sharpest contrast to the treatment received by other workers. When they came to the city hall to join the National Guard, they were told that no arms were available. As one republican militant put it, "If the dockworkers were admitted, it was in the thought, which [the authorities] did not even trouble to dissimulate, that these men of the people, feudatories of their patrons the merchants, would serve to combat that other people, the

workers, whose very name brought on the shivers."<sup>59</sup> In 1848, conservatives and revolutionaries were agreed that the dockworkers could be relied upon to act as reactionaries.

But the dockworkers' conservatism did not withstand the disasters of the 1860s. Their reduction from a privileged elite to ordinary proletarians made them notoriously hostile to the Imperial regime that had succeeded the Second Republic -- all the more so because the Emperor himself had twice deceived them during their struggle with the Compagnie des Docks by giving vague but empty promises of help. It is therefore hardly surprising that dockworkers figured prominently in a republican demonstration in Marseille in July 1870, two months before the overthrow of the Empire and the establishment of the Third Republic, nor that several dockworkers were active in Marseille's Commune in 1871. One of these, Etienne pere, was the Commune's second in command and was condemned to death after the suppression of the Commune -- although his sentence was subsequently commuted.<sup>60</sup> The correlation with politics therefore appears straightforward: if the rise of the dockworkers to prosperity made them conservative by 1848, their fall from prosperity led them to political radicalism at the time of the Commune.

On closer observation, however, this intimate association between economic situation and political behavior turns out to be flawed. It is true that the dockworkers were staunch conservatives in 1848 and exemplary revolutionaries in 1871. But it turns out that their shift to the left began long before the demise of their economic fortunes. This can be seen most clearly in figures for participation in revolutionary activities in the decade following the Revolution of 1848. (See Table 2) Only three of the 270 men who were convicted of participating in Marseille's June 1848 insurrection were dockworkers. Dockworkers therefore made up 1.1 percent of the insurrectionaries, as against 2.9 percent of the adult male population. There were six dockworkers among the 297 radicals rounded up after Louis Napoleon's coup d'état in 1851. This was 2.0 percent -- still below the dockworkers' percentage of the population, but above the 1848 figure. And when the police drew up lists in 1853, 1855, and 1858, composed of "dangerous individuals" who were to be rounded up if an insurrection should take place, dockworkers made up

18 of 346 names -- 5.2 percent, or well above their proportion in the population. The same development, but even more pronounced, can be seen in the identities of men convicted of assorted political offenses over the same years. The offenses included were quite diverse -- the most common being politically motivated acts of violence against police or other authorities, membership in secret revolutionary societies, or singing subversive songs or uttering "seditious cries" in the streets. No dockworker was among the 20 convicted of such offenses in 1848 and 1849. In 1850 and 1851, there were two dockworkers among the 51 men convicted -- close to their proportion in the population. And in the first eight years of the Second Empire, dockworkers made up eight of the 85 men convicted of political offenses, about triple their proportion in the population. [Table 2 about here.] These figures are obviously insufficient as measures of the overall political opinions and behavior of the dockworkers. But they would seem to indicate that during their golden age, while their privileged position was still intact, dockworkers evolved from one of the most conservative and quiescent working-class trades to one of the most radical.

There are other scraps of evidence that indicate a general drift to the left during the course of the Second Republic. The first sign was as early as the June 1848 insurrection, when the dockworkers' national guard company -- originally formed, as we have seen, as a bastion of reaction -- refused to respond to orders upon discovering that they might be asked to fire on fellow workers.<sup>61</sup> A year later, there was a sign that the dockworkers were moving toward a more insurgent position. In June of 1849, some 500 dockworkers held a banquet in honor of Louis Astouin, a dockworker who had written a widely acclaimed book of poetry, and who had just been defeated in a bid for re-election to the National Assembly on the democratic ticket. The banquet ended with the entire crowd shouting "Vive la Republique democratique et sociale!" and some 114 francs were collected for the families of the insurrectionaries of the prior June who remained in custody.<sup>62</sup> Neither of these actions would have been thinkable in the early days of the Second Republic. A final indication of the dockworkers' shift to the left is a remark made by Armand Audiganne, a prominent Parisian social investigator, in 1855 in his monumental Les Populations ouvrieres et les industries de la France. He reported that the revolutionary movement of 1848

"received support above all from the corporation of the dockworkers, justly famous for their riotous temperament."<sup>63</sup> This manifestly false statement would seem to be explained by the fact that he visited Marseille in 1852 or 1853, and projected the then evident radicalism of the dockworkers backwards in time to an era when, in fact, they were regarded by democrats and reactionaries alike as staunch supporters of the existing social and political order.

All the evidence points to a significant radicalization of dockworkers' political opinions and behavior between 1848 and the mid-1850s, a decade before the drastic restructuring of work reduced the dockworkers to a proletariat. It is therefore clear that changes in dockworker politics cannot be explained as a simple reflex of proletarianization. Instead, the seemingly paradoxical rise of dockworker radicalism over the decade following the Revolution of 1848 requires a complex explanation, one that recognizes the simultaneous autonomy and interrelationship of economic, political, and social factors.

