

Radical Republicanism

*Recovering the Tradition's
Popular Heritage*

Edited by

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and

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Contents

<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	vii
Introduction: Radical Republicanism and Popular Sovereignty <i>Bruno Leipold, Karma Nabulsi, and Stuart White</i>	1
I. DOMINATION: SOCIAL AND STRUCTURAL	
1. From Neo-Republicanism to Critical Republicanism <i>Dorothea Gädeke</i>	23
2. A Radical Revolution in Thought: Frederick Douglass on the Slave's Perspective on Republican Freedom <i>Alan Coffee</i>	47
II. POPULAR CONSTITUTIONALISM	
3. Republicanism, Virtuous and Corrupt: Social Conflict, Political Leadership, and Constitutional Reform in Machiavelli's <i>Florentine Histories</i> <i>John P. McCormick</i>	67
4. Citizens' Assemblies and Republican Democracy <i>Stuart White</i>	81
III. MOVEMENT AND RESISTANCE	
5. Popular Resistance and the Idea of Rights <i>Guy Aitchison</i>	103
6. Two Traditions of Radical Democracy from the 1830 Revolution <i>Karma Nabulsi</i>	118
IV. SOCIALISM AND LABOUR	
7. Solidarity and Civic Virtue: Labour Republicanism and the Politics of Emancipation in Nineteenth-Century America <i>Alex Gourevitch</i>	149

8. Marx's Social Republic: Radical Republicanism and
the Political Institutions of Socialism 172
Bruno Leipold

V. HISTORICAL TRAJECTORIES

9. The Intellectual Origins of Turkish Radical Republicanism 197
Banu Turnaoğlu
10. The Utopian Imagination: Radical Republican Traditions
in France, from the Enlightenment to the French Communists 215
Sudhir Hazareesingh
- Bibliography* 239
Index 267

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Introduction

Radical Republicanism and Popular Sovereignty

Bruno Leipold, Karma Nabulsi, and Stuart White

This volume offers a historically informed understanding of republicanism: a political tradition encompassing radical forms of democracy and popular sovereignty. In this tradition, the active and equal political participation of citizens are seen as the core guarantors of liberty, equality, and solidarity. The tradition has an extensive history of revolutionary activity to achieve these principles and of opposition to all forms of domination and oppression that undermine the free and equal standing of citizens in the republic. It lays claim to a long series of struggles against tyrants and despots, slaveholders and colonial masters, patriarchs and oligarchs, and is a tradition that stretches across the world, from Latin America to Haiti, from Asia to Africa. It has combined a commitment to revolution and insurrection with a dedication to building institutions that keep power in the hands of the citizenry, and one that is alert and resilient to oligarchical and imperial encroachments.

Contemporary political theorists are informed by a somewhat distinct conception of republicanism, associated with understandings where ‘the people’ is viewed with suspicion or even something to be guarded against; where courts and expert committees are empowered to counteract possible tyranny by the majority; and where representative government, the rule of law, and the separation of powers are seen as the ultimate guarantors of liberty. Republicanism’s rich and diverse intellectual tradition has, in other words, become largely associated with concepts locating it within contemporary liberalism.

This volume seeks to rectify the current absence of this tradition’s extensive history of radicalism, in the process reintroducing popular sovereignty as a driving force in republican thought. The contributions to the volume set out to retrieve republicanism’s popular and revolutionary heritage, from English Levellers to French and Ottoman revolutionaries, to American abolitionists and trade unionists. It draws on the anti-oligarchical thought of Machiavelli, the radical democratic aspects of Rousseau, and the republican dimensions of Marx’s socialism. Further, the volume explores theoretical accounts of social and structural domination and offers institutional proposals to democratize the state and the economy—from

citizens' assemblies to cooperative production—that are inspired by this radical republican history.

Republicanism's trajectory is not exclusively radical: moderate and indeed conservative strains can also be traced, especially in its pre-modern incarnations. The sensibilities of Roman statesmen, Florentine *ottimati*, and American Federalists are an integral part of the republican tradition. Yet the rich language, defining ideas, and organizational forms of republicanism's radical elements provide us with powerful resources for contemporary discussions about confronting injustice and domination.¹

Republican theorists owe a profound debt to the scholarship and body of work developed by Quentin Skinner and Philip Pettit, which has articulated a republican conception of freedom as non-domination, where citizens are only free when not subject to the arbitrary, uncontrolled power of a master.² This conception of liberty has enormous critical potential and has rightly taken its place as one of republicanism's defining principles. Here, we seek to help extend the concept's application from political domination (historically the main focus of republicanism) to social and private forms of domination (which are often the most intense form of domination citizens experience),³ as well as emphasizing the structural processes that underlie them.⁴

Alongside this commitment to non-domination, we argue that the republican tradition is identified with the core principle of popular sovereignty. The concept of sovereignty belonging to the people is one closely tied to republicanism's other defining commitments: the need for civic virtues in order to create, and then maintain a free republic; the idea that politics should be directed towards the common good of all; and that widespread political deliberation and participation

¹ See further, Martin McIvor, 'Republicanism, Socialism and the Renewal of the Left', in *In Search of Social Democracy: Responses to Crisis and Modernisation*, eds. John Callaghan, Nina Fishman, Ben Jackson, and Martin McIvor (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), pp. 252–66; Karma Nabulsi, 'No Maps, No Manuals: Retrieving Radical Republicanism, Restoring Popular Sovereignty', *Juncture* 22, no. 2 (2015), pp. 147–52; and Stuart White, 'Is Republicanism the Left's "Big idea"?', *Renewal* 15, no. 1 (2007), pp. 37–46.

² For the classic statements see Philip Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) and Quentin Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

³ On the importance of social domination, see, for instance, Alan M. S. J. Coffee, 'Mary Wollstonecraft, Freedom and the Enduring Power of Social Domination', *European Journal of Political Theory* 12, no. 2 (2013), pp. 116–35; M. Victoria Costa, 'Is Neo-Republicanism Bad for Women?', *Hypatia* 28, no. 4 (2013), pp. 921–36; Alex Gourevitch, 'Labor Republicanism and the Transformation of Work', *Political Theory* 41, no. 4 (2013), pp. 591–617; Anne Phillips, 'Feminism and Republicanism: Is This a Plausible Alliance?', *Journal of Political Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (2000), pp. 279–93; and Melvin L. Rogers, 'Race, Domination, and Republicanism', in *Difference without Domination: Pursuing Justice in Diverse Democracies*, eds. Danielle Allen and Rohini Somanathan (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, forthcoming).

