





THE LIBRARY  
OF  
THE UNIVERSITY  
OF CALIFORNIA  
RIVERSIDE







THE FRENCH REVOLUTION  
A POLITICAL HISTORY



A POLITICAL HISTORY

1789—1804

BY

F. . . . .  
PROFESSOR OF LETTERS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PARIS

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF THE THIRD EDITION  
WITH A PREFACE, NOTES, AND HISTORICAL SUMMARY BY  
BERNARD MIALL

IN FOUR VOLUMES

VOL. II. THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC  
1792—1795

LONDON : ADELPHI TERRACE  
LEIPSIC : INSELSTRASSE 20

1910

1945  
4 MS  
1945

*(All rights reserved.)*

# CONTENTS OF THE SECOND VOLUME

	PAGE
CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY . . . . .	II
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.—DUMOURIEZ. . . . .	25
THE REVOLUTIONARY CALENDAR . . . . .	29

## CHAPTER I.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE DETHRONEMENT OF LOUIS XVI.	31
---	----

I. Measures taken by the Legislative Assembly against the royal power.—II. Public opinion in France in July and August, 1792.—III. The Federals.—IV. The Parisian journals and Republicanism.—V. Sectional agitation.—VI. The attitude of the Legislative Assembly.

## CHAPTER II.

THE THRONE FALLS : DEMOCRACY ESTABLISHED. . . . .	68
---	----

I. Louis XVI. is suspended.—II. Organisation of the Executive Power. The Revolutionary Commune.—III. Universal Suffrage.

## CHAPTER III.

	PAGE
THE EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL IDEAS FROM AUGUST 10TH TO SEPTEMBER 22ND . . . . .	79

I. Provincial France subscribes to the Revolution of August 10th.—II. The movement against Louis XVI. and against royalty.—III. The attitude of the Legislative Assembly.—IV. The attitude of the people of Paris.—V. Journals and pamphlets.—VI. Elections to the Convention in Paris.—VII. The Jacobin Club.—VIII. The republican movement in the provinces.—IX. Elections of deputies to the Convention.—X. The republican movement in these elections.—XI. Proposals for taking another King.—XII. Schemes for the organisation of the Republic.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REPUBLIC . . . . .	144
---	-----

I. Abolition of Royalty (September 21, 1792).—II. The establishment of the Republic (September 22, 1792).—III. How the public welcomed the new Government.

## CHAPTER V.

THE CONSTITUTION OF 1793 . . . . .	159
------------------------------------	-----

I. Condorcet's proposal.—II. Public opinion.—III. The debates in the Convention on the proposal of Condorcet.—IV. The proposal of Hérault de Séchelles.—V. Discussion and adoption of de Séchelles' proposal.—VI. General character of the Constitution of 1793.—VII. Adjournment of the Constitution.

## CHAPTER VI.

	PAGE
THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT BEFORE THE 9TH OF <i>THERMIDOR</i> . . . . .	211

I. Definition of the Revolutionary Government.—II. The provisional Executive Council and the Executive Commissions.—III. The National Convention: its organisation and method of operation.—IV. The Committee of General Security. The Committee of General Defence. The Committee of Public Safety.—V. The representatives “on mission.”—VI. The People’s Clubs.—VII. The decree of the 14th of *Frimaire*, year II.—VIII. The Terror. The rule of the Press. The Revolutionary Tribunal. Terrorist laws.—IX. General character of the Revolutionary Government.

## CHAPTER VII.

ROYALISM BEFORE THE 9TH OF <i>THERMIDOR</i> . . . . .	296
---	-----

I. Royalism in France at the outset of the Republic.—  
II. Royalism in the insurgent districts: La Vendée, Lyons, Toulon. Attitude of the Comte de Provence.—  
III. Royalism in the non-insurgent provinces.





**II**

*THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC*

1792—1795



# A CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF EVENTS, JULY, 1792, TO SEPTEMBER, 1793.

BY THE TRANSLATOR

1792

JULY 7. The scene of the "Kiss of Lamourette" (see Vol. I.).

The King confirms the suspension of Petion and Manuel.

Although the King has vetoed the decree which would establish an armed camp in front of Paris, the communes of France are enrolling volunteers and despatching them to Paris. The War Department orders the municipalities to withhold these men, and to turn them back; but in spite of this a certain number are despatched; ostensibly to celebrate the Federation Festival on the 14th, but really to be sent to Soissons or the frontiers. These Federals are in many cases armed and equipped by the local Jacobin Societies.

The King promises to be present at the Champ de Mars on the 14th.

Meanwhile Brunswick is at Coblenz with a large army of Prussians and *émigrés*, preparing to march.

11. The Assembly decrees that France shall be declared to be in danger, as an appeal to the whole nation, invasion being threatened on every side.
13. Petion is re-installed as Mayor.
14. The Champ de Mars is prepared for the Federation Festival. There are tents for Louis and the Assembly (it rained at the previous Festival), and eighty-three Trees of Liberty, one for each department. There are thousands of spectators, but few Federals; the ceremony is a tame affair. The cry of the day, although Louis takes the new oath, is everywhere *Vive Petion!*

Many of the Federals bear petitions demanding the establishment of a National Executive and the suspension of the King.

Since the 5th a battalion of five hundred Marseillais has been marching towards Paris, singing the famous Hymn *La Marseillaise*.

Invasion is more than ever imminent ; the Assembly is already divided, and the executive weak.

JULY 21. Paul Jones, the brilliant naval adventurer, is buried to-day.

The Legislative Committee has reported that there is no ground for impeaching Lafayette ; much to the indignation of the people.

Shops are closed, and the sections march through the streets while the tocsin is rung.

22. *The Country is declared in Danger.* The municipal officers turn out in their insignia ; cannon are fired, bells rung, flags flown ; guards are posted, processions formed ; after the processions tents are erected in the public places of all the sections ; and the municipal officers commence to enrol volunteers. This enrolment continues day after day. The proclamation is made throughout the country. Ten thousand volunteers are on their way to Paris within a few days.

Besides defenders, the country needs a strong executive. As a provisional measure the sections and primary assemblies declare themselves in permanent session, and are made so by decree on the 25th.

25. Brunswick marches from Coblenz, and publishes his famous Manifesto. This invites the French people to rally round Brunswick and the *émigrés* in support of the King, and charges the Assembly to hold all fortified places and cities till Brunswick's army can take them over. All National Guards found in arms will be shot as traitors.

The country still lacking a powerful executive, such Federal Guards as remain in Paris form a permanent committee at the Jacobins ; and the forty-eight sections have formed a Central Committee sitting in the Hôtel de Ville.

26. The Brest Federals arrive.

29. The five hundred Marseillais reach Paris, and in the evening collide with the Grenadiers of Filles-Saint-Thomas.

AUG. 3. As a result of Brunswick's impolitic manifesto, the people and the Jacobins are urgent as to the paramount necessity of dethroning the King. This feeling rapidly grows until it amounts to a national movement. The Girondists see the necessity of suspension at least ; though some would displace Louis in favour of his child. The Girondists fear mob rule ; the Jacobins fear national destruction. The gulf between the *bourgeoisie* and the democrats grows wider ; the former having lost their chance, if ever they had it, of leading the people instead of attempting to check them.

3. The Municipality petitions the Assembly for a decree of

forfeiture. Forty-seven of the sections have agreed to it. Danton requests all passive citizens to take their places in the sectional assemblies.

- AUG. 5. Louis holds his last *levée*. It is proposed to carry him to Rouen, there to rally the royalists about him; but he hangs back at the last moment, not believing the insurrection to be imminent.
8. The Assembly absolves La Fayette. There are riots around the Salle de Manège. The mob is more than ever distrustful of the Assembly, which represents France, not Paris.
9. The dethronement not being yet decreed, the patriots of the sections take counsel together. They declare that unless Louis be dethroned to-day they will at midnight attack the Tuileries. It is decided to dismiss Pétion and to replace the General Council of the Commune by an insurrectionary municipality.

Paris does not go to bed. All the troops the Court feels confidence in are posted about the city. All the bells of the city are rung. By the dawn of the 10th all the "patriots" of Paris are armed and in the streets. The troops are unreliable. Mandat, the commander of the National Guard, who was to defend the Tuileries, has been murdered in the streets. Louis attempts to review the defending troops; they shout *Vive la Nation!* He takes refuge, with the Royal Family, with the Assembly; the reporter's box and three small rooms being assigned to them.

The Swiss Guards at the Tuileries, being pressed, fire; after considerable bloodshed Louis sends them an order to cease firing. They cease; but the besiegers still fire. The Swiss try to escape in various directions, but are cut up. The patriot besiegers have lost thousands. The new Municipality enters the hall of the Assembly and finally demands the decree of dethronement. It is passed unanimously. Louis is removed to the Temple prison.

18. La Fayette leaves his army, which was about to send him to Paris, as he had tried to incite them to oppose the Jacobin mob-rule, the advantages of which, in the dangerous state of the country, he could not see. He escapes to Holland, but is imprisoned for four years.
26. The primary assemblies meet for the Convention elections.
29. News reaches Paris that La Vendée has risen. An uncivilised country of superstitious peasants and petty nobles, the *ancien régime* still obtains there. The insurrection is

chiefly clerical, the people refusing to give up their priests, who have refused to take the civil oath ; but the royalists soon join it, as they do almost every insurrection. The Prussians hold the country around Metz ; Longwy has fallen ; Spain threatens the south, Sardinia the south-east. Enlistment is still hurried on ; but there is a dearth of arms, clothing, and supplies. Danton demands a domiciliary search for arms ; in the course of which many real and suppositious royalists are arrested, and the prisons fill.

SEPT. Brunswick arrives before Verdun with 60,000 troops. Beaurepaire, the General in command of the French, commits suicide, finding that the municipality have determined to offer no resistance. Brunswick occupies Verdun and advances forty miles into France. Dumouriez is at Sedan, defending the Forest of Argonne, a wooded mountain range forty miles in length with but few practicable passes.

Paris is already in deadly fear of treachery and royalist plots. The news of Verdun reaches Paris before the fact. The city is alarmed by tocsin and gunfire. Placards inciting to enlistment are posted. There is a state of panic. The Assembly suggests retiring to Saumur. Danton refuses to listen. They must remain in Paris to intimidate their enemies. "What we need is boldness, and again boldness, and still, always boldness !" Marat suggests as a serious measure the assassination of 200,000 aristocrats. Regarded by some as a criminal lunatic, he is yet to be seriously reckoned with ; he has a way of keeping the dregs of the people up to fever-pitch. The Commune enrolls thousands of volunteers to march at once to the frontiers.

In the afternoon of this same day certain non-juring priests are being driven from another prison to the Abbaye. They are mobbed ; one strikes a man who is trying to prevent him from closing the blinds of the carriage. Next moment the mob tears them from their carriages and massacres them.

From this moment the September Massacres begin ; they last four days. They are the work of three hundred men, savage fanatics or habitual criminals, employed and paid by the Commune. It is hard to fix the responsibility upon any one person or persons ; but there must have been premeditation, and Marat and Robespierre were probably more guilty than any. A so-called impromptu Court is formed in the Abbaye prison ; the prisoners are brought

forward ; the great majority accused of royalism are "convicted," thrust from the prison gates, and cut down in the street. The same process is repeated in all the seven prisons of Paris ; even the common criminals of Bicêtre and the Salpêtrière do not escape. The Princess de Lamballe is among those killed and mutilated. It is said that the dead number 1,089.

Roland attempts to stop the killing in vain. The National Guards seem loth to interfere ; some, indeed, assist. Petion is powerless ; the mob is savagely frightened and out of hand. The Commune pays the butchers "for preserving the healthfulness of the air in the prisons," and also pays those "presiding over these dangerous operations." The dead are carted away in heaps and are buried in lime.

On the 3rd Panis, Sergent, Marat, and others publish from the Hôtel de Ville a manifesto addressed to the municipalities of France, inciting them to imitate the prison massacres of Paris. The suggestion is ignored. But a number of prisoners being brought from Orléans to Paris, there to be tried, are butchered in the streets by the people of Versailles.

Meanwhile Dumouriez has blocked the passes of the Argonne and holds Brunswick in check.

SEPT. 20. Finally the Prussians take the hills above Sainte-Menehould, near the mill of Valmy ; the French take up a position across the valley, with eighteen pieces of artillery. The French are successful after a long day's fight. This is the famous *cannonade of Valmy*.

21. On the 21st the Convention is constituted. It is decreed that the corner-stone of the Constitution is the sovereignty of the people ; and that the Constitution must be subjected to the sanction of the people ; that the taxes shall be continued until the new order of things is established ; that property shall be considered sacred ; that royalty shall be abolished, and France constituted a republic.

- Brunswick is in retreat. Thionville, besieged, holds out.
22. An Executive Council of Ministers is created, and the whole administration of the country is rapidly "purged" of royalists. A Committee of Constitution is created ; universal suffrage is to be the basis of the Constitution.

The Convention originally supposed its duty to be simply to create a Constitution, and then to dissolve. But from the first there are two great parties : the philosophical,

theoretical, cultured party, the Girondins ; well-meaning and honest men, but yielding stiffly to the expediency and opportunism demanded by the times, and inclined, indeed anxious, to exclude the unthinking masses from their calculations ; and the Mountain, the Jacobins and demagogues, with some honest but sternly practical men among them ; who see the paramount importance of national defence, and must therefore gain the confidence and interest of the people, at the cost of being overpowered by them ; a party consisting largely of men of the people, and therefore to be swayed by demagogues ; a party finally to be mastered by fear, vengeance, and the ambition of Robespierre.

