



# Recollections: The French Revolution of 1848 and Its Aftermath

*Alexis de Tocqueville*

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Alexis de Tocqueville's *Souvenirs*—his extraordinarily lucid and trenchant analysis of the 1848 revolution in France—was his most polished literary text. Written immediately after the climax of Tocqueville's political career, and just before Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte's 1851 coup prompted the great theorist of democracy to retire from political life, it was initially conceived as an exercise in candid personal reflection. Despite its bravura passages and stylistic flourishes, however, it was not intended for publication.

In *Recollections: The French Revolution of 1848 and Its Aftermath*, renowned historian Olivier Zunz and award-winning translator Arthur Goldhammer offer an entirely new translation of the author's compelling book. Yielding to pressure from friends, Tocqueville finally approved its publication, although only after those characters portrayed in the work—most, unflatteringly—had died. In 1893, more than three decades after his death, Tocqueville's grandnephew published a censored version, but it was not until 1942 that French editors restored the potentially offensive passages.

Goldhammer's is the first English translation to do justice to Tocqueville's masterpiece of analytical description, stylistic subtlety, vivid social panorama, and incisive critique of political blundering and cowardice. Zunz's introduction and selection of Tocqueville's ancillary speeches, occasional texts, notes, and letters, round out a volume that significantly enhances our understanding of the revolutionary period and Tocqueville's role in it. Here, Zunz highlights the persistent influence of the United States on the life and work of a man, who tirelessly, albeit futilely, promoted the American model of government for the New French Republic.

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