⁴ For discussion of structural domination, see Cécile Laborde, 'Republicanism', in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*, eds. Michael Freeden and Marc Stears (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 521–2; Dorothea Gädeke, *Politik der Beherrschung: Eine kritische Theorie externer Demokratieförderung* (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2017), chap. 5; and Michael J. Thompson, 'Reconstructing Republican Freedom: A Critique of the Neo-Republican Concept of Freedom as Non-Domination', *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 39, no. 3 (2013), pp. 282–3.

are necessary to achieve a common understanding of that good.⁵ Like ‘democracy’, popular sovereignty is an ideal which is widely endorsed, but often without any engagement with the radical challenge it presents to more traditional justifications of authority. Instituting the people as the foundational source of the republic’s legitimacy remains republicanism’s most subversive and revolutionary commitment. Our volume consequently seeks to restore the centrality of popular sovereignty to the republican tradition and show how it can inform and serve contemporary republican theorization. In the sections that follow, we indicate some of the contributions that popular sovereignty can make to three central areas of concern for republicanism: its organization in political and social movements, the design of its political institutions, and the structure of its economy. This is followed by an overview of the chapters to follow.

1. Popular Sovereignty and Radical Republican Movements

Under varying political conditions and different times and places, radical and revolutionary movements across the world struggled to achieve liberty and equality for themselves and their people, and identified themselves as republicans. They engaged in this battle with a commonality of facing unequal odds and informed by a shared approach: their reliance—indeed ardent belief—in the justice and the triumphant power of popular sovereignty. Their battle to restore popular sovereignty lay at the heart of radical republican movements’ organizing, and informed the techniques they relied on to change society, the shape their movements took, as well as the institutions they created to advance their goals. For republicans, the source of popular sovereignty lay in a continually refashioned social contract. Indeed, their goal was a return to the natural order of things: for republicans, sovereignty did not reside in the monarch or the hands of a few, but was instead the rightful possession of all. Put simply, popular sovereignty is the foundational principle underlying a just political order. People are the source of power and legitimacy, and therefore all laws and institutions created must be the reflection and outcome of their determining, and their will.

Republicans understood that it was popular sovereignty’s constant location of power and authority in the people themselves, not in the state or its national institutions, that allowed these very institutions to breathe, take life, and have force. When applied, the principle of popular sovereignty ensured that the decisions of any national body were made through its people’s determining, and with their participation and consent. In this way, their general will and its expression are

⁵ For accounts of republicanism that see it as a cluster of concepts, see Richard Dagger, ‘Neo-Republicanism and the Civic Economy’, *Politics, Philosophy and Economics* 5, no. 2 (2006), p. 154 and Stuart White, ‘The Republican Critique of Capitalism’, *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 14, no. 5 (2011), pp. 562–4.

understood as the basis for all legitimate collective political arrangements, structures, laws, strategies, and policies. In the republic they campaigned and fought to create, radical and revolutionary movements viewed popular sovereignty as performing two essential tasks to ensure the republic was sustained: that the people would participate in its institutional workings, and that they recognized the political structures that emerged from their will—where they played the primary role—as representing their desired ends.

Although the principle of popular sovereignty was included (with numerous constraints), in a variety of political institutions of liberal democratic forms, throughout the ‘long nineteenth’ century its formations and expressions were predominantly found within revolutionary, socialist, and anti-colonial liberation movements. Its revolutionary and socialist expressions have a long heritage and tradition across the world; socialist frameworks of popular sovereignty have a rich history in Latin America, Africa, Asia, the Arab world, and Europe.

Through a set of philosophically grounded practices, republicanism remains rooted in a common history with peoples who took up this same mission of instituting popular sovereignty—against a tyrant, a monarch, an empire, or a foreign colonial power. Tracing such common accounts furnish us with a vast reservoir of customs which republicans practised in their political associations, networks, and organizations. In the most inclusive republican imaginary, popular sovereignty can be defined as a legal status, an abstract concept, or a political principle. But it can also be understood as a tradition of action: its vast repertoire of techniques, handed on by successive republicans, provided generations with a concrete education on achieving radical change.

The republicans’ goal to overturn the established order meant that their guiding eighteenth- and nineteenth-century principles of freedom, equality, and fraternity, combined with popular sovereignty, created a model of lengthy, sustained, and often successful revolutionary activity, which represented an ongoing and decisive challenge to the ordering of the international system of states between the second half of the eighteenth century and the end of the twentieth.

Distinctive in many of its features from contemporary Anglo-American republican theory, republican movements had clear doctrines for mobilization that were designed specifically to confront larger, far better-equipped structural forces—notably the powerful apparatus of the imperial state. So revolutionary republicans possessed more than an innovatory language to inspire their cause: in the words of a leader of the republican movement in 1830s France, it was ‘la force révolutionnaire,’⁶ of mass mobilization: generous, usually national in scope, and offering useful guidelines, rules, and lessons for achieving their dreams.

⁶ Godefroy Cavaignac, ‘La Force Révolutionnaire’, in *Paris Révolutionnaire*, ed. G. Cavaignac (Paris: Guillaumin et Cie, 1848), pp. 5–46.

In its manifest workings, this rich and complex tradition offers patterns of associational practices that provide a system for building a republic: for it was republicans who created republics; not republics (at least in their formation) that created republicans. Sequentially the formation of citizens came before any virtuous republic could appear; republicans' own capacities became the prerequisite for obtaining a truly free republic, one that would be able to maintain equality and freedom against the constantly increasing power of elites.

Radical republicans believed that the republic belonged to the people, that the wellbeing of a people existed in the extent of their individual and collective freedoms, and in the equality of their relations to each other as citizens. Considered in this light, republicanism as a movement comes into view: associations whose essential purpose was to create and preserve freedom for each and for all, never understood as a limited search for parliamentary democracy alone, or a gradual (and possibly temporary) enfranchising of individual rights and liberties that were prised from the encroachments of an ever expanding state.