The September Massacres are mentioned in the Convention. Law-abiding deputies would like to see the instigators brought to justice. In vain ; the whole Mountain would suffer ; the Convention is overawed by the Commune.

This arouses the just indignation of the Girondists, The representatives of the French people must not be the slaves of the self-appointed rulers of the Parisian mob. The Convention must have might as well as right ; it must have a National Guard from all eighty-three departments

SEPT. 25. A decree to this effect is passed. The Guards once enlisted, the massacres shall be looked into. Here is an apple of discord ! The decree is repealed, passed again, partly executed, repealed again ; the scheme fails after dragging along for seven months.

The Convention fears a dictator, fears anarchy ; suspects and fears Robespierre ; denounces Marat's *Journal* ; a decree of accusation against Marat is nearly passed.

Now there is danger of war with England. In the north, Dumouriez more than holds his own. But the War Department, under Pache, is corrupt ; the army is ill-supplied.

OCT. Grain becomes scarce, and the populace consequently insubordinate ; if they are hungry, the Convention should stop the famine. The most important question of all—the basic cause, with the feudal system, of the Revolution—the better cultivation of the soil of France—has never been faced, never properly perceived by the Assemblies, who think to bring about the millennium by decree. There are grain riots. Pétion, re-elected Mayor, declines to act. A pound of bread costs nearly half a day's wages. No one thinks of Government supervision of crops to prevent future



dearth. Santerre suggests the use of potatoes—which, however, have to be grown—and the hanging of dogs, as though dogs lived on bread!—as a serious measure of relief. Free-trade is the panacea of some—in time of war and general distress;—a maximum price of grain has to be fixed; but there is not enough irrespective of price. Finally bread in Paris is so scarce that it is sold only twice a day to holders of municipal tickets. This question of bread — indeed the whole economic question, which originally was *the* question—is never practically tackled; and the war continually drains the soil of its cultivators, ensuring further trouble in the future.

The *Trial of Charles the First* is everywhere being sold; a symptom of the state of the public mind.

Robespierre is ably accused by Louvet of plotting to become dictator. The anger of the Convention is aroused; but he demands a week to reply in. His defence is more wordy than precise; but the matter drops.

Nov. Dumouriez defeats the Austrians at Jemappes, and is master of the Low Countries. Young Orléans distinguishes himself. Jacobins and commissaries follow Dumouriez, melting church plate and settling the country.

On the 6th a report is read to the Convention on the crimes of Louis XVI. It is decided that Louis is not inviolable, and may be tried. The Girondists shrink from regicide; the Jacobins know their own mind. The Girondists have made the mistake that Louis himself made, and will suffer his fate; instead of leading the Revolution they seek to check it; but it cannot be checked.

DEC. 11. Louis comes to trial before the Convention. Questions are asked, 57 in number; 162 documents read. Louis meets most of the questions with total denial.

26. Desèze, Louis' counsel, reads his defence.

The Girondists are anxious to be just; also to give judgment on a king with due ceremony and solemnity. They debate interminably, and exasperate the Jacobins by their delay.

### 1793

JAN. Dumouriez comes to Paris. He is suspected in some quarters of royalism. He complains of Pache; has come to prepare for the spring campaign.

The Convention wastes weeks in theorising over the matter of the King's trial.

- JAN. 15. The fate of Louis is at last put to the vote. He is unanimously found guilty. Those that might have voted otherwise dare not. Shall the question be referred to the people? This would favour revolutionary outbreaks; perhaps civil war. It is settled by vote that there shall be no appeal to the people. During the trial the galleries are full of spectators, many of them fashionably dressed women; refreshments are handed round; outside the Assembly betting is universal.
- 16-17. The question of Louis' punishment is put to the vote. The voting lasts two days, each vote, as a general thing, being accompanied by a speech, short or long. The result is a majority of fifty-three votes for *Death*.
- Louis' counsel asks for delay, and an appeal to the people. The appeal is refused; but delay may be put to the vote.
20. The question of delay is put to the vote. The majority against it is seventy. Louis is to die within twenty-four hours. Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau, who voted for death, is stabbed by an ex-Guardsman. This terrifies the Convention, which foresees a royalist plot and perhaps a massacre; there is a rumour that the Comte d'Artois is in town.
21. After a long and affecting farewell to his family, Louis receives the Sacrament and is led to the scaffold. He commences a speech; but his voice is drowned by the drums of the National Guard. Six executioners seize him and bind him to the plank. There are cries of *Vive la République* as the head is shown. Kerchiefs and pike-points are dipped in his blood; the crowd disperses and the usual Parisian day begins.
22. Roland resigns.
24. Saint-Fargeau is buried in the Pantheon. It is feared at this time that Dumouriez is unsound; that he would willingly see young Orléans king.
- War is declared by England and by Spain.
- FEBRUARY. The mob, thanks largely to the Jacobins, is now unchained and beginning to feel its power. It is hungry; it demands not a government that shall strengthen the economic basis of the country and be given a fair trial, but immediate bread. Crowds—sometimes of women—rush to the Convention and petition for bread; sometimes riotous and threatening.
25. On the 25th there is a notable riot of women. There is a sale of sugar this day, which, being unexpected, is for some reason regarded as sinister, and probably the work of Pitt.

About this time the word *Federalist*, bandied about on illiterate lips, becomes a mysterious term of reproach; equivalent finally to *traitor*. The Girondists, remembering that they represent France, and not the Parisian mob, wish to see good departmental governments. The Jacobins consider this policy detrimental to the national unity, inconsistent with the strong national executive essential to successful national defence. The two parties begin to diverge more and more seriously. Danton tries to keep the peace; the safety of France must come first with all; it is no time for party strife; but the Mountain will not be reconciled.

Lyons, a town of moderate sympathies, is all but in revolt. All the southern cities are disturbed, and angry at being dragooned by Paris and the Jacobins. National representation has become a dead letter.

Dumouriez attempts Holland and is badly beaten. Metz is besieged; Spain, which supports the Bourbons, is advancing. The insurrection in La Vendée is now a civil war.

MARCH. Each section of Paris sends two commissaries into the departments for recruiting purposes. Eighty other commissaries follow them. The suggestion of a camp of 80,000 volunteers before Paris is again raised. The black flag of the Native Land in Danger is flown once more. Paris is hysterical; sees plots in every meeting, hears secret signals in every sound.

The section of Mauconseil demands that Brissot, Vergniaud, and twenty other Girondist deputies shall be arrested. It is sharply rebuked.

(It is significant of the public intelligence that although the list is always altering—and although some of the deputies accused will finally escape—yet the expulsion of *twenty-two* will always be demanded; twenty-one will ultimately be tried.)

18. Dumouriez<sup>1</sup> is defeated at Neerwinden, and rapidly retreats. He speaks of the "murder of the King." Danton and Lacroix hasten to the frontier as commissioners; Danton returns suspicious of Dumouriez.

The Terror now begins in earnest.

Revolutionary Committees for the arrest of suspects are formed in every one of the 44,000 communes of France.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Biographical Note, p. 25.

Every man must have his name painted on his door, and a card of citizenship in his possession.

All *émigrés* are declared legally dead, their property falling to the State; but even if actually dead they are declared legally alive in so far as the State is to inherit all legacies falling due to them for the space of fifty years.

A new Extraordinary—afterwards the Revolutionary—Tribunal is formed to deal with suspects. The notorious Fouquier-Tinville is Procurator-General. Committees of Defence and of General Security are experimented with; the former becomes the Committee of Public Safety, and reduces the Ministers to the status of clerks. Taxes are imposed on a sliding scale—a measure that should have been taken in 1789. Requisitions are made, and compulsory loans are raised to continue the war.

Meanwhile Dumouriez' army is full of suspicion and confusion. Dumouriez is strangely independent in manner for a good republican. He is thought to meditate a *coup d'état* for his own benefit.

- APRIL 2. The Minister of War and three deputies arrive at Dumouriez' headquarters; they invite him to come to Paris, to explain a few matters at the bar of the Convention. No; he cannot, will not come just then. He is ordered under arrest; he has the deputation ejected, and sends them into the Austrian lines; they are confined in an Austrian prison.
3. Dumouriez issues a Proclamation, and, chased by Jacobin troops, escapes to the Austrian lines. Young Orléans escapes to Switzerland; to Madame Genlis and his sister; one day to re-appear as King Louis-Philippe. The Army is left in chaos; but other generals arrive and the campaign is continued.
6. Orléans the elder is arrested and examined, and imprisoned in the Château d'If, near Marseilles.
12. Petion laments the anarchy invading the Convention. Marat is accused and sent before the Revolutionary Tribunal.
24. Marat is acquitted; largely from fear of his ultra-Jacobin followers.

Volunteers, before leaving Paris, demand the arrest of the twenty-two Girondists. This demand is now a parrot-cry. Constantly the sections defile through the hall, demanding their expulsion; coming finally every day; deputations of women enter.

- MAY 10. The Convention moves into its new hall in the Tuileries.

Calvados, Bordeaux, Marseilles, and the Gironde seem ready to rise if the Girondists be arrested.

The Central Committee of the Sections now sits in the archiepiscopal palace.

The Girondists fear assassination ; with some reason. Without reason, they fear that Pitt is at work.

Desmoulins suffers from the delusion that the rising he provoked in July, 1789, was engineered by Pitt.

The Commune comes to the Convention demanding the expulsion of the twenty-two, and asks, *Can you save France or must we ?*

Paris fears to attack the Girondists lest the south and west should rise against her. Meanwhile the Girondists meet secretly at night.

MAY 31. As the city is seen to be in a state of effervescence, Pache and the municipality are sent for by the Convention, and an explanation is required. Pache states that early that morning, the municipality being still in session, ninety-six persons calling themselves Plenipotentiary Commissioners from the sections entered the Hôtel de Ville, and, as members of the Sovereign People in Insurrection, dismissed and then re-created the municipality, adding themselves thereto, and thus constituting an Insurrectionary Municipality.

The Convention protests against this usurpation of power, and talks of breaking the new body. But guns are heard ; the tocsin sounds ; the Convention is surrounded by Paris in arms ; section after section passes through the hall, demanding the expulsion of the twenty-two and the dismissal of the Commission of Twelve, who were drawn from the Girondists. The Commission resigns.

JUNE 1. At night the alarum sounds again. Armed bodies take their places about the Tuileries with provisions for the night. The Girondists remain at home.

2. The Convention assembles ; the gates of Paris are shut ; all Paris is in insurrection. What with National Guards and Volunteers who have not yet been sent to the frontiers, there are 100,000 armed men in the streets. They represent, not Paris alone, but the Jacobin element of all France ; the unlettered, suspicious democracy. Provision carts and camp fires are everywhere ; cannons are levelled against the Tuileries. The Insurrectionary Municipality is supreme.

Deputation after deputation tramps into the hall, demanding the expulsion of the twenty-two and the

twelve. It is suggested that the twenty-two will perhaps resign. The majority refuse. The galleries threaten. All day the war of words is waged. In the evening the Convention, resenting compulsion, resolves to go forth in a body to discover whether it is free. But the troops level arms against them; they can nowhere find egress. Marat, with 100 patriots, orders them back to the hall. They retire; they vote on the fate of the twenty-two. The twenty-two (and also the twelve) are voted to be kept under arrest in their own houses.

These twenty-two comprise the flower of the Girondists; the flower of Revolutionary France; all that is best, most selfless, most human in French politics.

This insurrection, marking the fall of the party from power, leaves the Jacobins, a headless, tormented mob, at the head of affairs; wrestled with by Danton, who seeks to lead them for the good of France; finally captured by Robespierre and made the instrument of his ambitions. Of the proscribed deputies a few wait in their houses; others escape, assembling afterwards at Caen. There they seek to awaken the departments, and to urge them to destroy the power of the democracy, whose rule they regard as anarchy. Seventy-two departments, or rather the heads of seventy-two departments, declare in their favour. They gather volunteers; they finally have an army and intend civil war. The Mountain sends commissaries all over France; those sent to Caen are imprisoned.

- JUNE 13. Charlotte Corday, having travelled from Caen to Paris, kills Marat, in the hope of serving the Girondists; exaggerating his power and putting too much faith in the comparative humanity of his colleagues; also forgetting that the Convention did not surrender the Girondists until terrorised by the people.
14. The Girondists at Lyons, where there is a strong Girondist party in the city, guillotine Chalier, the Jacobin leader. Marseilles is imprisoning "patriots." Most of the southern cities are involved in the Girondist movement.

In Paris deputations are daily demanding a Constitution.

Wimpfen, the Girondists' General at Caen, sees no hope save in joining issue with the royalists. The Girondists recoil from the suggestion with horror. The forces of the Mountain and the Gironde meet near Vernon, and mutually retreat. The Girondist army melts away; the national troops enter Caen without excesses. The Girondist

deputies, disguised as national volunteers, escape to the south, and meet with various fates. The Calvados insurrection has failed, not having sought help of clericals or royalists.

Metz falls ; the defenders are bound not to take part in defensive operations for a year. Valenciennes falls, and Condé.

AUG. 10. Chaumette's deputation gets its Constitution ; one put together in eight days ; not for use, but to quiet the constitutionalists. It is accepted by the 44,000 communes. On the 10th there is a new Feast of Pikes to celebrate the occasion. The day is passed in processions and spectacles, and the unveiling of large temporary statues and puerile symbolical groups.

The Convention has now carried out its original mandate.