Let us begin with economics. Although the dockworkers' favorable structural position in the maritime economy was not challenged in the late 1840s and 1850s, their economic well-being was sharply affected by short-term fluctuations. The traffic of Marseille's port fell precipitously in 1848 and remained low for several years. (See the graph in Figure 1.) The revolutionary upheavals of 1848 in France and Europe caused a general panic among the possessing classes; credit dried up and investment fell, causing a general depression in industry and trade. It was not until 1852, when Louis Napoleon's coup d'etat had ended the fear of political instability, that the traffic of the port rebounded to the level of the middle 1840s again.<sup>64</sup> The long commercial depression surely increased unemployment and sharply cut incomes on the docks, reducing the dockworkers to economic circumstances more or less comparable to those of the early 1830s, when, as we have seen, they were also involved in revolutionary agitations. The dockworkers were not thrown into desperate poverty by the depression, and the Muse operated to distribute available employment equitably. Nevertheless, lower incomes and high levels of unemployment must have made dockworkers far more receptive to the republican and socialist agitations of the era than would have been the case had employment remained high. This economically induced



receptivity undoubtedly helps to explain the dockworkers' initial drift to the left from 1848 to 1851.

But this drift to the left had political as well as economic causes. If hard economic times made dockworkers more receptive to messages critical of the status quo, revolutionary politics changed the nature and vastly increased the volume of such messages. The French Revolution of 1848 made "worker" (ouvrier or travailleur) a politically potent term, and made the fact that one belonged to the socio-economic category of manual workers politically relevant in a way it had never been before. Radical Parisian workers, allied with the socialist journalist Louis Blanc, had made the "organization of labor" the key issue of the revolution -- not only in Paris, but throughout France. The revolutionary provisional government declared the "right to work," established "national workshops" to give relief to the unemployed, and established the Luxembourg commission, headed by Louis Blanc, to draw up plans for a new "organization of labor." In Marseille, as elsewhere in France in the spring of 1848, not only socialists, but public officials, moderates, and even the most reactionary monarchists addressed a blizzard of pamphlets, newspaper articles, speeches, handbills, and proclamations "to the workers." In Althusser's terminology, one could say that after February 1848 the utterance "worker" insistently interpellated or hailed workers as ideologically defined political subjects.<sup>65</sup> Bombarded by this massive outpouring of ideological discourse, even trades like the dockworkers, whose members had been apolitical or vaguely monarchist before 1848, must have been aware that the revolution was promising to raise manual labor to a new dignity in the state and must have pondered what their unquestioned status as workers implied for their own role in politics.

Much of the discourse directed specifically at Marseille's dockworkers in the spring of 1848 came from conservative quarters and praised them for their "moderation." For example, on February 26, the day the dockworkers were incorporated into the national guard, the conservative newspaper Le Nouvelliste remarked that the dockworkers' firm repudiation of the "tumultuous demonstrations that have alarmed this city" had

honored in the highest degree the working population [population ouvriere] of our city....This evening more than two thousand of these estimable workers [ouvriers], armed and incorporated into the national guard, will efficaciously stand guard to assure due respect to persons and property....We do not doubt that the noble example of the dockworkers' corporation will be followed by the entire working population [population ouvriere] of Marseille, because nowhere else, and we say this with a just pride, do the laboring classes [classes laborieuses] offer, to the same extent as ours, such guaranties of morality and devotion to the sacred bonds of the family, from which flow essentially all instincts of order and legality.<sup>66</sup>

This article not only attempts to reinforce the dockworkers' conservatism, but holds up the dockworkers as a model for all of Marseille's workers -- who, interestingly, are praised not so much for their political conservatism, as for their apolitical attachment to family bonds, which is assumed to be a guarantee of good political behavior. Yet even this text paradoxically contributes to the dockworkers' identity as workers and, in spite of its reactionary intent, makes this identity as workers politically potent.

From the very beginning of the revolution, Marseille's conservatives, by ostentatiously adopting the dockworkers as the apotheosis of the apolitical "sage ouvrier," unwittingly contributed to their politicization. Once dockworkers had been encouraged to think of themselves as somehow exemplary of workers in general, they could not be prevented from recognizing that republicans and socialists were hailing all workers as constituents of a new and better state and society, a "democratic and social republic" in which labor would be properly "organized" and duly rewarded as the basis of all wealth. By June of 1848 the republicans and socialists certainly had not succeeded in constituting dockworkers as revolutionaries. But the fact that the dockworkers' unit of the National Guard refused to report for duty at the time of the June insurrection because they were unwilling to fire on "fellow workers" indicates that they had begun to accept "worker" as a political identity and to act on that identity even against an express command of the forces of "order and legality."

The shift of political discourse that took place in the spring of 1848, together with a sharp rise of unemployment, appears to have moved the dockworkers beyond the reactionary docility attributed to them by both monarchists and republicans in February. But it was not until 1849 or later that dockworkers began to appear with some frequency in the ranks of Marseille's militant republicans and socialists. This delayed conversion of dockworkers to the radical movement was very unusual in Marseille; in virtually every other case, trades that had not been radicalized by June of 1848 remained conservative or apolitical to the very end of the Second Republic. To explain the unusual case of the dockworkers, we must look not only at the general politicization of workers in 1848, but also at the unique details of their particular political history -- which, from 1849 to 1851, were closely tied to the surprising career of Louis Astouin, the dockworker poet-politician. Astouin was initially named to the monarchist slate of candidates in the legislative elections of April 1848. The monarchists chose him because of his prominence and popularity as a worker-poet, assuming that his apparent lack of pronounced political views indicated the docile conservatism for which his fellow dockworkers were famous. But in the National Assembly he turned out to be a sincere, if moderate, republican. He was therefore dropped from the monarchist list for the elections of 1849 and replaced by another dockworker of known reactionary opinions. The democrats, however, named Astouin to their list, and he responded by moving considerably to the left and espousing the cause of social democracy. Astouin turned out to be a tireless campaigner. Although narrowly defeated in the 1849 election, he continued to work for the democratic and social republic, right down to Louis Napoleon's coup d'etat in December 1851. Astouin's towering prestige among the dockworkers, together with his diligent and incessant proselytising, was surely a major source of the new political insurgency that characterized the dockworkers after 1849.<sup>67</sup>