Given the strength of their opposition, along with the extensive nature of their goals, radical republicans saw themselves as engaged in a constant battle, a struggle, in a fight. The notion of the military campaign 'in the field' was transferred into the arena of the public realm—the battle against empire, tyranny, inequality, and colonialism, now seen as a political campaign, yet most often as the continuation of a military one in a new arena: the public space they were establishing. Equally, the histories of these republican movements illustrate that the battle to transform the body politic from absolute monarchy to free republic was neither spontaneous nor ceded by an existing power. Instead, each liberty was gained by a number of different formations and coalitions of movements over centuries of struggle and enfranchisements.

Combining, developing, augmenting, then conveying the gathered understandings of mid-eighteenth-century republican thought and practice, Rousseau emphasized republicans' duty to dedicate themselves to advancing the common good for 'the happiness of all,' in the phrase most commonly used by republicans of the era. In his *Social Contract*, Rousseau shows the convergence between republican principles—fraternity, equality, liberty—and republican practice. The republic was not simply to be imagined, but was to be fashioned by republicans coming together to work purposefully for it.

In this tradition, although debate, discussion, and deliberation were essential to republicans, and to republicanism, it was not often seen as useful to rely solely upon them in the stage of creating the republic, especially when facing the asymmetry of force of the king's repressive army and when seeking an immediate end to its gross injustices. Free deliberation could only be secured once the republic protected the rights of all, especially the weak and invisible, to speak and be heard as equals. This classic republican view was captured by the editor of a nineteenth-century republican newspaper: 'To arrive at the perfection that is possible of society, from the point

of departure that we are at, there are two routes: one violent, that of revolutions; the other, peaceful education of public opinion. Both of these are popular, the *Tribune* accepts them both.⁷

With popular sovereignty as a core principle of republicans, their movements that challenged the status quo primarily belonged to the people. Radical republicanism did not typically operate in elite domains (although radical republicans could often be found in the corridors and salons of power and played a key role in them). This subtle, intelligent, and purposive understanding of popular sovereignty created a distinct style of leadership carried by the popular class, based on a shared understanding of leadership as required in all tiers of society, and power, working together as a shared purpose, one body—if playing distinct roles. Republican culture was shared too, across the battleground of the factory, field, town square, association or underground network, and the tyrants' prisons. Radical republicanism in its various forms, movements, and sectors was led by factory workers, artisans, peasants, prisoners, refugees, and sometimes captains or colonels, and members of the nobility. In the final days of the momentous 1834 silk workers' insurrection in Lyon, while it was being crushed by the king's troops, a poster went up in the popular Croix Rousse district calling for the revolution to continue. It expresses this republican adherence to popular rule, of the people's sovereign right to the public realm, of the intelligence of the sovereignty of the people: 'no doubt it is terrible that blood must spill in order to fight tyranny . . . but our enemies have already assassinated us before we could dream of taking up arms. We are republicans, and we know all the virtues.'⁸

2. Popular Sovereignty and Political Institutions

After the republic is founded, popular sovereignty expresses itself not only through citizens' movements, but also requires a constitutional and institutional context for the making of law and policy. What kind of institutions are needed, or helpful, to give expression to the ideal of popular sovereignty?

One obvious point of inspiration here is once again Rousseau's *Social Contract*. Rousseau argues that the legitimacy of a state depends on reconciling freedom and authority, and that this requires a political order in which sovereignty lies with the 'general will'. As a first approximation at least, we can say that the general will is general in terms of its *source* and its *aims*. On the one hand, it is a will that comes from the citizen body as a whole, as expressed in political participation in making the 'laws'. On the other hand, it is a will that is properly oriented towards

⁷ Armand Marrast, *La Tribune*, 31 January 1833.

⁸ E. Carrier, the commander of the Croix Rousse area of Lyon, 11 April 1834, in *Réquisitoire, Cours des Pairs, 'l'Affaire d'avril 1834'* (Paris, 1835), p. 177.

the interests of all, towards a common good. Rousseau's central idea is that when laws have this origin and orientation it is possible for citizens to view the laws as an expression of their will, thereby achieving the ambitious reconciliation between freedom and state authority. For Rousseau, the institution of the general will in this sense is most obviously served by requiring that all fundamental laws be authorized by an assembly of the citizens.

Some further aspects and possible implications of this conception of the polity should be noted. First, note that for Rousseau the sovereign power of the people over their basic laws is in an important sense an *active* power. In some social contract theories, such as that of John Locke, the people assemble to make their basic laws, but then dissolve, reassembling as a constitutional authority only in a revolutionary context. By contrast, Rousseau's model of the periodic citizen assembly (CA) captures the idea that popular sovereignty should be institutionalized as an ongoing feature of the political system. When he insists that the CA should meet periodically, independent of the governments' will, he is asserting that 'We, the people' regularly reassemble with authority over the 'laws'. Second, given the way the general will is oriented to the common good, it is arguable that this conception also entails a central role for public argument, debate, and deliberation so that citizens are able to thrash out the nature of their common good.⁹ It is also very important, in this connection, that political power is not skewed towards particular social groups (e.g., defined by class or race) who are able to impose their sectional interest at the expense of the common good. As Helena Rosenblatt has argued, Rousseau's *Social Contract* was in part motivated by a long-standing concern that power in the Genevan city-state had been effectively usurped by a social elite. His advocacy of the rights of the CA was supposed to be an antidote to this.¹⁰

Given this basic vision, what kind of political institutions are implied? To put the question more concretely, how adequate to this vision are the standard institutions of a contemporary representative, parliamentary democracy? Is it enough for a state to have, say, regular, open, and fair elections to legislatures which have the power to make laws and policy?

To begin with, we should perhaps beware of overstating the extent to which radical republicanism necessarily takes issue with these institutions. It is helpful here to recall Bruce Ackerman's idea of 'dualist democracy' in which politics operates at two levels.¹¹ There is, first, a level of 'normal' politics in which citizens elect representatives to legislatures to make ordinary law and policy. But normal politics

⁹ There is disagreement as to how far Rousseau himself took this view. For helpful discussion, see Joshua Cohen, *Rousseau: A Free Community of Equals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 75–7, 170–2.