Deputations still visit the Convention to demand that the Constitution be put in execution. Finally the Committee of Public Safety declares that France is revolutionary and must be so till peace.

In La Vendée, Rossignol and Santerre are held at bay. The defenders of Metz are sent against the rebels, and are cut to pieces. Toulon, the better to hold out, has called in the English ; Admiral Hood is preparing to stand a long siege. The Spaniards threaten the south. In these desperate circumstances the Committees of Public Safety and of General Security increase their powers. The 44,000 communes are called upon to produce more volunteers. In Paris the sections meet twice weekly, and poor men are paid 40 sous to attend.

23. On a report of the Committee of Public Safety a *General Requisition* is declared. "All France, and all she has of men and resources, is put under requisition. . . . The Republic is one vast besieged city." All able-bodied men are enlisted in the army or transport or set to work at making guns, powder, shot, or providing supplies ; women work at tents, tilts, clothes, &c., old men help in the work of enlistment.

In the precincts of the Luxembourg and the Tuileries 250 forges are set up for the manufacture of gun-barrels.

SEPT. 3. Amar reads before the Convention a report against the twenty-two Girondists and proclaims as traitors the twenty fugitive deputies. He then reads the names of seventy-three Girondist deputies who signed protests on June 6th and 19th against the expulsion of the twenty-two and moves that they shall be arrested. They are arrested, and

## 24 CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF EVENTS

sent to the various prisons ; but Robespierre, finding them of use as a counterpoise to the Mountain, finally obtains their deliverance.

SEPT. 17. All sections are ordered to arrest suspects and are told what suspects are. All France is thrown into an insane state of suspicion. No one feels safe ; no one is safe. If not a suspect, one may be *suspect of being suspect*. A Revolutionary Army of 6,000 is to wander through France helping the communes to "clean up." The guillotine is now in daily use.



## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

BY THE TRANSLATOR

**Dumouriez**, as the general who undoubtedly saved France from invasion, but who finally, exasperated with the Republic, sought to restore the Constitution and the Monarchy, is a remarkable figure in republican history. Born at Cambrai in 1739 (Michelet says in 1742), of Provençal extraction, the son of a commissary in the army, he was, as a boy, a serious student and no inconsiderable scholar. Originally weakly, ambition and a strong will enabled him to inure his body to military hardships; and, entering the cavalry, he served in the Seven Years' War, distinguishing himself by extraordinary personal gallantry and efficiency. An unhappy love-affair, interrupted by his father, led to attempted suicide. Coming to the notice of Favier, an agent of the Duc de Choiseul, he was employed in military and diplomatic missions, mostly of a secret or dangerous kind. As quartermaster-general of the French army in Corsica (under Louis XV) he distinguished himself as usual, and captured Paoli's library. Returning to Paris, he had considerable social success, but, offending Du Barry, was sent on a secret diplomatic mission to Poland, where he played a leading part in holding off Souvaroff and in promoting the insurrection against Stanislas. When the insurrection failed through a general mutual betrayal of the Poles, Dumouriez returned in disgust to Paris. To curry favour with Russia, Louis and d'Argenson sent him to the Bastille, and afterwards to Caen, where he found, in a convent, his first love, his cousin; they were married, and he was appointed commandant of Cherbourg. Here he spent fifteen years of unhappy marriage with a pietistic wife.

At the approach of the Revolution he turned his attention to the probable course of politics. He had a lack of faith in the democracy, and saw hope rather in a change of dynasty and a Constitution. The Army being deprived of officers by emigration, he was at last promoted.

As a soldier of the Revolution he was non-committal; immensely popular with his troops, he had no difficulty in preserving discipline.

A master of intrigue, he entered on his new sphere of action as upon a gigantic adventure. At the age of fifty, never having attained the position his abilities undoubtedly deserved, he was impatiently ambitious, and saw in himself the necessary leader of the Revolutionary Army of defence. A keenly intellectual man of action, idolised by his men, trained in statecraft as well as in tactics, a dashing yet greatly able soldier, it is impossible to guess to what heights he might have risen under less democratic employers than the Jacobin Convention.

Appointed commandant at Nantes in 1790, he attached himself to the Girondists, though formerly he had been a Jacobin; made Minister of Foreign Affairs, he afterwards resigned that post to take service on the frontiers; having just become intimate with Louis, whom he liked and respected, he agreed, the better to serve him, to be careful to appear in public as an ardent constitutionalist; and in fact he regarded the Constitution as Louis' only possible safeguard.

He then, out of policy, made overtures to the Jacobins, and donned the red bonnet in their tribune; the Jacobins received him with enthusiasm, and do not seem to have suspected him until September, 1792.

After his brilliant defence of the Argonne he occupied Belgium. Upon the democratic organisation of Belgium by the Jacobins, Dumouriez began to have differences with the latter. The Jacobin rule consisted largely of pillage. Dumouriez, for reasons of personal ambition and secret policy, protested against this alienation of the Flemings, and went to Paris to complain of such impolitic conduct. Once having quarrelled with the Jacobins, he began openly to show his hand; whether from a genuine dislike of duplicity or an overweening confidence in his popularity it is hard to say. He conceived the idea of entering Holland by the help of the Dutch republicans, just as in Belgium he had looked for the assistance of the Brabanter patriots; of overturning the Government, delivering Belgium from the Jacobin tyranny, uniting the two countries with himself as Protector, gaining over his own army to his ultimate purpose, and then, with his new State as refuge and headquarters, he would march upon Paris, dissolve the Convention, destroy the Jacobin societies, revive the Constitution of 1791, and give France a king; probably the Duc de Chartres; a programme laudable if successful, unpardonable if not.

He entered Holland with only 20,000 troops, and took Breda and Gertruydenberg; but then received orders from the executive to take immediate command in Belgium, the army of the Right having met with the most serious reverses. He had no choice but to obey.

The Jacobins, some of whom suspected Dumouriez, put down these defeats after brilliant victories to treachery, and began a wild series of denunciations, finally ending in the arrest of the Girondists. Dumou-

riez, trying to stem the Austrians, and finding his army in want of all kinds of supplies, sent the Convention a letter in which he complained bitterly of the Jacobins; who in turn denounced him. At Neerwinden he was defeated, and evacuated Belgium. Between the Austrians and the Jacobins he decided to treat with the former. He arranged with the Austrians to march on Paris and restore the monarchy. He took little pains to conceal his plans. To a Jacobin deputation sent to make sure of his defection he expressed himself with perfect candour. "The Convention is a body of 735 tyrants. I will not suffer it to shed blood with its Revolutionary Tribunal. . . . I had faith in the Republic for three days. . . . I have deplored the successes I have won in so evil a cause. . . . There is only one way to save France—the Constitution of 1791 and a king. . . . My army will follow me." Having promised to give up to the Austrians, as a guarantee, various frontier fortresses, he attempted to reduce them; but failed. This failure was fatal.

The Convention promptly despatched the Minister of War and three other deputies, to bring him to Paris or arrest him. He received them at the head of his staff. He refused to enter Paris. "Tigers want my head; they shall not have it." Cannes, one of the deputies, declared him arrested. Dumouriez promptly had the commissioners arrested by German hussars, and sent them to the Austrians as hostages.

He now tried once more to reduce Condé; in vain. He took the road with the Duc de Chartres, Colonel Thouvenet, Montjoie, some *aides-de-camp*, eight hussars, and thirty horses. Near Condé an *aide-de-camp* announced the revolt of the garrison; the troops were beginning to feel themselves betrayed; they were determined to hold Condé against all enemies of the Convention. Dumouriez dismounted; three battalions of volunteers were passing at the time, marching on Condé of their own accord. Dumouriez, not having given them orders, halted them. He then retired to a neighbouring cottage to write an order. Hearing a commotion on the road, he turned back. The volunteers, scenting treason, threatened to fire upon him. Dumouriez leaped on his horse and fled across country, followed by his escort. At a canal several were killed. The party, including two young girls, made for Breuille; the girls, who knew the ferry, got them across the Scheldt and out of fire. Dumouriez, exhausted, found refuge in a small château. In the evening, General Mack arrived from the Austrian lines. News came to the effect that Dumouriez' troops were stirred up in his favour. Dumouriez returned to the camp with an escort of fifty dragoons. Having gained control of some part of his army, he advanced to Ramigies, and again prepared to surprise Condé.

But in the meantime his camp broke up, whole divisions deserting him; indignant at having been used in his plots—or perhaps at last alarmed. Then Dumouriez knew that all was lost. With Thouvenet,

the Duc de Chartres, Montjoie, Barrois, de Fernig and the two de Fernig girls, he returned to Tournay, where Clairfayt received him. Eight hundred of his troops accompanied him rather than part with their idol.

Henceforth he fell on evil days ; almost ignored by the Austrians ; finally pensioned in England. He offered his sword in vain to many causes ; and spent his time in writing memoirs and military works. He died, some say, in London ; some at Turville Park, near Henley, afterwards Lord Lyndhurst's house.

## REVOLUTIONARY CALENDAR

The Revolutionary Calendar dated from September 22, 1792, but came into actual use on October 5, 1792.

The year began in September. There were four seasons, each of three months ; thirty days in each month, divided into decades of ten days each. Each tenth day was called a *Décadi*; and was a day of rest. The five extra days were made festivals, and were called the *Sans-culottides*: the festivals of Genius, Labour, Actions, Rewards, and Opinion. Every fourth year was a sixth day, the festival of the Revolution.

The months were—Autumn : Vendémiaire, Brumaire, Frimaire ; the months of Wine, Mist, and Frost ; Winter : Nivôse, Pluviôse, Ventôse ; months of Snow, Rain, and Wind ; Spring : Germinal, Floréal, and Prairial ; months of Budding, Flowering, and Meadows ; Summer : Messidor, Thermidor, Fructidor ; months of Reaping, Heat, and Fruit.

It will be observed that, as a mnemonic aid, all the months of the same season have the same termination.

This Calendar continued in use for twelve years.—[TRANS.]



## CHAPTER I

### PREPARATIONS FOR THE DETHRONEMENT OF LOUIS XVI

I. Measures taken by the Legislative Assembly against the royal power.—II. Public opinion in France in July and August, 1792.—III. The Federals.—IV. The Parisian journals and Republicanism.—V. Sectional agitation.—VI. The attitude of the Legislative Assembly.

#### I.

AT the very time when the Legislative Assembly was declaring itself to be monarchical, it found itself drawn, by the necessity of the situation, by the fact of the war, and by the existence of the latent treason of the King, into measures of defence against the King, which had no other object than that of saving a threatened country ; measures which, in reality, deprived the royal power of something of its prestige and authority, and thus prepared the way for the downfall of the throne. The Assembly felt itself forced to treat as an enemy, one who must before all else be disarmed, the King whom it had sworn to maintain ; whom, in fact, it wished to maintain.

We have seen that the Assembly disbanded the King's guard, and that the King sanctioned the decree.

Having deprived the King of the means of defence against a popular insurrection, the Assembly had sought to create for itself a military force whose function should be to annul the projects of the King and

the Court. This camp of 20,000 men, whose establishment under the walls of Paris the Assembly had decreed on June 8th, was to be composed of volunteers chosen from all parts of France ; of Federals who would at first stay in Paris, there to celebrate the festival of July 14th, and would then remain in the neighbourhood of the capital, so that they would enter it at need, in order to suppress the royalist conspirators. They would have constituted not only a kind of permanent federation, but a new body representative of the nation ; more numerous than the legal body, and more authoritative, since it would have been newly elected by a direct suffrage ; and more powerful, since it would have been representative of the nation in arms : an elective army.

The King refused his sanction. But the Assembly, while disowning the manifestation of June 20th, which was partly provoked by this refusal, nevertheless found a means of imposing this " armed camp " on the King, although it was conceived as a defence against him. The communes had already sent their volunteers marching to Paris, although the decree concerning the camp had not been sanctioned, and the Minister of the Interior had given orders to stop them. On July 2nd it was decreed

" that the citizen National Guards whom love of the Constitution and of liberty have decided to present themselves in Paris, from there to be transferred either to the reserve intended to cover the capital, or to the armies intrusted with the defence of the frontiers, shall at the moment of their arrival repair to the Municipality of Paris, in order there to inscribe their names, the names of their departments and municipalities, and particulars of the papers with which they are provided."

Thus not only were the Federals allowed to come to Paris in despite of the royal veto : they were almost invited to come. To be sure, July 18th was decided



on as the term of their stay in the capital, and it was decided that they should then proceed to Soissons. But they were to be present at the "Federation oath" of July 14th<sup>1</sup> and, to speak plainly, the Assembly was summoning to Paris an army of patriots whose feeling with regard to Louis XVI was obviously characterised by the very fact that they set out illegally, and against the King's wishes. The King, alarmed, gave his sanction to the decree.

So here we have the throne deprived of its army of defence by the decrees of the Assembly itself, and exposed to the onslaught of an army of attack.

The King had confirmed the suspension of Petion and Manuel pronounced by the Department on July 13th. The Assembly removed this suspension by decree, and Louis sanctioned the decree, thus annulling an act of his own royal authority. This anti-republican Assembly disregarded the royal power, and on occasion governed by itself, as though a republic already existed.