How, then, is the radicalization of Marseille's dockworkers in the years following 1848 to be explained? First, the change was made possible by a revolutionary transformation of the state and a consequent upsurge in radical discourse that established "the worker" as a constituent of a new "democratic and social republic." This new vision of work and politics so dominated the

discourse of the spring of 1848 that even conservative workers such as the dockworkers could not escape a new politicized working-class identity. Second, the extended maritime depression of the Second Republic surely made dockworkers more receptive to the radical message than they would have been in a period of full employment. Finally, the particular political career of Louis Astouin meant that the gospel of the "democratic and social republic" reached the dockworkers with special authority and intensity between 1849 and 1851. The confluence of these general and particular conditions had the effect of transforming dockworkers from notorious reactionaries to moderately active republicans by the end of the Second Republic.

None of these factors, however, can explain the increasing prominence of dockworker militants in the underground republican movement that followed Louis Napoleon's coup d'etat and the establishment of the Second Empire. The maritime economy, after four years of depression, turned sharply upward in 1852, and remained relatively buoyant to the end of the decade. After 1851, republican and socialist discourse was choked off by the tight censorship and oppressive police apparatus of the Imperial state. And Louis Astouin was arrested after the coup d'etat in 1851, placed in internment in Valence and then in Besancon, and kept under close police surveillance when he returned to Marseille in 1853; he was no longer able to participate actively in the now illegal republican movement.<sup>68</sup> Yet the dockworkers did not lapse back into their deferential conservatism of the 1840s. To judge from evidence in the archives of repression, summarized in table 2, dockworkers were among the most active trades in the underground republican movement that took shape in Marseille in the 1850s; their participation in radical politics became more prominent as repression got more severe. In my opinion, the most likely explanation for this increasing prominence is the extraordinary solidity of the dockworkers' social organization. The dockworkers' unparalleled organizational experience and their density of personal and institutional contacts made them unusually capable of sustaining the organizational efforts required in the political underground. The dockworkers' initial conversion to radical politics may have been slow, but once they were committed to the democratic and social republic their superior command of social resources moved them to the center of the political struggle.

The dockworkers' politics, then, was far from a simple reflex of their relation to the means of production. Socio-economic conditions were far from irrelevant, but the evolution of dockworker politics cannot be explained without reference both to transformations in state structure and political discourse and to the details of politics and personalities in Marseille. To explain how Marseille's dockworkers were radicalized requires not just an examination of their changing economic circumstances, but the construction of a multi-causal narrative that takes into account, weighs, and attempts to establish the joint and several explanatory power of social, economic, and political factors.

Does this mean that declaring the autonomy of politics is just another form of the call for a "revival of narrative?" To some degree, perhaps it does: any attempt to explain historical change in a non-reductionist fashion implies a "narrative" concern for sequence, contingency, and agency. But the autonomy of politics should not be used as a license for historians to revel atheoretically in the particularity of each case's sequence of events, or to resurrect (as one might say I have done with Louis Astouin) the "great man" theory of history. The account of dockworker radicalization that I have sketched out here is not a return to old-fashioned narrative history, but rather a theoretically motivated response to the (as yet insufficiently recognized) crisis of labor history's reigning explanatory strategy.

If capitalist development is uneven in the sense I have been arguing in this essay -- that is, if it produces not an increasingly solid and uniform proletarian continent but a continually changing archipelago of variegated working-class categories -- then the appropriate explanatory strategy for labor historians is not to look for evidence of proletarianization behind every surge of working-class political radicalism, but to ask how and why workers with widely varying economic trajectories and work-place experiences could successfully be constituted as political insurgents. For some trades, in some historical instances -- for example, Christopher Johnson's French tailors in the 1830s and 1840s -- proletarianization surely is the most important single answer. But we would be wrong to take the tailors as epitomizing nineteenth-century working-class experience in general. This study of Marseille's dockworkers indicates that even highly privileged workers

could, under certain conditions, be induced to identify themselves with less fortunate workers and struggle for a radical transformation of the social order. If we are to understand those occasions when a wide variety of workers joined radical revolts -- such as the French workers' insurgencies of 1833-34, 1848-51, and 1870-71, the English Chartist movement, the New York labor uprising of 1850, or the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917 -- we must ask how economic changes, transformations of state structures and political discourse, new or preexisting networks of social relations, and purposive actions by prominent or strategically placed persons or groups made possible the construction -- at least for a time -- of a common working-class political identity and program. Such a strategy should also help us explain why, in a capitalist economy that supposedly produces an increasingly uniform proletariat, such triumphs of class unity have repeatedly proved ephemeral. The case of Marseille's dockworkers should help us to see that socialism and class-consciousness are contingent and fragile achievements of political struggle, not necessary and automatic products of the development of capitalism.