¹⁰ Helena Rosenblatt, *Rousseau and Geneva: From the First Discourse to the Social Contract, 1749–1762* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

¹¹ Bruce Ackerman, *We the People*, vol. 1: *Foundations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

in this sense properly works within the framework of a higher, constitutional law. This implies a second level of ‘constitutional politics’ in which, Ackerman argues, the people properly exercise a sovereign power over the constitution that sets the limits and goals of normal politics. With respect to these two levels of politics, Rousseau makes a related distinction between ‘government’ and ‘sovereign’. The people, in assembly, have sole authority to make the laws while also choosing the institutions and individuals to serve as a government, making detailed policy within the framework of the laws. If we understand ‘laws’ in Rousseau’s discussion to refer to the basic, fundamental laws of the political association, as some interpreters argue we should, then Rousseau’s conception looks very similar to the dualist democracy model identified by Ackerman.¹² Within this model, the standard institutions of representative democracy have an important place. They are central to the operation of normal politics.

Nevertheless, a radical republican may have reason to doubt the adequacy of these institutions by themselves. First, while these institutions might have a central place in normal politics, what about constitutional politics? This is the point (or, at least, a point) at which Rousseau’s picture of an active popular sovereign comes in. How can the people retain their authority over the basic, fundamental laws of their polity? Are the standard institutions of parliamentary democracy adequate to this, or is there a need for further institutions? Possibilities here include requirements for periodic constitutional conventions to review the basic laws and/or powers for citizens to initiate conventions or direct votes on constitutional amendments.

Second, the historic record, and contemporary politics in many nations, suggests that the standard institutions of representative democracy are by no means invulnerable to capture by socio-economic elites. For example, where electoral competition requires resources, and the rich are in a better position to offer politicians resources, there is always a danger that the politicians will become overly attentive to the preferences of the rich at the expense of the common good. Radical republicanism will therefore want to see strict controls on the role of ‘money in politics.’ This concern is also a further consideration in support of giving citizens the power to initiate reviews and even direct popular votes independently of the elected legislature.

That said, ‘direct democracy’ undoubtedly carries its own risks from a radical republican point of view. Even if the process of direct democracy, e.g., in the form of citizens’ initiatives, can be insulated from the power of money in politics, it is possible for these processes to be used in objectionably ‘majoritarian’ ways, e.g.,

¹² See Frank Marini, ‘Popular Sovereignty but Representative Government: The Other Rousseau’, *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 11, no. 4 (1967), pp. 451–70; Christopher Bertram, *Rousseau and The Social Contract* (London: Routledge, 2004); Richard Tuck, *The Sleeping Sovereign: The Invention of Modern Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

to oppress racial or sexual minorities.¹³ The radical republican response in part refers us back to the importance of social movements and the wider associational context in which institutions operate. These movements and related associations, such as trade unions, can potentially both push back against the power of money in politics and raise the voices of popular and minority groups. A further, complementary response, however, is to think further about the institutions themselves. For example, is there a role here for ‘micro-publics’, such as CAs?¹⁴

CAs are bodies of representatives chosen on a near random basis, but so as to be descriptively representative of the population along dimensions such as gender, race, and region. CAs are typically given an issue or proposal to consider, and their discussion of the issue or proposal is structured through learning, testimony, and decision phases, supported by facilitators who aim at full participation by all involved. Evidence from a number of nations suggests that they can achieve high-quality deliberation.¹⁵ Placing CAs within citizen initiative processes might be one way to raise their deliberative quality and orientation to the common good.

More generally, CAs direct our attention to the possible value of *sortition* in a radical republican perspective: of choosing representatives by lot, a practice used in many ancient, medieval, and early modern city-states.¹⁶ John P. McCormick has recently outlined an interesting variant of the CA which he calls the tribunate.¹⁷ Drawing on Machiavelli’s works, McCormick argues for an understanding of ‘the people’ as distinct from and standing in conflict with society’s economic and political elite (a perspective he argues is occluded by the more Rousseauian picture of the people as a unitary popular sovereign). Conventional institutions of

¹³ Derrick A. Bell, Jr., ‘The Referendum: Democracy’s Barrier to Racial Equality’, *Washington Law Review* 54, no. 1 (1978), pp. 1–29.

¹⁴ Archon Fung, ‘Recipes for Public Spheres: Eight Institutional Design Choices and Their Consequences’, *Journal of Political Philosophy* 11, no. 3 (2003), pp. 338–67.

¹⁵ Amy Lang, ‘But Is It for Real? The British Columbia Citizens’ Assembly as a Model of State-Sponsored Citizen Empowerment’, *Politics and Society* 35 (2007), pp. 35–69; Graham Smith, *Democratic Innovations: Designing Institutions for Citizen Participation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); David M. Farrell, ‘The 2013 Irish Constitutional Convention: A Bold Step or a Damp Squib?’, in *75 Years of the Constitution of Ireland: An Irish-Italian Dialogue*, eds. Giuseppe Ferrari and John O’Dowd (Dublin: Clarus, 2014), pp. 292–305; John Grant, ‘Canada’s Republican Invention? On the Political Theory and Practice of Citizens’ Assemblies’, *Political Studies* 62, no. 3 (2014), pp. 539–55.

¹⁶ C. L. R. James, ‘Every Cook Can Govern: A Study of Democracy in Ancient Greece: Its Meaning for Today’, *Correspondence* 2 (1956), available at: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/james-clr/works/1956/06/every-cook.htm>; Barbara Goodwin, *Justice by Lottery*, 2nd ed. (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2005); Oliver Dowlen, *The Political Potential of Sortition: A Study of the Random Selection of Citizens for Public Office* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2008); Alexander A. Guerrero, ‘Against Elections: The Lottocratic Alternative’, *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 42, no. 2 (2014), pp. 135–78. For discussions that indicate the potential epistemic benefits of sortition, see also Hélène Landemore, *Democratic Reason: Politics, Collective Intelligence, and the Rule of the Many* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), and Udit Bhatia, *Epistocracy and Constitutions* (DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2018).