A still graver measure, and one more dangerous to the throne, was the proclamation that the country was in danger, in which we must see not merely fine words and impressive gestures, but a series of positive measures (those of July 5th, 11th, and 20th), which modified the entire attitude of the nation. The departments, districts, and municipalities were declared in permanent session. All citizens capable of bearing arms were put "in a state of permanent activity." Every citizen, under pain of imprisonment, had to declare his arms and ammunition to the municipality; they were thereupon requisitioned. There was a great levy of

<sup>1</sup> On the 7th it was decreed that the expenses of the Federation should be defrayed by the nation. On the 12th another decree was passed regulating the ceremonial of the festival. But the Assembly did not fix on any method of electing the Federals; they were elected spontaneously, without any uniform method.

volunteers ; the National Guards, assembled in the chief town of the district, selected those to be forwarded. Every man was forced to carry the tricolour cockade. All France was in movement, even to the depths of the rural population. Every peasant left his plough in order to go to the *mairie*, there to see with his own eyes that the country was in danger, and to return with a cockade in his hat. In July, 1789, at the time of the great panic, the nation had arisen, shuddering, and had effected the municipal revolution. Since then it had been resting, feeling sure of its conquest. This time, being attacked, it rose anew, but with a virile confidence, a new alacrity. Where is the peasant who, three years earlier, used to hide in the caves or forests like an escaped slave? He is now a free man, who feels himself a soldier, and he will not lay down his arms until he has conquered Europe.

The proclamation that the country was in danger also taught the people, indirectly, that the King had failed in his mission as defender of France, or that he had deserted his post. The French saw that in this serious crisis they could not, must not count on any but themselves. France would save herself, since the King had been unable to save her !<sup>1</sup> What a lesson in republicanism !

Especially among the citizens of the departments did this proclamation cause a change of attitude and of feeling. The citizens of Paris were assuredly affected by the theatrical pomp which accompanied the declaration. But for the Parisians the country had been in danger for a long time ; they had been for a long time under arms. The Assembly, by the decree of July 25th, granted the permanence of the sections, which allowed the more ardent patriots to organise themselves against the treasons of the executive power.

<sup>1</sup> See how Robespierre, in his speech at the Jacobins on July 11th, comments upon this declaration (*La Société des Jacobins*, iv. 89.)

These are the principal measures which the Legislative Assembly took against the royal power, which it nevertheless intended to maintain as the keystone of the constitutional edifice, and was now forced to weaken in the interests of the national defence. For the same reason, and under the stress of the same necessities, the Assembly was also sapping, by expedients and concessions, the property-owners' suffrage. Thus on August 1st it authorised the municipalities to distribute pikes to all citizens as yet unarmed; even to passive citizens, with the sole exception of vagabonds or notoriously "bad subjects." On the 3rd—

"considering that it is only just, as well as to the interest of the State, to surround the profession of those who hazard their days in the maintenance of the liberty of their country with all the advantages that the gratitude of the French people can promise; considering that, in the system of political equality, the full exercise of civic rights is the most precious of possessions, and wishing, finally, that honest poverty and the habitude of social virtues may at every step find their reward in a very useful career"—

the Assembly decrees—

"that all Frenchmen, whether in the battalions of national volunteers, or in the regiments of the line, the national gendarmerie, the legions, the free companies, or in any other corps that may be formed, who shall have taken part in the war of liberty, and shall have remained with the colours and in active military service until the conclusion of peace, from the commencement of the present campaign, and all Frenchmen who have received wounds in the service which shall make it impossible for them to continue in it, shall enjoy, if twenty-five years of age, or upon attaining that age, the rights of active citizens, as if they had served for sixteen years, in conformity with the decree passed by the National Constituent Assembly."<sup>1</sup>

As the same favour was accorded "to the lay National Guards who shall have been required and employed in the cities in a state of war and in the camps," and

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. i. p. 188.

as, on the other hand, all Frenchmen were incited to enrol themselves by the very proclamation that the country was in danger, the Assembly was really decreeing universal suffrage for the future, as the price of the war of liberty.

In this manner the monarchical and middle-class Assembly was preparing, under the stress of the necessities of national defence, for the downfall of the monarchy and the *bourgeoisie*, and the above are the most essential of the legislative decrees which facilitated the insurrection of August 10th, and the advent of democracy and the Republic.

## II.

The Assembly would not have legislated in a direction contrary to its mandate and its instincts if it had not been impelled by a current of opinion which was not merely Parisian, but national, or rather communal.

The idea, or rather the feeling, that the King was betraying his people, and that the country could only be saved by making it impossible for him to do so any longer, either by legal or by revolutionary means, was precisely the principle of the insurrection of August 10, 1792, which was rather patriotic than republican. But this insurrection was not, if we consider it from the outset, exclusively the doing of the citizens of the capital, as had been that of July 14, 1789, and that of October 5th and 6th of the same year. A large proportion of the citizens of the departments prepared the way for it by words and actions which were not inspired by Paris, and which were sometimes even in advance of Parisian opinion. It was in this respect that the revolution of August 10th was national.

I have said that it was above all communal. There were at this time two movements in France : the one departmental, the other communal. The departmental administrations, artificial bodies born of the ideas of legislators, were by no means imbued with the democratic spirit of the Revolution, nor with the spirit of national unification which characterised the great movement of July and August, 1789. These administrations supported the *bourgeois* system ; they were "moderantist," to use a word of later origin. On the other hand, although monarchical, and zealously monarchical (believing that without the monarchy the *bourgeois régime* would be impossible), they were animated with a kind of centrifugal spirit of federalism. The departments were to form so many republics, directed by a *bourgeois* aristocracy, under the feeble sceptre of a king in tutelage ; that, it would seem, was their ideal. The cities, unlike the departments, were full of democratic tendencies ; tendencies toward national unification. Although their municipalities were the issue of a system of qualified suffrage, the municipal spirit of July, 1789, which was a democratic spirit, lived on in the towns, and was excited by the Jacobin clubs ; which, *bourgeois* at the outset, became gradually more and more democratic. It was in the communes that the patriotic spirit of defiance against Louis XVI had its birth. And it was the communes that rose, if not against royalty, at least against the King.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, while the greater number of the departments were protesting, in vehement addresses, against the outrage offered to the royal majesty by the Parisian demonstrations of June 20th, the cities in great measure

<sup>1</sup> Contemporary writers felt very strongly the sense of these different tendencies of the departments and the communes. Thus Girardin, at the tribune of the Legislative Assembly (July 12, 1792), spoke of the "royalist Directories" and the "republican Communes." (*Moniteur*, xiii. 128).

manifested their indignation against the treason or the failure of the King; sometimes by proclamations issuing from their municipalities, often by proclamations emanating from the clubs, and often also by proclamations issued by citizens who assembled for the occasion.<sup>1</sup>

Addresses hostile to Louis (I am speaking of addresses anterior to August 10th, or written after the 10th but before the news of suspension would have been received) were referred by the Legislative Assembly to its Extraordinary Commission, and I have been able to read them in the National Archives among the papers of this Commission.<sup>2</sup> They come from communes situated in the following departments: Ain, Aube, Aude, Ariège, Bouches-du-Rhône, Calvados, Côte-d'Or, Dordogne, Eure, Finistère, Gard, Haute-Garonne, Gers, Gironde, Hérault, Jura, Maine-et-Loire, Meuse, Orne, Haute-Saône. This enumeration shows that discontent and defiance of Louis were first of all expressed by the east and south of France, while the north, the west, and the centre remained attached to the person of the King and the cause of royalty until a later date.

<sup>1</sup> There were, however, some exceptions. Thus, on June 24, 1792, the active citizens of the city of Rouen issued an address unfavourable to the manifestations of the 20th. It reads (*Moniteur*, xiii. 4): "The true conspirators are those . . . who speak of the republic as a state monarchically constituted by the unanimous wish of the nation." On the other hand, in an address which was printed and placarded, the Department of Drôme demanded that the Legislative Assembly should severely warn the King. The Department of Finistère approved of the levy and the departure for Paris of the Federals of Brest. Carra, in the *Annales patriotiques*, No. 192, published a list of the Directories of Departments (to the number of thirty-three), which the Sieur Terrier, Minister of the Interior, claimed as being entirely on his side.

<sup>2</sup> *Arch. Nat.* Evidently all the addresses are not there; but those are there which the Assembly thought most unconstitutional; that is to say, those of the greatest interest to a historian of the republican idea.

Of all these addresses hostile to royalty, some are hostile only to the King, others to royalty itself. Only from the departments of Côte-d'Or, Ain, Bouches-du-Rhône, Aude, and Ariège, did the Assembly receive petitions which hinted, directly or indirectly, at the destruction of the throne.

Thus the republican movement awoke, in June, July, and August, 1792, in almost the same regions of departmental France in which it had awakened a year earlier, on the morrow of the King's flight. But there was one notable difference: in 1791 the republican impulse came above all from Paris, while in 1792 it was spontaneous; and when the Parisians, influenced by Robespierre, seemed to renounce the idea of a republic, a tide of republican opinion arose in these departments of the east and south-east, and a tide stronger than that which arose after the flight to Varennes; a tide which reached Paris, and drew Paris with it.

It is worth remarking that these departmental republicans in their most vehement declamations did not pronounce the word "republic"; so many apprehensions did this word still evoke, so emphatically had Robespierre discredited it. We call them republicans because they demand, either formally or by implication, not only that Louis XVI shall reign no longer, but that there shall be kings no longer. There are some who carry prudence so far as to wish to preserve a royal etiquette for some time longer. Thus on July 4, 1792, four citizens of Saint-Girons (Ariège), who state that they sign on behalf of the great majority of their fellow-citizens, declare that kings are the root of all evil, and that the moment is approaching when all men will be of this opinion; but since there is still a prejudice in favour of the monarchy, they ask that the Assembly shall confine itself to proclaiming the downfall of Louis XVI, or his suspension as of

unsound mind, convoking "the electoral body for the nomination of a regent." Others evidently incline to the immediate suppression of the monarchy, but ask that the right of establishing a new form of government shall be reserved for a Convention. This is the sense and object of a petition of sixty-one "free citizens" of the town of Seurre (Côte-d'Or), which I will reproduce, not only because it acquaints us with a manifestation earlier than that of the citizens of Bourg, but because it clearly shows us that it was the conduct of the King, and not a philosophical propaganda, that had disgusted the petitioners.<sup>1</sup>

"LEGISLATORS,—

"The country is in the greatest danger! Liberty is everywhere assailed! The executive power is openly destroying the Constitution by means of the Constitution itself. We have sworn to maintain it; but, before all, we have taken an oath to live free or to die.

"The nation will never resume the fetters which it has broken in the horrible cavern of tyranny; it will not lose its right of sovereignty, solemnly recognised in the Declaration of the Rights of Man, in the third article.

"Legislators! in the state of crisis in which we find ourselves, may the safety of the people, the supreme law, be your sole guide! Full of confidence in the energy and purity of your patriotism, adopting in entirety the proposals announced in the demands which the citizens of Bourg addressed to you from the department of Ain, on the 24th of June last; struck especially with the justice of the reflection which terminates them, 'that the organisation of the present executive power cannot subsist any longer without effecting the general subversion of the empire, *as a body whose head conceives in one manner while the arms act in a contrary manner is a veritable political monster*'; in virtue of the first article of the seventh chapter of the Act of the Constitution, which recognises the people's right to change and to modify the Constitution, wishing to attain this urgently necessary end in order to preserve our conquest of liberty, without causing a shock fatal to the empire; we endow you, Legislators, with all our rights and powers, and we adjure you to form yourselves promptly into a National Convention, in order to change or to modify the Constitution,

---

<sup>1</sup> This petition is undated, but the marginal note indicates that it was received by the Assembly on July 18, 1792.



only in matters concerning the executive power. We leave to your prudence and enlightenment the task of organising it in such form as may seem to you the most suitable in order to ensure the triumph of liberty. We promise and swear to wield our arms and to sacrifice our lives to ensure the integral execution of the laws, to watch over your safety, to maintain public tranquillity, and to annul the odious conspiracies of your enemies and ours."

If the citizens of Seurre had wished only to change the King, and not to suppress royalty, the Constitution would have offered them the means of realising their wish by dethronement and a regency. From the moment of demanding the revision of the Constitution in all that concerned the executive power, they intended at least to put in question the very existence of the throne. They were probably republicans, as were the citizens of Narbonne, who, in an address dated July 11th, criticised Louis XVI and the institution of royalty, demanding "a sovereign people and a responsible government," and the convocation of the primary assemblies to that end. And may we not also regard as republican the "petition of the citizens assembled at the fair of Beaucaire from all parts of the French empire, to the National Assembly" (July 29th), to which the Jacobins of Nîmes subscribed? Herein not only the downfall of the "traitor" was demanded, but a state of things in which the executive power should no longer be inviolable. If this is not asking for a republic it is something very like it.

At this time the department of Bouches-du-Rhône was the principal focus of republicanism. There, even in the case of the communes which limited themselves to demanding Louis' downfall, the demand was made in frank and uncompromising terms, which indicated, as men used then to say, a "republican soul." Does not the short address of the citizens of Pennes and of Cadeneaux (Bouches-du-Rhône), signed by numerous hands, sum up in striking terms the mental state of

the patriots of 1792? "We loved Louis XVI as long as he served us well, but from the moment he betrayed us by failing in his oath he freed us from our own. We want no more of him, and we sign in favour of his dethronement." The "anti-political brothers" who form the Society of the Friends of the Constitution of Aubagne go farther :

"Legislators, the measure is full; the time has come to hunt the Tarquins out of France. The people, who had the power to give themselves a king, have the right to depose him, above all when such an institution compromises the security of the empire."