1. E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (London: Victor Gollancz, 1963), especially chapter 8. Work on French artisans that explores this problem includes Christopher H. Johnson, "Economic Change and Artisan Discontent: The Tailors' History, 1800-48," in Roger Price, ed., Revolution and Reaction: 1848 and the Second French Republic (London: Croom Helm, 1975), pp. 87-114; Johnson, "Communism and the Working Class before Marx: The Icarian Experience," American Historical Review 76 (June 1971):657-67; Ronald Aminzade, "The Transformation of Social Solidarities in Nineteenth-Century Toulouse," in Consciousness and Class Experience in Nineteenth-Century Europe, ed. John M. Merriman (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1979), pp. 85-105; Aminzade, Class, Politics, and Early Industrial Capitalism: A Study of Mid-Nineteenth-Century Toulouse (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), especially chapter 2; Alain Cottureau's introduction to the reprint of Denis Poulot, Question sociale: Le sublime, ou le travailleur comme il est en 1870, et ce qu'il peut etre (1870; repr. Paris: Francois Maspero, 1980), esp. pp. 63-81; and Alain Faure's introduction to Agricol Perdiguier, Memoires d'un compagnon (Paris: Francois Maspero, 1980). For a similar argument about nineteenth-century American workers, see Sean Wilentz, Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).
2. William M. Reddy, The Rise of Market Culture: The Textile Trade and French Society, 1750-1900 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Royden Harrison, ed., Independent Collier: The Coal Miner as Archetypal Proletarian Reconsidered (London: Harvester Press, 1978).
3. Charles Sabel and Jonathan Zeitlin, "Historical Alternatives to Mass Production: Politics, Markets and Technology in Nineteenth-Century Industrialization," Past and Present 108 (August 1985): 133-174.
4. Raphael Samuel, "Workshop of the World: Steam Power and Hand Technology in Mid-Victorian Britain," History Workshop 3 (Spring 1977): 6-72.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 57-60.

6. Over the long run, capitalist development results in accumulation and concentration of capital, increasing separation of producers from ownership of the means of production, and commodification of ever widening areas of life.

7. Johnson, "Economic Change and Artisan Discontent."

8. See citations in note 2.

9. The artisan trades most severely affected by capitalist penetration in Marseille in the first half of the nineteenth century were the tailors and the shoemakers. Both had rates of participation in the revolutionary movement that were somewhat above the average of Marseille's working-class occupations. But their radicalism was considerably surpassed by that of bakers, housepainters, and stonecutters, whose trades do not seem to have been importantly affected by capitalist penetration, and by machinists, whose scarce and avidly sought-for skills made them among the most privileged workers in the city. These conclusions are drawn from quantitative data on persons arrested for participating in the insurrection that took place in Marseille in June 1848, and on those rounded up as dangerous revolutionaries after Louis Napoleon's coup d'etat in December, 1851 (Archives Departementale des Bouches-du-Rhone: M6/137, M6/100).

Preliminary analyses of these data will be found in William H. Sewell, Jr., "La Classe ouvri=re de Marseille sous la Seconde R;publique: Structure sociale et comportement politique," Le Mouvement social 76 (July-September 1971), pp. 27-65; and Sewell, "Social Change and the Rise of Working-Class Politics in Nineteenth-Century Marseille," Past and Present 65 (November 1974), pp. 75-109. The first of these articles has been published in English as "The Working Class of Marseille Under the Second Republic: Social Structure and Political Behavior," in Workers in the Industrial Revolution: Recent Studies of Labor in the United States and Europe, ed. Peter N. Stearns and Daniel J. Walkowitz (New Brunswick, N. J.: Transaction Books, 1974), pp.75-116.

10. The socio-economic experiences that can predispose workers to political radicalism need not be either classical or modified versions of proletarianization. Migration, ethnicity, neighborhood communities, cultural differences, or gender identities may, in a given case, be more important than details of the relation to the means of production.



11. Although it is never easy to reconstruct the history of a nineteenth-century French working-class trade, Marseille's dockworkers are unusually well-documented. By the 1850s, they had gained a certain local and even national notoriety. The Dockworkers' mutual aid society -- which was in fact a refurbished old regime corporation -- was described in print at some length by two early social investigators and advocates of working-class moral reform, who saw it as a possible model for workers' associations elsewhere. Armand Audiganne, Les Populations ouvrières et les industries de la France, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Paris, 1860) 2:265-8; Emile Laurent, Le Pauperisme et les associations de prévoyance: Nouvelles études sur les sociétés de secours mutuels, histoire--économie politique--administration, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Paris, 1865), 2: 547-52. Moreover, the lengthy and dramatic dispute in the late 1850s and early 1860s that eventually destroyed the dockworkers' privileged position produced numerous tracts and several bulging police files now kept in the Archives Départementales des Bouches-du-Rhône. For the 1850s and 1860s, at least, the documentation is remarkably full. For earlier decades the evidence is sparser, but still better than for most other trades. Particularly useful are the papers of the mayors' office from the Restoration period (1814-30), which are preserved in series I of the Archives de la Ville de Marseille (hereafter abbreviated AVM). In addition, I have at my disposal some extremely valuable quantitative data derived from systematic computer-aided analyses of Marseille's marriage registers in 1821-22, 1846, 1851, and 1869. These data are derived from several bound volumes of Actes de Mariage in the Archives de la Ville de Marseille (hereafter abbreviated AVM), series 201 E. For a thorough discussion of the marriage-register data, see William H. Sewell, Jr., Structure and Mobility: The Men and Women of Marseille, 1820-1870 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), esp. pp. 317-319. This quantitative research was supported by a National Science Foundation Grant SOC 72-05249-A01. By far the best modern study of the dockworkers is a very fine Diplôme d'Études Supérieures by Victor Nguyen, "Crise et vie des portefaix marseillais, 1814-1914," (Diplôme d'Études Supérieures, Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines, Aix-en-Provence, 1961). Only the final portion of this diploma, less interesting for my purposes than the earlier portions, has been published: Victor Nguyen, "Les