¹⁷ John P. McCormick, *Machiavellian Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 170–88.

representative democracy in capitalist societies do not offer any formal or explicit representation of the people in this Machiavellian sense and, McCormick argues, this enhances the potential for effective elite control even within the framework of formally democratic institutions. As a counter, McCormick proposes (in the United States context) the setting up of a body of fifty-one citizens to be chosen at random for non-renewable one-year terms. The tribunate's members will be chosen by lot from the general population but excluding the wealthiest 10 per cent and politicians and with provision to enhance representation members of historically oppressed groups such as African American and Native American citizens. The tribunate would have powers to veto proposals coming from other branches of government, to initiate referendums, and to initiate impeachment proceedings against political officials.

Insofar as radical republicanism continues to make use of election in representation, there is also an interest in mechanisms that increase the accountability of elected officials to voters (thereby limiting the risks that they give undue preference to the preferences and interests of elites). Possibilities here include placing representatives under imperative mandates as to how they can vote. Another possibility is to give voters effective powers to recall elected representatives if they are dissatisfied with their performance. For both elected and non-elected representatives, having short terms of office might also enhance accountability, as might limits on the number of terms for which someone can sit as a representative.

Radical republicanism does not offer a single set of institutional prescriptions for democratic political life. But its emphasis on popular sovereignty, and on the properly active and deliberative and contestatory quality of popular sovereignty, points to a need to think creatively about political institutions in a way that goes beyond the conventional structures of representative democracy, taking in (and perhaps integrating) proposals for things like citizens' initiatives, micro-publics, sortition, and rights of recall. These proposals for political institutions need to be understood, however, as working in tandem with the radical republican emphasis on the value of citizens' movements and with a radical republican agenda for the economy. There is no purely, narrowly 'institutional' solution to the challenge of realizing genuine popular sovereignty.

3. Popular Sovereignty and the Economy

For radical republicans, the fight for popular sovereignty in the political realm is inseparable from the struggle to emancipate citizens from relationships of domination in the economic realm. Citizens subjected to arbitrary power in the workplace and denied control over society's principal economic institutions are unfree citizens. That unfreedom is not only a grave wrong in itself but threatens the realization and practice of popular sovereignty. An entrenched economic oligarchy can and will use its power to undermine the citizenry's control of its

government and instead direct the state towards its own narrow class interests. Republicanism thus cannot restrict itself to the political realm.

That is an insight that has been crucial to those republicans who have taken economic domination seriously. The labour republican trade unionist, George E. McNeill, for instance, insisted in 1892 that ‘there is an inevitable and irresistible conflict between the wage-system of labor and the republican system of government’ and that it was therefore imperative to ‘engraft republican principles into our industrial system.’¹⁸ The idea that republican principles must be extended to include a thoroughgoing democratization of the economy is one that can also be found throughout the socialist tradition. Writing just a few years after McNeill, James Connolly, one of Ireland’s foremost socialists and republican fighters, freely and self-consciously embraced socialism’s republican inheritance, arguing that ‘A socialist republic is the application to agriculture and industry; to the farm, the field, the workshop, of the democratic principle of the republican ideal.’¹⁹

A number of republican theorists have over the last few years begun deploying republicanism’s normative and conceptual tools to analysing the multifaceted problem of economic domination. Particular attention has been focused on the arbitrary power exercised by employers and managers over their employees. Employers have wide discretion to direct and supervise their workers, the conditions under which they work, and the operation of the firm itself—all without employees having a say in the matter.²⁰ Employers thus have significant uncontrolled power over their workers; a power exercised in innumerable cases of petty interference in the workplace, from telling workers what to wear to limiting when they can use the toilet, and even extending to the employee’s life beyond work, with employers directing them to attend political rallies and disciplining them for their private sexual choices.²¹ Workers have little choice but to acquiesce to these arbitrary interventions because the consequence of not doing so—losing their jobs—is so severe. Workers can, if necessary, leave their employer, but without productive assets of their own, they are forced to search for work for a different employer and thus once again put themselves in a condition of arbitrary power. In Elizabeth Anderson’s pithy formulation: ‘Workers may choose their Leviathan, but only Leviathans are in most people’s opportunity set.’²²

¹⁸ Cited in Alex Gourevitch, *From Slavery to the Cooperative Commonwealth: Labor and Republican Liberty in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 6, 116.

¹⁹ James Connolly, ‘Labour Representation’, *Worker’s Republic*, no. 3, 27 August 1898, p. 4.

²⁰ Nien-hè Hsieh, ‘Rawlsian Justice and Workplace Republicanism’, *Social Theory and Practice* 31, no. 1 (2005), p. 122.

²¹ Christopher Bertram, Corey Robin, and Alex Gourevitch, ‘Let It Bleed: Libertarianism and the Workplace’, *Crooked Timber*, 1 July 2012, <http://crookedtimber.org/2012/07/01/let-it-bleed-libertarianism-and-the-workplace/>.

²² Elizabeth Anderson, ‘Equality and Freedom in the Workplace: Recovering Republican Insights’, *Social Philosophy and Policy* 31, no. 2 (2015), p. 59; See also Elizabeth Anderson, *Private Government: How Employers Rule Our Lives (and Why We Don’t Talk about It)* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017).

The domination of workers thus does not simply consist in the personal domination of their individual employer, but in being subjected to the *structural* domination of employers, whose control over productive assets means that while workers do not have to work for a *particular* employer, they do have to work for *an* employer.²³ Domination in the economic sphere is thus not limited to the workplace but extends to the vastly unequal distribution of productive assets—a reminder of the importance of analysing the structure and functioning of domination in the economy as a whole. For instance, the private control of investment in capitalist economies systematically curtails popular sovereignty, with the ever present threat of capital strikes and capital flight constraining policy choices and placing citizens at the mercy of a wealthy elite.²⁴ Moreover, capitalism’s tendency towards economic crises undermines citizens’ robust protection against arbitrary interference,²⁵ and it has been argued that market competition itself exposes all workers, consumers, and firms to the uncontrolled power of other economic actors.²⁶