These addresses from Pennes and from Aubagne are dated August. As early as June 27th the general Council of the Commune of Marseilles pronounced against royalty in a striking and well-known petition :

"Legislators, the nation has confided to you the maintenance and support of its liberty and independence, and the sovereignty of its rights. Eternal reason has shown it that the laws relating to royalty, which your predecessors imposed upon it without any reference to its demands and complaints, are contrary to the rights of man."

A "mournful experience" has shown to what point royalty is contrary to the principles of equality and popular sovereignty. Our sufferings and our dangers come from this hereditary and inviolable King.

"Avow, legislators, that our Constituents constituted nothing; and if you yourselves wish to be something, if you wish to respond to the nation's desire, abrogate a law which renders it meaningless to you; a law which you can destroy by means of the nation; a law which the needs of its own existence will allow it to suffer no longer. You know the whole history of our misfortunes; it would be useless to relate them again. The indignation which they provoke has come to a head. Let us hasten to destroy its cause, and to re-establish ourselves in our

---

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Nat.* This address is dated August 15th, but at this date the citizens had not heard of the events of the 10th.

rights. Let the executive power be nominated and renewed by the people, as with certain differences the two other powers are already nominated and renewed ; and very shortly all will be re-established.”<sup>1</sup>

This petition was not merely a threat : it was followed immediately by an act of revolution, an act of aggression against the King and the throne. In despite of the royal veto, the mayor and municipal officers of Marseilles issued, on June 29th, a proclamation in which they announced, for July 1st or 2nd, the departure for the capital of five hundred men of Marseilles, “ well endowed and provided with patriotism, strength, courage, arms, baggage, and munitions.” This was the celebrated battalion which gave such effectual aid at the taking of the Tuileries.

Such was the force of anti-royalist opinion in Marseilles that the administration of the department of Bouches-du-Rhône dared neither suppress, nor even disavow, the unconstitutional actions and writings of the municipality. But the republicans of Marseilles had at least one friend in the department, for the procurator-general-syndic, Moyse Bayle, pronounced himself publicly against the monarchy. On August 2, 1792, he published a booklet entitled : *Of the Uselessness and Danger of a King in a Free and Representative Government*, with a dedication “ to Mouraille, Mayor of Marseilles, and to all fellow-citizens who are the friends of liberty and equality.” He says, in this book : “ An inviolable and hereditary representative, not chosen by the nation, and trusted with the execution of the laws, is a monster ; he is a polypus, absorbing all the sap of the body politic ; in time invading all the powers of the State, and ending in tyranny.” For the rest, “ Louis Auguste Capet ” has shown by his conduct that he is less worthy than

<sup>1</sup> Signed by Mouraille, mayor, Auguste Mossy, Bertrand, Seytres, Gaillard, Audibert, &c.

another might have been to fill the place of hereditary representative. The executive power should be elective, but it should not have a single head, even though elected. On the contrary, the members of the executive power should be large in number. After explaining his conception of the organisation of the executive (in terms which are somewhat obscure and complex), Bayle demands, with the democrats of the Cordelier school, that the people should sanction the laws.

In fact, what he desires is a democratic republic, although he does not call it by its name.

Such was the republican movement in Marseilles.

Thus while the Parisians went no farther than to warn the King, and to cap him with the red bonnet, and remained monarchical, the Marseillais demanded the suppression of the throne, and despatched a body of armed men to assist in the suppression. The commune of Marseilles was the first to rise in arms to establish the republic in France.

When the Marseillais petition was read before the Legislative Assembly, as it was on July 12th, it excited the most lively applause in the galleries, especially in that containing those of the Federalists who had already arrived in Paris from their various cities. The Assembly was indignant. Cambon declared that this unconstitutional manifestation was a snare. The petition was referred, with the disapproval of the Assembly, to the Commission of Twelve. But the effect produced was enormous ; henceforth the question of the destruction of the monarchy was brought into the domain of practical politics.

The addresses in which no steps against royalty in itself are contemplated, but in which measures against the King in person are demanded, plainly prove that Louis has destroyed his popularity by his anti-patriotic behaviour during the present war, and such addresses are of a nature to encourage the republicans.

The citizens of Bar-le-Duc (July 2nd) demand a regency with revolutionary violence, and obvious hatred of the King ; and in a like temper the National Guards and many of the citizens of Briançon write to the Assembly : “ A frightful tempest is threatening the ship of State ; the entire crew cry to you that a pilot is needed who shall devote himself to the safety of all.” The same sentiments appear in petitions in favour of dethronement or suspension signed by the citizens of Avirey (Aube), Périgueux, Bergerac (Dordogne), Carhaix (Finistère), Aiguevives, Clarensac, Saint-Jeandu-Gard, Saint-Ambroix (Gard), Toulouse, Lagrave, Rieumes (Haute-Garonne), Valence (Gers), Pauillac (Gironde), Béziers and Cette (Hérault), Lons-le-Saunier and Dôle (Jura), Angers<sup>1</sup> (Maine-et-Loire), Champplitte (Haute-Saône), Toulon, and Ollioules (Var). The communes of Normandy were neither the last nor the least emphatic in their attacks upon the King, although later the spirit of federalism, and then that of royalism, excited the Normans to sedition. As early as June 22nd a large number of the citizens of Caen demanded the dethronement of the King, and on August 4th the five sections of the city signed a petition to that end ; the idea of the petition had been adopted on July 28th, 29th, and 30th. On June 23rd about two hundred and fifty citizens of Falaise requested the Assembly to invite the King to recall the Roland Ministry, and, in view of the bad uses to which he put the civil list, to reduce the latter to five millions. The citizens of Alençon, on July 31st, signed a petition in considerable numbers asking for Louis' dethronement.

All these addresses, whether republican or otherwise, directed against Louis XVI, were inspired—and we cannot too often repeat it—by one single feeling :

<sup>1</sup> This petition from Angers, read by Choudieu on July 23rd, was applauded from the galleries.

that of the dangers of a country threatened in its very existence by the connivance of the King with the Austrians and Prussians. It was by reason of their patriotism, and their patriotism alone, that so many of the citizens of the towns decided against Louis, while some decided against royalty itself. It was because France was at war, because the King was deserting his post as head of the national defence, that the nation, enlightened by the patriots of the cities, rose against Louis in a vast movement of sorrow and anxiety, and, determining to save itself, overthrew its once so beloved King, who had now become its worst enemy.

### III.

The communal movement against the King, which lasted through June, July, and August, was manifested not only by the written and spoken word, but by actions also. We have seen how, when the royal veto was opposed to the decree by which the Assembly had sought to form a camp of Federalists before the walls of Paris, the march of volunteers upon the capital was nevertheless begun. And these illegal marches were not the result of ignorance of the veto. It was in the full knowledge of the veto, and because they wished to oppose the veto by revolutionary means, and to support the Assembly against the King, that the majority of the Federals set out for Paris.

It will be remembered that among these volunteers at least one body was hostile to royalty, not only to the King. The battalion of Marseillais set out to realise the anti-royalist desires of the Marseilles municipality.<sup>1</sup> It was not, as has been said, a troop of adventurers : they were young Marseillais of good family, who elected as their commander-in-chief one François Moisson, an

<sup>1</sup> See p. 42.

old soldier.<sup>1</sup> This battalion set out from Marseilles on July 2nd, and entered Paris on the 30th. On their departure, on the road, and on their arrival they sang the song of battle composed for the army of the Rhine by Rouget de Lisle, which was henceforth known as the “Hymn of the Marseillais,” and later as “the Marseillaise.” A journal of the time remarks: “They made this warlike air resound in all the villages they passed through, and in this way these modern bards inspired the countryside with civic and warlike feelings.” The *Marseillaise* was enlarged on the way—at Vienne—by the verse beginning: *Nous entrerons dans la carrière*. . . . This song, which was not only warlike, but civic in nature, and which abused the tyrants of the world in a way calculated to inspire the hearer with republican sentiments, was thus heard, during the travels of the Marseillais, through all the length of the Rhone Valley and the departments between Lyons and Paris. In all these districts it excited that patriotic anger which could only end in the downfall of the throne. The Parisians received the Marseillais with enthusiasm: “What a fine and touching spectacle!” says a contemporary:

“The heroes of the south united with the conquerors of the Bastille for the purpose of paying homage to virtue!<sup>2</sup> The brave Santerre, at the head of the heroes of the 14th of July, led the way. Pikes and muskets, mingled together, recalled the memorable periods of the Revolution. Then came the Marseillais, preceded by their cannon and followed by their waggons and munitions. It would be impossible to express what all these citizens felt as the troops went by; but tears fell from every eye, and the air rang with cries of ‘*Vive la nation! Vive la liberté!*’”

Marseilles was not the only city to send Federalists to Paris; there were also the Federalists of Brest, who seem to have paid with their persons as much as the

<sup>1</sup> See *Le Bataillon du 10 Août*, by MM. Pollio and Marcel, Paris, 1881.

<sup>2</sup> He means to say “the purpose of paying homage to *Petion*.”

Marseillais.<sup>1</sup> Many other cities also sent their detachments. What was the total number of these Federalists, who, with the Parisians, overturned the throne? During the session of the Legislative Assembly of July 18th a letter was read from the mayor, Petion, announcing that a total of 2,960 Federalists had inscribed their names at the municipality. This number, insignificant in itself, was considerable under the circumstances ; for the greater number of these volunteers set out in defiance of the royal veto, and in spite of a ministerial circular, before they had news of the decree of July 2nd which legalised their march. This was a formal act of disobedience against the King. Evidently a very large number of volunteers arrived in Paris after the date on which the 2,960 were inscribed, and amongst them was the company of the Federalists of Brest, who entered the capital on the 24th, and the battalion of the Marseillais,<sup>2</sup> who, as we have seen, entered on the 30th.

<sup>1</sup> The prominent part played by the Federalists of Marseilles and of Brest is proved by this fact among others : that in order to honour them the section of the Théâtre-Français took the name of the section of Marseilles, and the section of the Gobelins that of the section of Finistère.

<sup>2</sup> See the correspondence of the captain of the Brestois company, Desbouillons, and of the quartermaster, Fontaine, published by M. Corre, in the *Révolution française*, xxxiii. 445-68. If the Brestois Federalists disobeyed the King, they pretended to obey the Legislative Assembly. We read in the *procès-verbal* of the Assembly (July 22nd) : " Letter from M. Desbouillons, who informs the Assembly that he has set out with the 150 [M. Corre gives the figure as 105] citizen Federalists of the department of Finistère, all armed and equipped, in order to present themselves at Paris, and that he awaits the orders of the Legislative Assembly at Oudon, before coming to the meeting-place of the Assembly. The Assembly passes to the order of the day, as the law of July 2nd calls upon the citizens of the different departments to come to Paris, there to inscribe themselves in order to proceed to the camp of the reserves or to the frontiers, and consequently nothing need prevent M. Desbouillons and his companions-in-arms from approaching the capital. It orders that a copy of the *procès-verbal* shall be sent to M. Desbouillons.



These Federalists did not all arrive in the same state of mind. Only the Marseillais seem to have had the design of overturning the throne ; only they seem to have been truly republican. The rest came to Paris with the somewhat vague intention of providing against the dangers which threatened the country. There were even those who, like the Brestois volunteers, while resolved to oppose the treacherous policy of the Court, wished also to defend the Assembly against the encroachments of the Commune, and experienced a feeling of jealousy with regard to Paris. The men of Brest and Marseilles found the Federalists who had preceded them already indoctrinated by the Jacobins. As early as July 11th special galleries were reserved for them in the club, and the Federalists of Toulon were welcomed with applause. Robespierre constituted himself their political professor. But what doctrines were they taught : republican or anarchist? Although the Marseillais had not as yet arrived, their sentiments were known, for the republican petition of the municipality of Marseilles had formulated them, and had attracted widespread attention. There were also Federalists who laid no stress on the personal treason of the King, and complained only of his Ministers. The Jacobins tried to moderate some, to excite others. For what purpose? In order to warn the King or in order to replace him by another king? They do not say as yet ; perhaps they do not themselves know. They are agreed only on the necessity of effecting a sort of national manœuvre which shall prevent the King from betraying them any further. Let us listen to Robespierre. On July 11th he induces the club to vote an address to the Federalists : “ Hail to the defenders of Liberty ! Hail to the generous men of Marseilles who gave the signal for the sacred Confederation which unites them ! Hail to the Frenchmen of the eighty-three departments. . . . So many outrages have at last awakened the nation. . . . ”

“You have by no means come here to afford a vain spectacle for the amusement of the country and the capital. Your mission is to save the State. Let us make sure of the maintenance of the Constitution, but not of this Constitution, which squanders at Court the substance of the nation, which places at the King’s disposal immense sums of money and enormous power ; but principally and above all let us preserve all that guarantees the rights and the sovereignty of the nation. Let us demand the faithful execution of the laws ; not those which only protect the greatest scoundrels and assassinate the people in due form, but those which protect liberty and patriotism against tyranny and Machiavelism. Let us take no oath except before the country and ourselves, who are in the hands of the immortal King of Nature, who prepares us for liberty and who punishes all oppressors.”

And he is even more indignant with La Fayette than with Louis.

To sum up : what does Robespierre propose to the Federalists? Nothing at all precise, but it is certain that he does not propose the dethronement of the King, already demanded by many of the cities. A king who shall be better advised, with a reduced civil list ; this is the desire which we may divine in these declarations which the orator has taken good care to render vague in order to maintain harmony among the Federalists and also because his aims are still monarchical.