Portefaix marseillais. Crise et declin, survivances," Provence historique 12 (1962):363-97.

Although I differ with Nguyen on a number of points, I have learned a great deal from his work -- as my footnotes in this article will demonstrate.

12. Wage figures for all these trades are available in Travaux de la societe de statistique de Marseille, vol. 4 (1840), 52-3; vol.5 (1841), 346-7; and vol. 9 (1844), 72-3; and in "Enquete sur le travail agricole et industrel," Archives Nationales: C 947.

13. These figures are based on my analysis of the marriage registers of Marseille for 1846 and 1851. The marriage registers indicate the occupations of both grooms and their fathers.

14. Josette Zanzi, "Les Portefaix marseillais a la fin de l'ancien regime et sous la Revolution francaise" (Memoire de maitrise, Faculte des Letteres d'Aix-en-Provence, 1969), pp, 4-7; Laurent, Le Pauperisme, 2:458-9. The statutes of 1789 and 1817 are available in AVM: 1 I 1/35, 1370.

15. AVM: 1 I 1/35, 1370.

16. Laurent, Le Pauperisme, 2:549-50, and Nguyen "Crise et vie," p.15. A thousand francs amounted to an entire year's earnings for a skilled worker.

17. AVM: 1 I 1/35, 1370.

18. Laurent, Le Pauperisme, 2:548-9.

19. These are the provisions in the statutes of 1817. They were modified slightly in 1853. The 1853 statutes, which were printed together with a reproduction of the statutes of 1817, are available in ADBdR: XIV M 25/1.

20. Nguyen, "Crise et vie," pp. 14-5.

21. AVM: 1 I 1/35, 1370; ADBdR: XIV M 25/1; Nguyen, "Crise et vie," pp. 14-5.

22. AVM: 1 I 1/35, 1370; ADBdR: XIV M 25/1; Nguyen, "Crise et vie," p. 16; Laurent, Le Pauperisme, 2:549.

23. ADBdR: XIV M 25/1.

24. For a discussion of French labor organizations in the first half of the nineteenth century, see William H. Sewell, Jr., Work and Revolution in France: The Language of Labor from the Old Regime to 1848 (Cambridge, 1980), chap. 8.

25. AVM: 1 I 1/35. In fact, the statutes regulating the Nantes dockworkers established no dockworkers' society with power to limit entry into the occupation or to police the docks, and the mayor of Nantes prefaced the regulations governing dock work with this statement: "...it is not possible, according to the principles of current laws, to accord to [the dockworkers] an exclusive privilege for the work in question." The Nantes statutes actually indicate how extraordinary the Marseille dockworkers' association was.

26. Letter from mayor to prefect, 29 September 1817, AVM: 1 I 1/35.

27. ADBdR: XIV M 25/1; AVM: 1 I 1/35.

28. Zanzi, "Les portefaix marseillais," pp. 39-40.

29. See the mayor's correspondence in AVM: 1 I 1/36.

30. Nguyen found fragments of piece-rate schedules for various grains which indicate that rates had risen by no more than 10 percent between 1818 and 1853. "Crise et vie," p. 28.

31. The population of Marseille increased from 109,483 in 1821 to 195,135 in 1851. Sewell, Structure and Mobility, p. 147. The amount of customs duties paid in the port of Marseille rose by 178 percent from 1817-21 to 1847-51; the carrying capacity of ships entering the port rose by 121 percent from 1825-29 (the first years for which these figures are available) to 1847-51. The choice of different starting and ending points for such comparisons would result in somewhat different figures, but nearly all estimates indicate something between a doubling and tripling of maritime commerce from the early 1820s to the late 1840s. The figures are derived from the following sources: Jules Julliany, Essai sur le commerce de Marseille, 2nd revised ed. (Marseille, 1842), vol. 1, pp. 145, 162; Casimir Bousquet and Tony Sapet, Etude sur la navigation, le commerce et l'industrie de Marseille, pendant la periode quinquennale de 1850 a 1854 (Marseille, 1857) pp. 25-9; and Travaux de la societe de statistique de Marseille, vol. 1 (1837), p. 70 and vol. 19 (1855), p. 92.