Republican theorists have not restricted themselves to analysing economic domination but have proposed a number of policies to rectify it. Broadly, proposals to address domination in the workplace can be divided into three strategies: (1) state regulations that constrain employers’ and managers’ power over employees (what has been called ‘workplace constitutionalism’); (2) ensuring that workers have a meaningful right to exit their workplace; and (3) structuring the workplace so that workers have a voice in its management, known as workplace democracy.²⁷ Each of these strategies will play a role in eliminating workplace domination, the question is to what extent we rely on each strategy and what form each strategy takes.²⁸

State regulation—i.e., workplace constitutionalism—has unquestionably played an important part in limiting what employers can get away with; laws regulating an employer’s right to fire employees at will or impose longer working hours are

²³ Gourevitch, ‘Labor Republicanism and the Transformation of Work’, pp. 601–3; Bruno Leipold, ‘Chains and Invisible Threads: Liberty and Domination in Marx’s Account of Wage-Slavery’, in *Rethinking Liberty before Liberalism*, eds. Annelien de Dijn and Hannah Dawson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming); Lillian Cicerchia, ‘Structural Domination in the Labor Market’, *European Journal of Political Theory* (forthcoming), <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474885119851094>; James Muldoon, ‘A Socialist Theory of Freedom and Government’, *European Journal of Political Theory* (forthcoming), <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474885119847606>.

²⁴ White, ‘The Republican Critique of Capitalism’, pp. 568–71.

²⁵ Alex Bryan, ‘The Dominating Effects of Economic Crises’, *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* (forthcoming).

²⁶ William Clare Roberts, *Marx’s Inferno: The Political Theory of Capital* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), chap. 3; Nicholas Vrousalis, ‘Workplace Democracy Implies Economic Democracy’, *Journal of Social Philosophy* (forthcoming).

²⁷ Anderson, ‘Equality and Freedom in the Workplace’, p. 66; Iñigo González-Ricoy, ‘The Republican Case for Workplace Democracy’, *Social Theory and Practice* 40, no. 2 (2014), p. 234.

²⁸ For arguments, however, that maintain that workplace democracy is not a necessary component in addressing workplace domination, see Dagger, ‘Neo-Republicanism and the Civic Economy’, pp. 162–3, and Daniel Jacob and Christian Neuhäuser, ‘Workplace Democracy, Market Competition and Republican Self-Respect’, *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 21, no. 4 (2018), p. 936.

important and essential achievements. But relying solely on regulation faces the problem of enforcement, since workers are structurally disempowered relative to employers and are thus limited in their ability to enforce their rights; as well as the impossibility of regulating for all possible forms of interference, given the inherent incompleteness of labour contracts.²⁹ Some republicans have instead argued for the importance of strengthening a worker's ability to leave their workplace by ensuring that labour markets are perfectly competitive.³⁰ Setting aside whether perfect labour markets are realizable in practice, workers still face significant personal and professional costs when switching between workplaces and are still only able to choose from a set of arbitrary and despotic workplaces.³¹ Introducing an unconditional basic income, as several republicans have proposed, could certainly make exit less costly for workers and significantly increase their bargaining power relative to employers and thus reduce their domination.³² But if the level of basic income does not allow permanent retreat from the labour market (as some of its republican defenders admit is possible), workers still have to find work for an employer.³³

Another radical republican response has thus been to focus on transforming the workplace itself so that workers take an active role in the management of the firm itself. These proposals for workplace democracy span more limited calls for workers' representation on corporate boards and works councils (as in the German co-determination system) to more fully fledged proposals for cooperative ownership and control of firms by workers.³⁴ This kind of cooperative production, where power rests in the workforce as a whole and workers are actively involved in the running of the firm, can be seen as the realization of the radical republican commitment to popular sovereignty inside the workplace. This workplace popular sovereignty must in turn be supplemented and reinforced by economy-wide

²⁹ González-Ricoy, 'The Republican Case for Workplace Democracy', pp. 246–7.

³⁰ Robert S. Taylor, *Exit Left: Markets and Mobility in Republican Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), chap. 3; Philip Pettit, 'Freedom in the Market', *Politics, Philosophy and Economics* 5, no. 2 (2006), p. 142.

³¹ González-Ricoy, 'The Republican Case for Workplace Democracy', pp. 240–1.

³² Philip Pettit, 'A Republican Right to Basic Income?', *Basic Income Studies* 2, no. 2 (2008); Frank Lovett, *A General Theory of Domination and Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 201–3.

³³ Gourevitch, 'Labor Republicanism and the Transformation of Work', pp. 598–603; Alex Gourevitch, 'The Limits of a Basic Income: Means and Ends of Workplace Democracy', *Basic Income Studies* 11, no. 1 (2016), pp. 17–28. See also the critique of the power to exit argument by Simon Birnbaum and Jurgen De Wispelaere, 'Basic Income in the Capitalist Economy: The Mirage of "Exit" from Employment', *Basic Income Studies* 11, no. 1 (2016), pp. 61–74, and the discussion in Stuart White, 'Freedom, Exit, and Basic Income', in *Welfare to Work in Contemporary European Welfare States: Legal, Sociological and Philosophical Perspectives on Justice and Domination*, eds. Anja Eleveld, Thomas Kampen, and Josien Arts (Bristol: Policy Press, forthcoming).

³⁴ Keith Breen, 'Non-Domination, Workplace Republicanism, and the Justification of Worker Voice and Control', *International Journal of Comparative Labour Law and Industrial Relations* 33, no. 3 (2017), pp. 419–39; Inigo Gonzalez-Ricoy, 'Ownership and Control Rights in Democratic Firms: A Republican Approach', *Review of Social Economy* (forthcoming), <https://doi.org/10.1080/00346764.2018.1552792>; Tom O'Shea, 'Socialist Republicanism', *Political Theory* (forthcoming), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591719876889>.

measures, such as the strengthening of union power and public control over investment, which erode the ability of a wealthy elite to dominate and undermine the citizenry's political will.³⁵

4. Volume Overview

This volume provides a range of perspectives on radical republicanism, assembled in ten chapters, and divided into five thematic parts. The chapters range from historical discussions of seventeenth-century English Levellers and nineteenth-century Young Ottomans, to theoretical investigations of the radical constitutional possibilities provided by CAs, and the organizational praxis of republican movements. Uniting these diverse topics, approaches, and authors is a commitment to radical understandings of republicanism, and to retrieving the tradition's popular and revolutionary heritage. The topics and their conclusions show us the enormous contributions that radical republicanism can bring to existing theories of the republic, and to republicanism. We hope they will encourage further scholarship exploring the remarkable breadth of republicanism.