The republicans, although they no longer dared to speak of the republic in the club, did dare to express their discontent. On July 12th Robert “protests against the name of *Federates* given to the citizens sent from the departments at the rumour that the country was in danger. He pretends that *Federates* is not a fitting name ; that they should properly be called insurgents. After some slight discussion on this observation of M. Robert’s, the Society proceeded to the general orders of the day.” One would suppose that the word “insurgent” appeared to the Society, as to Robert, synonymous with “anti-royalist” or “republican.”

There are at this date Federals who do not wish to be treated as republicans. At the same session of the club, the Federals from Doubs demand the circulation of "addresses in the departments in order to undeceive the people concerning the accusations of republicanism which have been made against them by the Jacobins in Paris." And at the same session again the Federals of Pas-de-Calais make the following declaration: "None of us will go to the frontiers if the King is not suspended, if the National Assembly does not set in motion the national executive power." What is this "national executive power"? If this is not a republican motion, it must be admitted that it is peculiarly like one. What indecision, what contradictions there are at this time, amidst the anxieties of a patriotism which feels itself betrayed by the King, yet cannot, without anguish, entertain the idea of abolishing royalty!

On the other hand, it is evident that the monarchical politics of Robespierre do not attract everybody. During the session of the 13th, Carra demands the suspension of Louis XVI. Others demand that on the following day the Federals shall take the oath to the nation and the law, but not to the King. This appears to be the realisation of Robespierre's advice: *Let us take the oath only to our country and ourselves. . . .* Yet Camille Desmoulins, having, as we have seen, disavowed the republic in his Robespierrist *Tribune des patriotes*, supported this motion. But Danton, who was then, perhaps, secretly rallying to republicanism, and who, on the other hand, was more hostile to Louis than was Robespierre, delivered a vehement speech in which he implored the Federals not to leave Paris, in spite of the decree which ordered them, after the Federation, to proceed to Soissons; but to remain in the capital, under arms and united, until a petition "concerning the fate of the executive power" should have manifested

the will of the "sovereign." To depart only when Louis was no longer King—that was Danton's advice to the Federals, and his advice was listened to.

At the festival of Federation, on July 14, 1792, there was no cry of "*Vive le roi!*" and Louis was treated with hostile frugidity. There were cries of "*Vive la nation!*" but none of "*Vive la république!*" And even on the 15th, at the Jacobins, a Federalist from Calvados declared himself plainly as against the republic: "Let us remember that we have to fight one enemy alone: the royal machine. As for the monarchy, it will remain, for it is in the Constitution."

But the feelings of the Jacobins were visibly changing, and during the same session Billaud-Varenne once more demanded the republic of which there had been no question since the affair of the Champ de Mars; not by naming it openly (scarcely any one dared do that), but by designating it so clearly that no one could possibly fail to understand him:

"Let us hasten," he cries, "to arrest the progress of a conflagration of which the flames are already flickering; and in order to do so let all the Federalists, and all good citizens, present an address to the Legislature to-morrow, in order to demand, not, as has been said, the removal of the King, a measure as mistaken as imperfect, since it entails a long and embittered discussion; when it is urgent to act, since otherwise we are keeping in our bosoms the adder we are warming; but let us demand that a sufficient escort shall conduct the King and all his family across the frontier. When Rome was resolved to recover her liberty, she commenced by expelling all the Tarquins. Here they betray us basely; there at least we shall have them face to face, and their blows will no longer be formidable from the time we are able to prepare for them."

Does he wish to appeal to another dynasty? No; he demands "that the labours of the Ministry shall be placed under the immediate supervision of the National Assembly." He roundly proposes a direct universal suffrage: "Let all Frenchmen without distinction be

called to the primary assemblies in order to nominate the members of a National Convention ; without the intermediary of electoral assemblies." And he wishes to organise the democracy by a referendum system : "That in the first place the veto shall be bestowed on the eighty-three departments, of which the sanction will be decided by a majority of two-thirds ; the law will then become what it should be ; that is to say, the expression of the general will."<sup>1</sup>

How did the club receive this proposal of a democratic republic? It decided to print the speech and send it to the affiliated clubs. What a change of attitude on the part of those who only a year earlier were hooting at the republicans !

It would seem that Robespierre now became conscious that his policy, being strictly monarchical and constitutional, is no longer sufficient to this exalted frame of mind. He inserts, prominently, in his *Défenseur de la Constitution*, a vehement address, which the Federals present to the Legislative Assembly on July 17th, in which they demand not only that La Fayette shall be accused, but that the King shall be provisionally suspended.<sup>2</sup> It is true that they are careful to disown the republican faith. They express themselves in this way :

"The nation is betrayed. . . . *We do not refuse to obey a King, but we perceive a great difference between a King and a Court of conspirators, whose punishment and expulsion is demanded by the Constitution itself, and by all laws human and divine*" (*some twenty members and all the galleries applaud*). "Fathers of the country !

---

<sup>1</sup> *Société des Amis de la Constitution, séante aux Jacobins, à Paris. Discours de M. Billaud-Varenne sur les mesures à prendre pour sauver la patrie, prononcée à la séance du 15 Juillet, 1792, l'an IV de la liberté.* An impression is to be found in the British Museum.

<sup>2</sup> Buchez even believes that Robespierre himself drew up this address.

suspend, provisionally, the executive power in the person of the King : the welfare of the State requires and demands this measure. Impeach La Fayette. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

We see that the Federals have now, or appear to have, a fairly precise political programme ; to maintain the monarchy (or to resign themselves to its maintenance), and to ensure that the King, whether suspended or dethroned, shall reign no longer.

Moreover, the Federals are becoming organised. They form a *Central Committee of Federals*, which sits in the convent of the Jacobins.<sup>2</sup>

This Committee, on July 20th, presents “an address to the Frenchmen of the eighty-three departments,” in which it announces the intention of the Federals to remain in Paris, in order to fight against “a treacherous Court, a coalition of insolent empirics.” “It is in Paris that we must conquer or die, and we have sworn to remain here. This is our post, this is the place of our triumph, or it shall be that of our tomb.”

On July 23rd they present to the Legislative Assembly a new petition demanding the suspension of

<sup>1</sup> It was proposed to refer this to the Extraordinary Commission. After a lively debate, the Assembly refused, and proceeded to the order of the day.

<sup>2</sup> When was this Committee formed? Probably after July 14th. It first manifested its existence at the session of the Jacobins of July 20th, when it read an address. Buchez (xvi. 117) says: “We do not know who presided; we have only found the name of Mazué” (it should be Mazuel) “mentioned as that of the President of August the 10th.” We read in the *Patriote français* of September 17th that Gabriel Vaugeois, Federate of Loir-et-Cher, presided over this Committee, “until after the affair of the 10th.” Buchez says of the Central Committee: “For the rest, one may be positively certain that the principal leaders of the club communicated and often deliberated with them. This being so, Robespierre would certainly have taken part in their deliberations.” This is only a hypothesis, or perhaps an oral tradition. This volume of Buchez appeared in 1835, at which date there were many survivors of the Revolution.

the King and the convocation of the primary assemblies "in order to determine by a certain and immediate method the will of the people," and to "nominate a National Convention in order to pronounce upon certain so-called constitutional Articles." Let the Assembly make haste! "If you prove to the nation that you are impotent, the nation will have only one resource: to employ its whole strength in crushing its enemies itself." Act yourselves, or we shall act; such is the sense of the threatening petition which the Federals presented to the Assembly.

On August 3rd the Federals insisted once more, and in a more emphatic tone: "We demand a categorical reply: Can you save us; yes or no? The people are up; they wish to save the commonwealth, and to save you at the same time."

We know that the Assembly did nothing.<sup>1</sup> Strengthened and made bolder by the arrival of the men of Brest, of Marseilles, and many other cities, the Federals prepared for action, and a secret Directory, drawn from their Central Committee, organised the insurrection, hand in glove with the sections.

Such was the part played by the Federals in the weeks preceding the downfall of the throne. They were, so to speak, the armed deputies of the communes of France, who lent and imposed on the Parisians something of their own energetic humour. An alliance was concluded between the boldest patriots of the capital and of the provinces, with the object of dethroning Louis XVI; as for the question of organising a republic or a monarchy, that would be settled later. It was this alliance that gave the revolution of August 10th the character of a national movement.

<sup>1</sup> We shall return later on to this attitude of the National Assembly.

## IV.

Let us see if the effect of this understanding (tacit, but obvious) to postpone the question of the form of government to be established until the royal enemy had been dislodged from the Tuileries, was to prevent any manifestation of a republican nature before August 10th.

Let us first of all consider the periodical press. In the press, speaking generally, there was no question of the form of government.

The few journals which were republican in June and July, 1791, are now conforming to a kind of general understanding which all have obeyed since the massacre of the Champ de Mars, and do not mention the word "republic."

They limit themselves to abusing the King. Thus the *Révolutions de Paris*, at the beginning of July, calls him "our domestic and constitutional enemy," "this Tartufe crowned," "Louis the False." It wishes the Federals, on July 14th, to summon him to relinquish his rights of initiative, of veto, and of inviolability, and suggests that he should be reduced to a quarter of his civil list. Otherwise, abdication or dethronement; or again, the scaffold. But the fiery journalist does not demand the destruction of the throne.<sup>1</sup>

The sheet which succeeds the *Mercure national* of Robert, and which is called the *Journal général de l'Europe*, goes yet a little farther in its issue of July 24th. In a "review of an important measure for saving France," it is proposed that the Legislative Assembly shall deprive the King of the exercise of the executive power for as long a period as the war shall last, and that the Assembly itself shall adjourn until peace is restored. But first it would appoint three

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps Robert. Several journals, on announcing his election to the Convention in September, speak of him as "the author of the *Révolutions de Paris*."



dictators, MM. R—d, S—, and P—,<sup>1</sup> who would name the six Ministers who, together with themselves, would form the Supreme Council. This proposal of a Rolandist dictatorship in the form of a provisional Government had no success with the public.

But if none of the older journals pronounced plainly for the republic, there was founded at this time a republican journal which I believe no historian has mentioned: the *Journal des hommes du 14 juillet et du faubourg Saint-Antoine*, which appeared from July 12, 1792, until the following August 11th. It was not edited by any of the more famous revolutionists; we read in the prospectus that “MM. Gaultier, Bourbeaux, Gonchon, Fournier, Parrein, Rossignol, Ménant, Chartier, Plasse, Mijon, Dijon brothers, and other citizens of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine or men of letters, will be the principal directors.”

Herein we read, in the issue for July 20th :

“Yes, our first representatives have poisoned the sap of the constitutional tree. It is time to deliver it from royalty, that impure and mortifying worm, which would presently dry it to the roots. . . . Let us at last break the colossus whose weight would crush us sooner or later. It will destroy in its fall the noxious insects which it shelters, and society, delivered from all these plagues, will enjoy the peace and happiness that should be its share.”

Is it possible to pronounce more clearly against royalty? And yet these anti-royalists conclude with a provisional solution which the monarchical Robespierre would not have disowned; namely, “the removal of Louis XVI, the abolition of the veto, the diminution of the civil list.” They would resign themselves to a regency, and in the issue of July 21st a letter from “an estimable patriot,” who demands the suspension of the King, contains this formal proposition: “We call to the regency the person whom the law designs.”

<sup>1</sup> Evidently Roland, Servan, Pétion.

In the issue of July 24th we read an address of the citizens of the city of Narbonne, which is violent in tone, but which does not exclude the possibility of a reconciliation with the King. These citizens say to the men of July 14th :

“You are the advance guard of France : march, and at your first step the Army will move forward ; the nation in a body will arrive in Paris. What a wonderful sight !—this column of sixteen to seventeen hundred thousand citizens, marching from ten or twelve different points of the Empire, to demand an understanding from this King who calls himself the King of the French, but who should rather call himself the King of Coblenz ! . . . The nineteenth century is approaching. Oh that all the inhabitants of the earth, in the happy year of 1800, enlightened and delivered from their despots, might together offer up to the God of the Universe a hymn of gratitude and liberty ! Brothers of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, ask Louis XVI if he wishes to take part in this universal festival, this spectacle which earth prepares for Heaven. We are still keeping for him the first place at the banquet. If he refuses, the ingrate ! we invoke upon him the vengeance of Heaven, or, if that fail, the vengeance of the people ; our letter is the lightning which precedes the thunder. Farewell : we are afoot, our knapsacks and muskets ready, and we know the road to Paris.”

But very soon these “men of July 14th” grow bolder, and the word *republic* which was in their hearts at last finds issue from their mouth. We read in the number for July 27th :

“It is continually stated that republics are constantly agitated by sedition. Such reasoning is without common sense, and we dispute it here in order to come to a definition. It is a mistake to suppose that what our patriots desire is a republic like that of Athens or of Rome, for instance. We want a kind of government hitherto unknown, in which all the powers of the State will be in the hands of elective and temporary magistrates, in which all will be done by the people and for the people, in which human passions will be forced to direct themselves towards the good of all, and in which intriguers must provide for the general weal in order to win the dignities they desire. In this state of things we should wish a perfect civic equality. . . .”

These republicans, few in number, with little influence, hardly known, did not at that time convert the Parisians to their own ideas ; ideas which the other journals did not even discuss ; nor, to my knowledge, was the word " republic " heard on August 10th. But it is a notable fact that from the end of July the exasperation of patriotism was such as to produce, in a few writers, the necessary audacity to violate the monarchical understanding imposed on the democrats by Robespierre, and that the pens of the citizens of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine wrote, in the heart of Paris, the word which had been proscribed since the massacre of the Champ de Mars—the word " republic."