32. For a fuller discussion of the growth of maritime commerce, see Sewell, Structure and Mobility, pp. 18-23.

33. The normally relatively accurate Enquete sur le travail agricole et industriel estimates (Archives Nationales: C 947) put the number of dockworkers at mid-century at 2,500, whereas my far more reliable figures derived from a ten percent sample of the census of 1851 indicate only 1,530. This remarkable over-estimate, which one suspects was supplied to the Chamber of Commerce's investigators by the dockworkers' society, makes one wary of accepting any contemporary estimates not based on solid figures of some kind. There are, unfortunately, no census figures giving occupation before 1851. Under these circumstances, figures from the marriage registers seem the best alternative. The number of men in a given occupation who got married depends on a number of factors besides the total number employed in the occupation, such as the age structure of the trade, changes in the age at marriage or the rate of marriage, and so on. Nevertheless, this statistic is probably accurate enough to provide a rough estimate of the magnitude of change in the size of an occupation over time.

34. Victor Gelu, Marseille au XIXe siecle, ed. by Lucien Gaillard and Jorgi Reboul, introduction by Pierre Guiral (Paris, 1971), p. 143.

35. Nguyen, "Crise et vie," pp.19-22; AVM: 1 I 1/36.

36. This requirement that rebeirols wear the "pallier" was actually written into the statutes of the dockworkers' society in 1817. ADBdR: XIV M 25/1.

37. Only 37 percent of the carters and loaders who got married in Marseille in 1846 and 1851 had been born in Marseille, as against 89 percent of the dockworkers. Forty-one percent of the carters and loaders were sons of agriculturalists and 29 percent sons of unskilled workers.

38. Julliany, Essai sur le Commerce, 3:455.

39. Nguyen, "Crise et vie," p. 38.

40. Ibid., 40.

41. See Charles Carriere, Negociants marseillais au XVIIIe siecle: Contribution a l'etude des economies maritimes, 2 vols. (Marseille, 1973), 2:875-984, for a lucid and detailed description of Marseille's mercantile capitalism in the eighteenth century.

42. On the geography of poverty and crime in Marseille, see Sewell, Structure and Mobility, pp. 109-26, 228-32.
43. The quotations are from the statutes of 1817. The 1853 statutes use somewhat different language and specify the procedures to be used in trying accused dockworkers in more detail, but essentially follow the 1817 provisions, which in turn follow those of 1789. ADBdR: XIV M 25/1; AVM 1 I 1/35.
44. Paul Masson, gen. ed., Les Bouches-du-Rhone: Encyclopedie departementale, vol. 9, Le Mouvement economique (Paris, 1922), pp. 429-33, 437.
45. Ibid., pp. 446-7.
46. Ibid., pp. 450-2; Louis Girard, "La Politique des grands travaux a Marseille sous le Second Empire," in Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, Marseille sous le Second Empire Exposition, conferences, colloque organisees a l'occasion du centenaire du Palais de la Bourse, 10-26 novembre 1960. Paris, 1961; Nguyen, "Crise et vie," 79.
47. XIV M 25/1.
48. Nguyen, "Crise et vie," p. 81.
49. Ibid., p. 83.
50. ADBdR: XIV M 25/1.
51. Sewell, Structure and Mobility, pp. 38-43.
52. Masson, Les Bouches-du-Rhone, vol. 9, pp. 56, 74.
53. Masson, Les Bouches-du-Rhone, vol. 9, pp. 67-76.
54. Quoted in Pierre Guiral, "Quelque notes sur la politique des milieux d'affaires marseillais de 1815 a 1870," Provence historique 7 (1957), p. 174.
55. ADBdR: XVI M 25/1.
56. ADBdR: XIV M 25/1.
57. Nguyen, "Les Portefaix marseillais," 363-9.
58. ADBdR: M6/334.

59. Prosper Dubosc, Quatre mois de Republique a Marseille, 24 fevrier-24 juin (Marseille, 1848), p. 5. This highly irregular last-minute formation of a conservative national guard was documented in a detailed report by the revolutionary municipal commission's committee on the national guard. AVM: 1 D 73, session of June 10, 1848.
60. Nguyen, "Les Portefaix marseillais," pp. 376-80. Antoine Olivesi, in his history of Marseille's Commune, describes Etienne as "a pure revolutionary with the soul of an appostle," La Commune de 1871 a Marseille et ses origines (Paris: Marcel Riviere, 1950), p.76.
61. Dubosc, Quatre mois de Republique, p. 48.
62. There is an account of the banquet in the republican newspaper La Voix du peuple, June 8, 1849. According to my quantitative analysis of the 1851 census, there were about 1,500 dockworkers in Marseille in 1848. The 500 present at this republican banquet therefore represented about a third of all dockworkers in the city.
63. This quotation appears on page 154 of volume 2 of the second edition of Audiganne's work, which was published in 1860. It also appeared in the first edition, which was dated 1855.
64. Pierre Guiral, "Le Cas d'un grand port de commerce: Marseille," in Aspects de la crise et de la depression de l'economie francaise au milieu de XIXe siecle, 1846-1851, ed. C.-E. Labrousse, volume 19 of Bibliotheque de la revolution de 1848 (Imprimerie Centrale de l'Ouest: La Roche-sur-Yon, 1956), pp. 200-25.
65. Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)," in Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays (London: Monthly Review Press, 1971), pp. 127-186.
66. Le Nouvelliste, 26 February 1848.
67. Astouin's career can be traced from the spring of 1849 to fall of 1851 by occasional items in the police files and by articles in La Voix du peuple and its successor Le Peuple.
68. Astouin died in 1855 at the age of 33. His death was attributed to an illness he contracted in 1853, not long after his return to Marseille, when he threw himself into the cold waters of the

harbor to save a drowning child. Masson, Les Bouches-du-Rhone, vol. 11, Biographies (Marseille, 1913), p. 27.