Part I, *Domination: Social and Structural*, examines one of the central values of republicanism, freedom as non-domination, and how it can be reconceptualized for both political and social emancipation.

In the volume's opening chapter, Dorothea Gädeke develops an account of critical republicanism through a close engagement with Pettit's neo-republicanism. She argues that while Pettit's theory has greater critical potential than often assumed, three of its foundational building blocks need modification to realize its potential. The first is the normative core of Pettit's theory, which Gädeke explains is not centrally an objection to the limitation of choice that a state of domination brings but that a dominated subject is denied the discursive status of a being worthy of equal respect. Gädeke argues that this must be extended to the idea that domination is wrong because dominated individuals are denied normative authority—that they can be the authors as well as the subjects of the moral and political norms to which they are subject. The second concerns the concept of domination itself, which Gädeke argues should be understood as a structurally constituted arbitrary capacity to interfere (as opposed to a merely interactional capacity). This arbitrary power should also be reconceptualized to refer to power that is not justifiable to those subjected to it. Third and finally, the theory's institutional implications (in response to the previous changes) shift from a defence of a

³⁵ Alex Gourevitch, 'Quitting Work but Not the Job: Liberty and the Right to Strike', *Perspectives on Politics* 14, no. 2 (2016), pp. 307–23; Martin O'Neill and Stuart White, 'Trade Unions and Political Equality', in *Philosophical Foundations of Labour Law*, eds. Hugh Collins, Gillian Lester, and Virginia Mantouvalou (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 252–68.

mixed constitution and the contestatory citizenry, to the functional separation of powers and popular sovereignty. Taken together, Gädeke argues that these modifications transform neo-republicanism into a critical social and political theory.

Alan Coffee begins his chapter with the arresting observation that, in spite of the centrality of 'slavery' in republican rhetoric and theory, the words and political thought of actual slaves have been almost entirely absent in contemporary theory. To remedy this absence, Coffee turns to the American abolitionist, writer, statesman, and former slave Frederick Douglass. Coffee shows that Douglass's writings offer a crucial corrective to republican theory's tendency to overlook the centrality of social domination. For Douglass, the legal and political emancipation of the American slaves was insufficient to secure their freedom, because former slaves continued to be subjected to public norms and social attitudes that denied their equal status, and capacity for virtue. Coffee sets out Douglass's insistence that while American culture and public discourse remained dominated by the assumptions and prejudices of white society, black citizens were still enslaved. Douglass thus believed that a political revolution should be accompanied by a more comprehensive revolutionary transformation, in public norms and social attitudes.

Part II, *Popular Constitutionalism*, sets out some of the ways in which radical republicanism provides constitutional resources for exploring alternatives to the main institutions of liberal representative democracy.

John McCormick's chapter extends his influential account of Machiavelli as a popular democrat to the *Florentine Histories*, a text often taken to represent a conservative turn in Machiavelli's thought. McCormick argues that the *Histories* should be read in the light of Machiavelli's constitutional prescriptions in *The Prince* and the *Discourses*, which institutionalize the power of the people against the nobility. McCormick shows us that the *Histories* are an exercise in 'silent comparative constitutionalism', where Machiavelli unfavourably contrasts the political and legal institutions of the Florentine Republic with those of ancient Rome. McCormick shows how Machiavelli implicitly condemned the failure of the Florentine Republic to introduce Rome's signature popular institutions, the plebeian tribunate and large CAs for legislation and political trials. Instead it relied on small executive councils and foreign arbitrators, which were more easily swayed by Florence's nobility and wealthy guildsmen. Further, McCormick contends that Machiavelli criticizes Florence's key founders and reformers for failing to follow the ancient models of virtuous legislators, such as Romulus and Brutus, who had constrained or crushed the wealthy elites of the city and not hesitated to arm a civic militia of the people. McCormick thus concludes that in the *Histories*, Machiavelli maintains his commitment to a constitutional order that effectively channels social conflict between the people and the elites and institutionalizes the power of the former over the latter.

Stuart White explores the extent to which alternative models of CAs (where near randomly selected members of the general public deliberate and make

recommendations on public policy and/or constitutional issues) can help to realize the values of republican democracy (the promotion of deliberation, political equality and resiliency to oligarchy, and active popular sovereignty) in a contemporary political system. White argues that a *replacement model* of CAs, where they entirely supplant elected legislatures, faces the serious challenge of policy-making power being captured by the state bureaucracy and fails to promote active popular sovereignty. If all issues are decided in this way citizens not included in the assembly have no significant opportunity to participate. On the other hand, White argues that a *consultative model* of CAs, where they are set up by legislatures and act in an advisory and non-binding capacity, similarly fails to live up to the values of republican democracy. Here, the significant power assigned to legislatures means that the CA cannot be an effective counter-power to oligarchical influence. White instead defends a *petition-assembly-referendum* model of CAs, where citizens directly establish an assembly through petitions, and this assembly holding independent power to call a referendum. White shows how this model enhances deliberation, by providing a deliberative filter for referendums, increases resiliency to oligarchy by giving citizens an alternative legislative route when legislatures are captured by economic elites; and promotes an active popular sovereign by providing citizens with a direct and horizontal (citizen-to-citizen) method of initiating change. White concludes that the petition-assembly-referendum model of CAs should form part of a wider package of constitutional reforms that can realize the values of republican democracy.

Part III, *Movement and Resistance*, collects historical and contemporary perspectives on republicanism, both as a language and a tool of struggles against oppression.

Guy Aitchison argues that republicans should be committed to natural or moral rights in order to convincingly ground a right to resistance. Aitchison maintains that republican approaches to rights that dismiss natural/moral rights, and instead maintain that the only rights for individuals are those institutionally enforced by the state, are left unable to defend popular resistance to the state. These approaches also fail to appreciate how the language of rights can (and has) played a crucial role in the struggles of the oppressed against arbitrary power. They also reveal an excessively statist bias in the realization and enforcement of rights. In developing this position Aitchison draws extensively on the political thought of the English Levellers. In their struggle with more moderate republicans, these radical republicans of the seventeenth century relied on the idea of natural rights, which was foundational to their understanding of the right to resist arbitrary and despotic government.