## V.

Republican or otherwise, the democratic journals ended by agreeing, especially after the Duke of Brunswick's manifesto, to dethrone the King. We have seen that the Federals were already agreed on this point, and that they represented the boldest of the communes of France.

This opinion was also that of the sections.

I will not trace the course of this sectional movement ; it has often been described.<sup>1</sup> I will only remind the reader that it was at once political and social ; hostile to Louis XVI and hostile to the *bourgeoisie*.

On July 25th the section of the Louvre decided to draw up an address " on the necessity of bestowing the rights of active citizens on all citizens who pay even the smallest taxes."

These democratic demands had not been heard for more than a year. That they broke out afresh was due to the fact that the dangers with which the country

<sup>1</sup> See the *Histoire de la Terreur*, by Mortimer-Ternaux, and *les Sections de Paris*, by E. Mellié.

was threatened freed the patriots from the tacit engagement into which they had entered to assist in a loyal trial of the *bourgeois*, constitutional monarchy.

The danger being the same as that which threatened after the flight to Varennes, the compact was broken, and the section of the Théâtre Français, repeating its revolutionary action of June 21, 1791, established universal suffrage in its *arrondissement* (July 30, 1792).<sup>1</sup>

It was undoubtedly this democratic attitude of at least two of the sections which decided the Assembly to decree, on August 3rd, that the rights of active citizens should be granted to all Frenchmen who, enrolled under the flag, should serve through the war.

As for the struggle of the sections against the King, I will exclude incidents of secondary importance, even the celebrated proclamation of the section of Mauconseil, declaring that it would no longer recognise Louis XVI as King; in order to lay stress on the essential fact of the mutual confederation of these sections, which became permanent on July 25th, and was now holding public sessions. The most important factor in the history of the downfall of the throne is that forty-seven sections out of forty-eight, subscribing to a proclamation of the section of Fontaine-de-Grenelle, nominated commissaries, who, with the permission of the municipality, sat at the Hôtel de Ville on July 26th, 28th, and 29th, and August 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, under the presidency of Collot d'Herbois, and drafted the address which the mayor, Petion, presented to the Legislative Assembly at the session of August 3rd.

<sup>1</sup> I have given in the *Mémoires de Chaumette* the text of this decree (pp. 41, 42) signed by Danton, president; Chaumette and Momoro, secretaries. The same democratic tendencies were expressed in an address presented to the Legislative Assembly on August 6th drafted by Varlet and signed by a number of citizens on the altar of the country. This demanded not only the downfall of the King, but universal suffrage.

This address is an extremely able attack upon the King. It remarks that "the chief of the executive power is the first link in the counter-revolutionary chain."

The petitioners also express the very just idea that the movement against Louis is *communal*, while the movement in his favour is rather departmental.

"Departmental directories, in coalition, dare to constitute themselves arbiters between the National Assembly and the King. They form a kind of upper chamber, dispersed throughout the heart of the Empire. Some even usurp the legislative authority, and, as one of the results of a profound ignorance, while declaiming against the republicans, they seem to wish to organise France into a federative republic."

They demand not suspension, which according to them would be unconstitutional, but the downfall of the throne.

But a negative programme is no longer enough for these men, who, in their deliberations at the Hôtel de Ville, are able to examine at their leisure all the facets of the political problem which they have to resolve. They are thinking of the future :

"This important measure once carried," they say, "as it is very doubtful that the nation could feel any confidence in the present dynasty, we demand that ministers, responsible as a body, nominated by the National Assembly, but not from its members, according to the constitutional law, named by the vote of free men spoken aloud, shall provisionally exercise the executive power, while waiting until the will of the people, our sovereign and yours, shall be legally expressed in a National Convention, as soon as the safety of the State shall permit."

Thus the representatives of the sections exclude the Duc d'Orléans beforehand from the regency or the throne ; they exclude all the Bourbons, all the "present dynasty." In their schemes for the future, the question of monarchy or republic does not seem

to occur ; it is rather a question of the present dynasty or another. But what other? The house of York or of Brunswick? These expedients, although suggested at the time by a journalist,<sup>1</sup> are rejected in advance by the new patriotism, and it is very plainly evident that the petitioners have no conception of enthroning a foreign dynasty. Have they a French family in mind? By no means. Then what do they intend? There remains the republic. Do they at heart wish for the republic? One can only say that whether they desire it or not, they are in such a frame of mind that they are preparing a set of circumstances from which the republic will necessarily result.

In any case, if the sections have not definitely conceived the future form of government,<sup>2</sup> their design of dethroning Louis XVI and of obtaining the convocation of a Convention is worded as definitely as

<sup>1</sup> Carra, in somewhat cryptic phraseology, had suggested the Duke of York and the Duke of Brunswick as possible (and acceptable) candidates for the French throne. See the deed of accusation against the Girondins drafted by Amar.

<sup>2</sup> There was, however, at least one section which clearly declared itself against royalty before the 10th ; the section of the Théâtre Français. On August 6th, at the head of a warlike proclamation issued in reply to the Duke of Brunswick's manifesto, it quoted these lines from the *Brutus* of Voltaire, arranged for the occasion :

“If among all the French one traitor linger yet  
 Who still could seek a lord, or *Louis* could regret,  
 Let the perfidious wretch a death in torment find ;  
 And let his guilty ashes, thrown upon the wind,  
 Leave nought of him on earth except a name, e'en more  
 Foul than the name of *kings* whom all in France abhor.”

See the *Thermomètre du Jour* of August 10th, p. 325. These verses, adapted with a slight difference, had already figured at the head of the tyrannicidal placard of the Cordeliers, June 21, 1792. The proclamation of the section of the Théâtre Français is signed : Lebois, president ; Chaumette and Momoro, secretaries.

possible.<sup>1</sup> They are about to pass from words to deeds. The section of the Quinze-Vingts proclaims on August 4th that if, on August 9th, by eleven o'clock at night, the Legislative Assembly has not granted the people their rights and justice, at midnight that same night the tocsin will sound, the fire-drums will be beaten, and all men will be up in arms. This promise was fulfilled.

## VI.

Such was the attitude of the Federals, the Parisians, the journals, and the sections, during the events which preceded August 10th. I have already described the attitude of the Legislative Assembly, in explaining what measures it was obliged to take against the King, by

<sup>1</sup> This was also the design of the Jacobin Club. Robespierre rallied to the idea of the dethronement, and at the session of August 1st he even demanded the convocation of a Convention. Did he finally accept the republic? Nothing proves that he did. As lately as July 20th he said to the Jacobins: "Let us occupy ourselves with finding means of preserving our rights and our liberty *by means of the Constitution.*" The Club made no declaration against royalty before August 10th, but it allowed some few of its members to do so; for instance, Anthoine and Chabot. We conclude that the Jacobins at this period had never pronounced the word "republic," not only from the reports of their proceedings, but also from the testimony of Brissot, who says, in his speech of defence in 1793: "Ah! you who to-day speak of the republican government with such a facile boldness—did you at that time dare to pronounce its name? Read once more the debates of the Jacobins; you will find long speeches on the dethronement, but nothing as to the Government and the Republic. The friends of liberty knew too well that this word would have shocked a multitude of minds, and would possibly have destroyed the revolution then preparing. How circumspect had the true republicans to be in those days! They had to await the time, the treasons of the Court, and the will of the people, and until the Republic should at last be manifested they had to keep within the limits of the Constitution" (*Mémoires*, iv. 382).

means of decrees which disarmed him while arming his enemies, or against the *bourgeois* system, whose representative it was none the less, by means of democratic measures. It remains to recall certain facts which mark its political tergiversations in face of the formidable movement of opinion of which it was not the master.

At the end of July, when it felt that the whole constitutional system was menaced, and a revolution threatening, it ventured, through some of its leaders, on a supreme attempt to influence Louis XVI. Vergniaud, Guadet, and Gensonné conferred secretly with the King, and offered him their advice, with a view to reconciling him with the Revolution, and to persuading him to form a new Jacobin ministry.<sup>1</sup>

The petitions in favour of dethronement had already become threatening. The Assembly still hoped that if Louis would change his attitude his throne might perhaps be preserved.

On July 25th a deputy named Crestin asked leave to put on the orders of the day a question as to whether "the King is in the position of being supposed to have abdicated the crown." The Assembly passed on to the orders of the day.

<sup>1</sup> It was on July 20th that they drafted a letter containing this advice. Guadet had an interview with the King. For the details of this affair see Guadet, *Girondins* (new edition, Paris, 1889). Mme. Roland says in her *Mémoires* that in July, 1792, "the firmest republicans" only consented to the Constitution "for the moment," and "would have awaited the ameliorations of experience and time." Others wished to change the dynasty, but this desire was only expressed in private conversation. Pellenc wrote in July: "The Abbé Siéyès repeated more firmly than ever his theory that the Constituent Assembly made a great mistake in supposing that it could effect a revolution without a change in the reigning dynasty. This idea is to-day adopted by many of the members of 1789, and by a host of deputies in the present Assembly; even on the Right. It tickles their self-esteem to adopt it, because it explains their lack of success" (unpublished letter lent by M. Flammermont).



But it did not wish any longer to hurl itself against an opinion which it saw was popular, and the same day, the section of Mauconseil having presented a petition in favour of the dethronement, it accorded the petitioners the honours of the session.

On July 26th, in the name of the Extraordinary Commission, Guadet read a report on the petitions, in which, while proposing to postpone the question, he chid the King, saying: "You can still save the country, and your crown as well." He had only to select good ministers.

Brissot supported him, amid murmurs from the galleries. The nation, he said, could not grasp the idea of a dethronement suddenly proclaimed. Such a course would mean civil war. He demanded an inquiry, followed by a fundamental, serious discussion. To this republican the idea of a republic seemed so far from opportune that he made use of the following phrases, which in 1793 constituted the principal accusation brought against him before the Revolutionary Tribunal: "If this party of regicides exists, if there are men who would be capable of establishing the republic now, on the wreckage of the Constitution, the sword of the nation should descend upon them, as upon the active supporters of the proposal for two chambers, or the counter-revolutionists of Coblenz."

The Assembly decided nothing, and limited itself to referring the question once more to its Extraordinary Commission. It postponed the matter, allowing all kinds of proposals to be made. On August 3rd the honours of the session were accorded to the Federals who had demanded: *Can you save us, yes or no?* and to Petion, who demanded, in the name of the sections, the downfall of the dynasty. But the Assembly did not reply; at least, it said nothing definite.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The President (Laffon-Ladebat) replied to the Federals, vaguely enough, that the Assembly would find sufficient means of safety in the Constitution.

In the evening, Grangeneuve demanded that the question concerning the dethronement should be put on the orders of the following day. The Commission stated that it was not yet ready, and obtained an adjournment until August 9th.

On the 4th a deputy asked that the petition presented on the preceding day by Petion "should be returned to its authors as null and unconstitutional." The Assembly proceeded to the orders of the day.

On the same day the section of Mauconseil announced that it "no longer recognised Louis XVI as King of France." The Assembly seemed to be considerably disturbed; it demanded an immediate report from its Extraordinary Commission, and upon receiving this report, which was presented by Vergniaud, it annulled the decree of Mauconseil, but with a consideration almost benevolent, recognising "that only an ardent love of liberty had determined the citizens of the section of Mauconseil to take the step which they had communicated to the other sections."

On the 6th the Assembly granted honourable mention to an address of the General Council of the Department of the Meuse, which demanded the punishment of those who had signed petitions in favour of dethronement, and immediately decreed the honours of the session in favour of Varlet and the petitioners of the Champ de Mars, who demanded the dethronement and universal suffrage.

On August 8th an address from the department of Haute-Loire received the same honourable treatment; this address demanded the maintenance of the Constitution, and addresses from various communes of Calvados demanding the dethronement were equally honoured. But on this day the Assembly seems at last to cease holding the balance equally between the two parties, and it decrees, by 406 votes against 224, that there is no ground of accusation against La Fayette. This

decree exasperates popular opinion, unchains men's passions, renders the revolution inevitable, and assures its triumph beforehand.

August 9th was the day indicated by the sections as marking the end of the period of delay granted the Assembly by the people. In the name of the Extraordinary Commission, Condorcet read a report on the question of the dethronement. He proposed to postpone it; meanwhile to instruct the people in their rights. The Assembly decreed an impression of this report; it should then be discussed.

Then the people rose and hurled Louis XVI from his throne.

Such was the attitude of the Legislative Assembly on the eve of the insurrection of August 10th. It hung in the wind, in the hope that Louis XVI would alter his tactics and choose a patriotic Ministry. When it forsook this hope, it seemed no longer to take any further part in events, except as a witness to them. It precipitated them by an unpopular and undiplomatic decree which exculpated La Fayette; which was less a political action than the last will and testament of this monarchical and *bourgeois* Assembly. It did not expect, by thus defying the people, to arrest their anger and to save the King. It let things go their own way; awaited passively the fatal event. It felt, confusedly, that the petitioners were in the right; that it was powerless, and that only the people could save the country by rising up in their might. To this it finally resigned itself.

## CHAPTER II

### THE THRONE FALLS : DEMOCRACY ESTABLISHED

- I. Louis XVI is suspended.—II. Organisation of the Executive Power. The Revolutionary Commune.—III. Universal Suffrage.

#### I.

DEMOCRACY was established in France from August 10, 1792 ; the throne thenceforth remained vacant ; and, although this system of government did not receive its name until the following September, August 10th is the date that marks the starting-point of a history of the Democratic Republic.