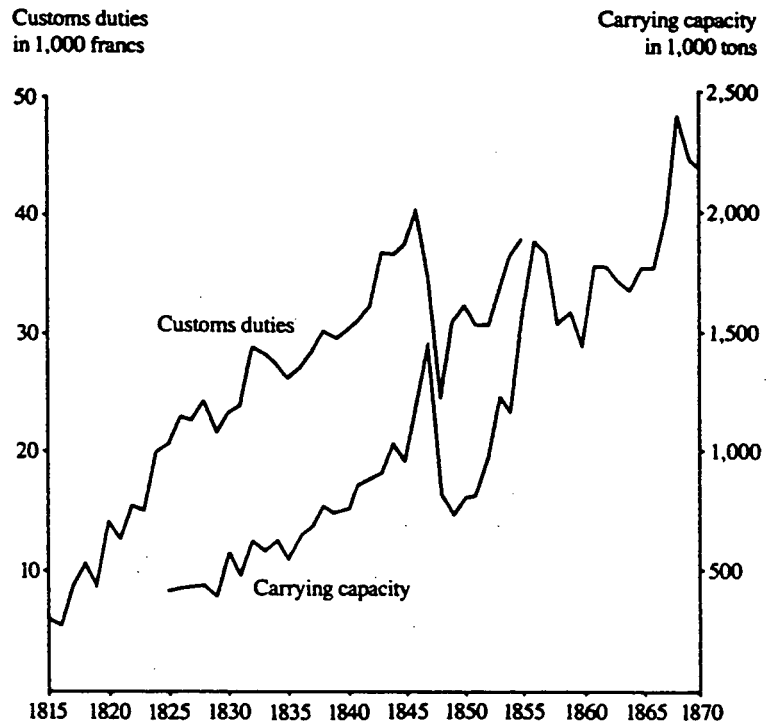
Table 1. Number of transport workers marrying

	1821-22	1846-51	1869	increase 1821-22 to 1846-51	increase 1846-51 to 1869
Dockworkers marrying/year	39	37	49	-06%	+32%
Other transport workers marrying/year	15	53	78	+253%	+47%
Total transport workers marrying/year	54	90	127	+67%	+41%



**Table 2. Participation of dockworkers in radical politics**

	(1) dockworker participants /all participants	(2) dockworkers as percent of participants	(3) dockworkers as percent of work force	(4) dockworker participation rate (2)/(3)
Insurrection, 1848	3/270	1.1	2.9	0.4
Coup d'etat, 1851	6/297	2.0	2.9	0.7
"Dangerous individuals," 1853-59	18/346	5.2	2.9	1.8
Miscellaneous political offenses				
1848-49	0/20	0.0	2.9	0.0
1850-51	2/51	3.9	2.9	1.3
1852-59	8/85	9.4	2.9	3.2