Karma Nabulsi's chapter sets out two models of French radical republicanism during the 1830 Revolution: that represented by Filippo Buonarroti and the other by Godefroy Cavaignac. Nabulsi begins her study by contrasting these two revolutionary models with the liberal republicanism of the Marquis de Lafayette, who

was instrumental in installing a constitutional monarchy instead of a republic. She turns to Buonarroti, a seasoned veteran of the first French Revolution, who believed in the key role of organized secret societies for creating the republic. He thought they served as crucial sites for the inculcation of virtue, and a subordination of one's own views for the good of the movement. In contrast, Cavaignac represented the younger generation of revolutionary republicans. Nabulsi shows that while sharing Buonarroti's admiration for the radical nature of the French Revolution, their vision differed from Buonarroti in terms of organization and the virtues. For Cavaignac, the republic could be achieved by building from below, and not by elite revolutionaries alone. For the young generation of French revolutionaries, virtues were practices to be engaged in the struggle for equality, humanity, and liberty. Nabulsi argues that these models provide useful resources for contemporary political theorizing and for understanding republicanism not only as an intellectual body of thought but as a tradition of political mobilization and radical change.

In Part IV, *Socialism and Labour*, we consider the relationship of republicanism to socialism and the republican response to capitalist domination.

In his chapter, Alex Gourevitch takes on one of the central historical (and now neglected) values of the republican tradition: civic virtue. Gourevitch argues that some key criticisms of civic virtue—that it is geared towards the preservation of state institutions and relies on state coercion—can be answered by exploring how the labour republicans of the nineteenth century transformed the concept of civic virtue in their struggle against wage labour and capitalism. Civic virtue meant sculpting workers' habits, needs, and desires, to make them aware of their unjust political and social order and their economic situation. It also entailed building alternative educational institutions (such as an independent labour press) to educate and stimulate workers' capacity for judgement—a form of civic education without state coercion. Labour republicans also sought to overcome the drive towards competition amongst workers by building a culture of solidarity, where workers saw their own good as tied to the universal good of all workers—an idea institutionalized through their self-organization in workingmen's parties, trade unions, and cooperative industries. In these ways, the labour republicans reconfigured civic virtue from a tool to preserve existing state institutions to one that could transform society.

Bruno Leipold investigates the radical republican influence on Marx's conception of the political institutions of socialism, which Marx referred to as the 'social republic'. Leipold argues that this influence can be detected in three institutional strands. First, Leipold establishes how Marx's criticisms of representative government and his embrace of popular delegacy echo Rousseau's famous critique of representation, as well as his less well-known defence of mechanisms that constrain the discretion of representatives, such as imperative mandates, representative recall, and short terms of office. Second, Leipold argues that forerunners of

Marx's criticism of the separation of powers and his advocacy of legislative supremacy over the executive can be found amongst the Anti-Federalists during the American constitutional debates, as well as radical republican contemporaries during the 1848 Revolutions. Third, Leipold shows how Marx's belief that state institutions had to be brought under popular control was inherited from classical ideas in radical republican thought, such as a citizen-militia and the deprofessionalization of public administration. Leipold concludes with the suggestion that the radical republican influence on Marx's politics shows the importance of radical democratic institutions to achieving and maintaining socialism.

In Part V, *Historical Trajectories*, we present two examples of traditions of radical republicanism that have been neglected in the historiography.

Banu Turnaoğlu traces the history of radical republican thought in the Ottoman Empire from the mid-nineteenth century to the foundation of the Turkish Republic. She focuses on the Young Ottomans, a secret society founded in 1865 and modelled on the various Young Europe societies of the nineteenth century. As Turnaoğlu shows, its members were committed to popular sovereignty, the republican trinity of liberty, equality, and fraternity, and the revolutionary overthrow of the sultan's despotic rule. Turnaoğlu draws attention to how they deployed traditional republican ideas (especially drawn from their experience in France), while reinterpreting them to suit the context of the Ottoman Empire. For instance, she explores their discussion of the compatibility of representation with the Islamic principles of consultation and deliberation, and their advocacy of an elected and non-hereditary caliph. Her chapter provides an illustration that republicanism is not an exclusively Western tradition and that our understanding of the tradition is greatly enriched by looking beyond canonized historical examples.

Sudhir Hazareesingh closes the volume with a *longue durée* overview of radical republicanism in France from the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century to the French communists in the twentieth century. Hazareesingh shows how this capacious tradition took its foremost inspiration from Rousseau and was united by its commitment to popular sovereignty and to resisting political and social oppression. This was a vision of human perfectibility, opposition to tyranny, and attachment to universal fraternity. Perhaps most distinctive is the tradition's 'prodigious sense of imagination'. He charts the development of the tradition from the Jacobin Constitution of 1793 to the utopian plans of Saint-Simon and Fourier; from the radical egalitarianism of Philippe Buonarrotti and social republicanism of Louis Blanc, to the fight for women's inclusion in the Republic in the writings of Olympe de Gouges, Flora Tristan, and George Sand. Finally, he traces the anarchists, socialists, and communists who kept the radical and universalistic promise of republicanism alive during the conservatism and imperialism of the Third Republic. Despite its traditional historiographical prominence, French republicanism, especially its radical and revolutionary strand, has been neglected

and even deliberately downplayed in the modern republican revival (especially in political theory). Hazareesingh's account shows the contribution that French radical republicanism has made and can make to modern political thought.

This volume originated at the conference 'Reclaiming Republicanism: Recovering the Tradition's Radical Heritage' convened at the University of Oxford. We would like to express our appreciation and thanks to the Department of Politics and International Relations and to Jesus College for funding the event, as well as thanking all who joined us at the discussions, which continue.

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The front page of *The Red Republican's* 9 November 1850 issue provides the book's cover. This radical Chartist journal brought together democrats, socialists, feminists, refugees, revolutionaries, and internationalists in a concerted endeavour to establish the sovereignty of the people—an inspirational vision for today.