**Figure 1. Traffic of the port of Marseille, 1815-1870**

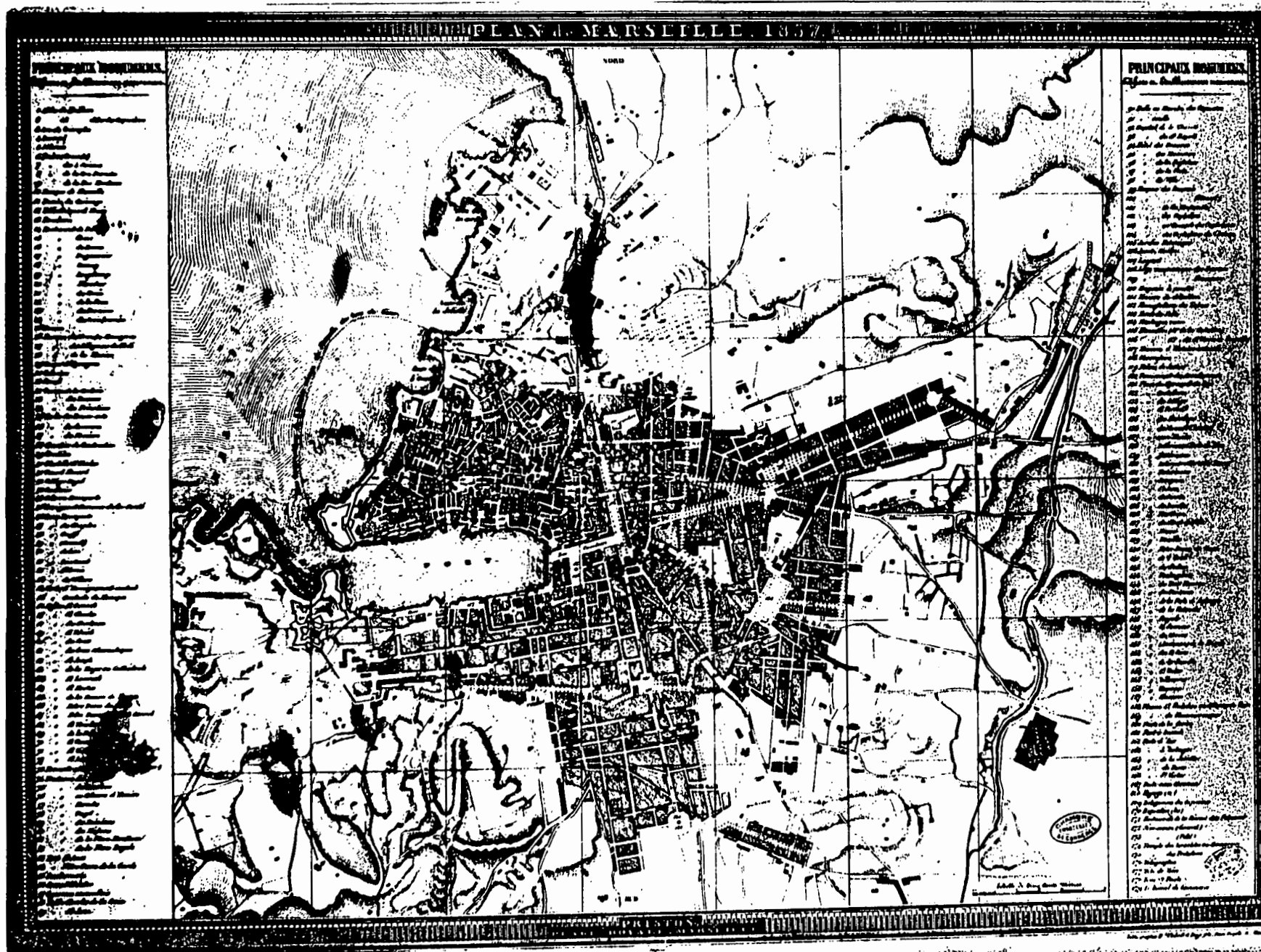
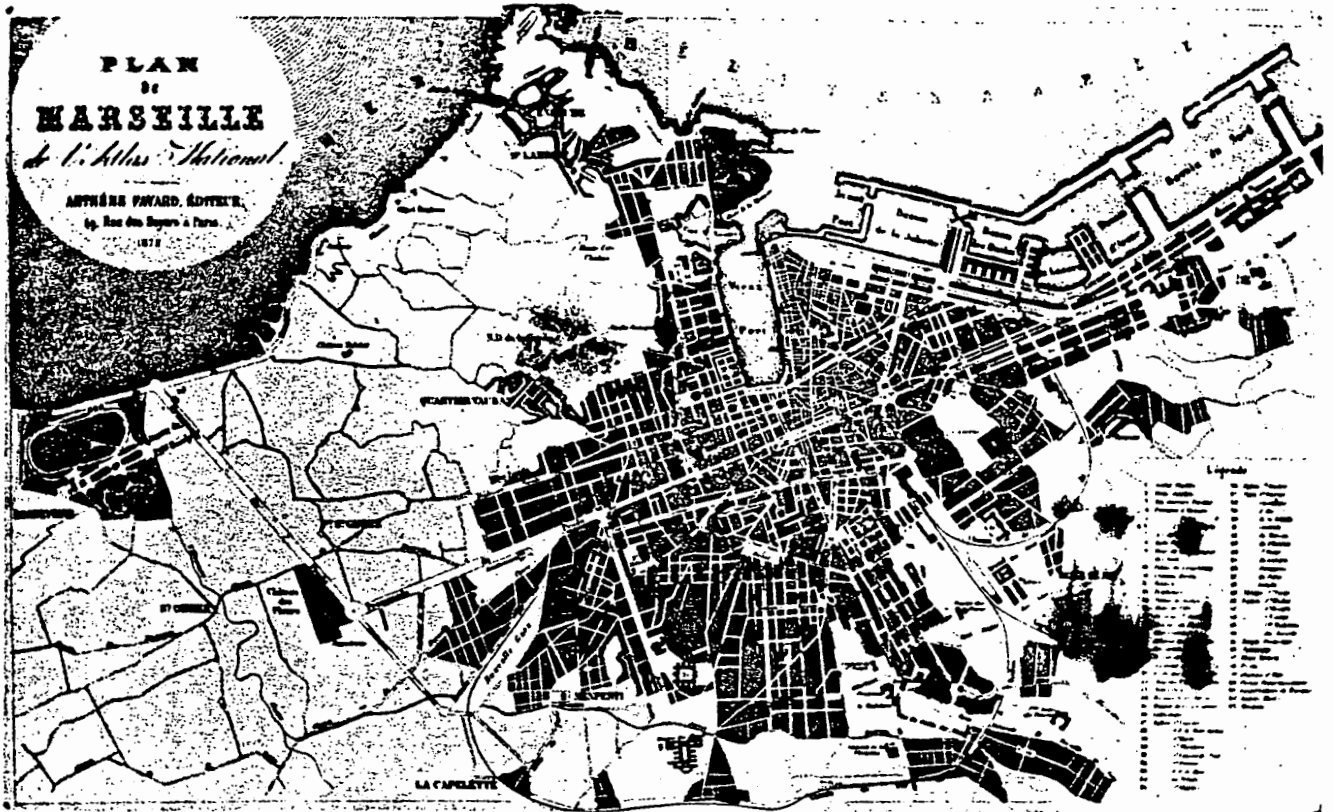


Figure 2. Marseille in 1837. Courtesy of the Archives de la Chambre de Commerce de Marseille.



**Figure 3.** Marseille in 1874. Courtesy of the Archives de la Chambre de Commerce de Marseille.

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