The ups and downs of the celebrated insurrection of August 10th offer no direct interest to the historian of the politics of the French Revolution. It will suffice to remark, in the first place, that the combatants did not, during the conflict, express any republican demands, and that there is nothing to denote that they had at this moment any design whatever but that of dethroning Louis XVI ; secondly, that this insurrection was as truly national in its final crisis as in its preparation, since the attacking army was composed of as many Marseillais, Bretois, and other provincials, as Parisians.<sup>1</sup> It is the results of this victory of the people that we must recall and consider in detail.

<sup>1</sup> Women also took part in this insurrection, as on the previous "great days" of July 14th and October 5th and 6th. On this subject see the very interesting and little known testimony of a contemporary, in the *Moniteur* of August 28, 1792 (reprint, xiii. 538).

As long as this victory was doubtful the Legislative Assembly avoided any definite pronouncement. Thus, when Louis XVI entered the Hall of Assembly, as it was so far impossible to foresee the result of the conflict, the President, Vergniaud, addressed him as though he were still on the throne: "Sire, you can count on the stability of the National Assembly; its members have sworn to die upholding the rights of the people *and the constituted authorities.*"<sup>1</sup>

But soon it is known that the Swiss have been defeated; that the château has been entered. The Assembly then renounces the maintenance of "constituted authorities," and ratifies the defeat of the King by adopting the formula of a new oath, in which fidelity to the King is not referred to: which oath is worded as follows: "In the name of the Nation, I swear, to the best of my ability, to maintain liberty and equality, or to die at my post." This oath is immediately taken by all the deputies present.

Then, in view of the report made by Vergniaud in the name of the Extraordinary Commission, the Assembly decides to satisfy the victorious insurrection.

<sup>1</sup> *Moniteur*, reprint, xiii. 378. The *Journal logographique* attributes to Vergniaud language still more constitutional (and it was this text which was employed by Amar in 1793 in drafting the act of accusation against the Girondists): "The National Assembly knows its duties. It regards the maintenance of the constituted authorities as one of its most cherished duties. It will remain firm at its post. We all know how to die there (*applause*)." *Journal de Perlet*, No. 315, p. 83: "The President replies to the King that he can count on the firmness of the National Assembly, that its members have sworn to die at their post, in support of the rights of the people and the constituted authorities." The *Journal des débats et décrets* alone attributes to Vergniaud a reply in which no mention is made of *constituted authorities*: "The National Assembly knows all its duties. It will remain firm at its post, and we all know how to die there." Later, the Assembly effaces these traces of monarchical scruples; the *procès-verbal* makes the President say simply that "the Assembly fears no danger, and at the worst it will know how to die, if must be, at its post."

Given the evils from which the country is suffering, and considering "that these evils have been principally the result of the distrust inspired by the conduct of the head of the executive during a war undertaken in his name in defiance of the Constitution and the national independence," considering that, under the extraordinary circumstances, it can only "reconcile that which it owes to its immovable fidelity to the Constitution with its firm resolve to be entombed under the ruins of the Temple of Liberty rather than to allow it to perish, by appealing to the national sovereignty": the National Assembly decrees that the French people is invited to form a National Convention, and that "the head of the executive power is provisionally suspended from his functions, until the National Convention shall have pronounced upon the measures it may think fit to adopt in order to assure the sovereignty of the people and the reign of liberty and equality."

A second decree, passed a few minutes later, decides that the King and his family "shall remain as hostages, and that the civil list shall cease to exist."<sup>1</sup>

Why does the Assembly vote for the suspension of the King and not for his dethronement?

This is the question which in 1793 was put by the accusers of the Girondists, Saint-Just and Amar. Brissot, in his defence, replied in the following terms:

"You tell me that I preferred suspension to dethronement, and the suspension *was an act preservative of royalty*. Yes, we did prefer suspension, and this preference is yet another proof of my republicanism. The dethronement would not have cut at the root of the evil; for Louis XVI would have been succeeded by a child and a

---

<sup>1</sup> On August 12th the Assembly declared that the King and his family should inhabit the hôtel of the Minister of Justice. On the 13th, "on the demand of the Mayor of Paris and the commissaries of the commune," it decreed "that the King and his family should at once be surrendered to them in order that they might be transferred to the place indicated for their domicile," namely, the Temple.

regency ; the Council had always been devoted to him ; constitutional royalty would have continued ; the source of the evil was there, and dethronement would not have cured it. Suspension, on the contrary, in conjunction with a Convention, prepared for every danger. On the one hand, the forces of the nation were in the hands of its representatives ; and, on the other hand, in calling the Convention we were calling upon the nation to pronounce upon the future of its government and its Constitution. Now the nation alone had the right to change the one or the other ; for if the Legislative Assembly had wished to annihilate royalty then and there, it would have exceeded its powers ; a fact which Saint-Just did not remark in reproaching it with not having wished to establish republicanism. It was necessary to ask the people either for new powers, or for successors whose power should be unlimited. The Assembly preferred this latter alternative, which would lead more naturally to a republic. If it had wished to preserve the institution of royalty, the Constitution, and its own power, it would merely have had to proclaim the dethronement. That would truly have been *an act preservative of royalty*. The suspension, on the contrary, was an appeal to the republic ; it was giving it a trial before it was decreed."

That Brissot, when he saw the King vanquished, immediately returned to the republicanism which he had disowned in his speech of July 26th, is entirely likely. But that he, and the Assembly, voted for suspension because it was a more republican measure than dethronement, is disproved by the very character of the Assembly, and Article 4 of the decree of suspension : "The Extraordinary Commission will during the day present a proposal for a decree concerning the nomination of the governor of the Prince Royal." It had intended the monarchy to continue ; and if it relinquished this policy, it was under the pressure of the people and the Commune. At the same time, it did not at first intend to treat Louis as a captive ; it was a "lodging," not a prison, which was assigned him first in the Luxembourg, and then in the hôtel of the Minister of Justice. But the Commune decided to confine the King in the Temple, and the Assembly confirmed their decision.

It is evident that if the Assembly preferred suspension to dethronement, it was because the former measure appeared less radical, less republican than the latter. Later, swept away by events and the tide of opinion, it renounced its monarchical intentions.

## II.

The King suspended and a prisoner; the throne vacant; there we have the most notable results of the insurrection of August 10th.

How was the executive power reorganised?

Imitating the Constituent Assembly, which, after the flight to Varennes, did not hesitate to exercise the royal functions in the interim, but differing from it in that in place of retaining the King's ministers it dismissed them, the Legislative Assembly decided, on August 10th, to nominate the six ministers who were to form an executive authority, a council which would no longer be known as the King's Council or the Council of State, but as the provisional Executive Council.

Having decreed that the minister who should first be nominated should sign for all the departments of the ministry, as long as they remained vacant—and this indicated in advance what an exceptional degree of confidence the Assembly was prepared to repose in the minister first appointed—it nominated Danton first of all. Only 285 voters were present out of 745 members; the whole Right, with a few exceptions, was absent.<sup>1</sup> Danton was elected Minister of Justice by

<sup>1</sup> Among the few deputies of the Right to remain now at their post through the session of August 10, we must mention Turquet de Mayerne (from Indre). In the *Journal des débats et des décrets* of September 2, 1792, was a letter from him, dated August 29th, in which he stated that he was present and voted with several of his colleagues of the Right.



222 votes, while Monge, elected Minister of Marine, obtained only 154. Then Le Brun and Grouvelle competed for the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, the first obtaining 109 votes, the second 91. A second scrutiny, of which we have not the figures, resulted in giving Le Brun the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, and Grouvelle was appointed Secretary to the Council. Then, without scrutiny, the Assembly completed the Council by summoning the three "patriot" ex-ministers whom Louis XVI had lately dismissed; Roland became Minister of the Interior, Servan Minister of War, and Clavière Minister of Public Taxes.

There was no permanent President of Council. On August 15th the Assembly decreed that "each minister should in turn fulfil, week by week, the functions of President of Council."

The provisional Executive Council was entrusted, by the same decree of August 15th, "with all the functions of the executive power."

It began the exercise of these functions on August 13th, and held its last meeting on the 30th of *Germinal* in the year Two—April 19, 1794—when it was replaced by twelve Executive Commissions.

I shall speak later on, in the chapter on the Revolutionary Government, of the changes which occurred in the personality, the organisation, and the authority of the Executive Council.

What should especially at this point be remarked is that the election of Danton was a victory for the democratic party; through him the insurgents of August 10th seized on and exercised the executive power.

How was it that Danton, formerly treated as a demagogue, often disowned by the most authoritative leaders of the Revolution, was elected Minister of Justice, and by so large a majority? The most illustrious of his electors, Condorcet, has explained, in a posthumous work, the reasons of his choice :

“There are those who have reproached me for giving my vote to Danton when he was elected Minister of Justice. Here are my reasons. It was necessary to have in this Ministry a man who should enjoy the confidence of the people whose uprising had but then overthrown the monarchy ; it was necessary to have a man who, by his ascendancy, could control the extremely untrustworthy instruments of a glorious, useful, and necessary revolution ; and it was essential that this man, by his mind or character, should degrade neither the Ministry nor the Assembly which would have dealings with him. Danton alone had these qualities. I chose him, and I do not repent my choice. Perhaps he exaggerated the maxims of popular constitutions in paying too great a deference to the ideas of the people ; in making too great a use, in the conduct of affairs, of popular movements and opinions. But the principle of acting only with the people and through the people, while directing the people, is the only principle which can safeguard the laws in a time of popular insurrection ; and all parties that separate themselves from the people will end in destruction, and perhaps in destroying the people with themselves.”

We know also that at the moment of voting Fabre d'Églantine said to Brissot : “ The patriots want to put Danton in the Ministry : are you going to oppose his nomination ? ” Brissot replied : “ No ; on the contrary, this ought to be the seal of our reconciliation.”

The election of Danton was thus the result of two feelings. On the one hand, the Legislative Assembly hoped, by nominating the chief leader of the party of insurrection, to effect a reconciliation with the popular party, which had gone against the Assembly in the election of August 10th, and to guarantee itself against the violence of this party. On the other hand, this election proved to France, and to all Europe, that all French patriots, whether moderate or extreme, were united against the foreigner.

Danton was the real head of the provisional Executive Council, which held its meetings in his quarters, at the hôtel of the Minister of Justice. He assured the unity of the Council, and directed its actions, especially its diplomatic relations. It was through his negotiations that the retreat of the Prussians was effected,

and France saved from the invasion. If the Council fulfilled satisfactorily its principal duty, which was to save an invaded country, it was because it allowed Danton to assume a preponderating influence.

The authority of the Council was counterbalanced not by the Legislative Assembly, although the latter pretended to fill the place of the King and ruler ; for it was really too greatly weakened by the victory of the Revolution of the 10th to play such a part in actuality ; but by a new power, popular and revolutionary ; that of the Revolutionary Commune.

On the night of August 9th commissaries nominated by twenty-eight of the forty-eight sections of Paris, with full power to safeguard public affairs, met at the Hôtel de Ville. Among these men there was at first only one well known ; namely, Robert ; others, such as Tallien, Hébert, Lulier, Huguenin, Rossignol, Bourdon, Xavier, Audouin, were to distinguish themselves later. Robespierre, Billaud-Varenne, Fabre d'Églantine, Chaumette, and Pache were appointed after the victory of the insurrection. The first commissaries refused the mayor admittance, suspended the Council General of the Commune, and installed themselves in its place, maintaining in the performance of their duties the mayor (Petion), the procurator, and the sixteen administrators. The new Commune thus associated itself with the principal members of the legal Commune.

The Revolutionary Commune directed the insurrection. It opened negotiations with the Legislative Assembly on August 10th, towards midnight, by means of a deputation whose members were at the outset known as "deputies of the Commissaries of the Sections assembled at the Hôtel de Ville." The Assembly, without explicit recognition of this new power, nevertheless instructed it to take measures to prevent the burning of the Tuileries. The insurrection once victorious, the

Assembly addressed the commissaries as "the municipality." On the 11th the Assembly allowed it a grant of 850 livres per month. Completed by the new elections, and numbering now 288 members, the insurrectionary assembly of the Hôtel de Ville gave itself the name of Council General of the Commune.

From this time onwards it tried to influence the Government of France; it entered into conflict with the Legislative Assembly; and often it paralysed the action of the Executive Council; as, for instance, on the days of the September massacres.

Danton took care that these conflicts did not degenerate into civil war. He ingeniously avoided all open ruptures. The Government he presided over retained the appearance of a Government in the eyes of Europe, and was at least master of all diplomatic and military operations.

But in the case of home affairs the Council was obliged every moment to negotiate with the Revolutionary Commune, which in fact associated itself with the Government. This peculiar state of things, which has often been called the Parisian Dictatorship, was not an active dictatorship, but a participation of the Commune of Paris in the operations of the Executive Council.

### III.

The suspension of the King, the establishment of the provisional Executive Council, the spontaneous formation of the Revolutionary Commune: these are not all the results of the insurrection of August 10, 1792. This insurrection also, and at the same time, brought about the fall of the *bourgeois* system and the establishment of democracy.

Having determined on the convocation of a National Convention, which should take measures "to safeguard the sovereignty of the people and the reign of liberty and equality," the Legislative Assembly adopted the conclusions of a summary report presented by Jean de Bry in the name of the Extraordinary Commission, and, unanimously and with applause (according to the *Journal des débats*), it passed the following decree :

"The National Assembly, wishing, at the moment when it has just solemnly sworn to maintain equality and liberty, to consecrate on this day the application of a principle equally precious to the people, decrees the matter to be one of urgency :

"The National Assembly decrees that, for the purpose of forming the coming National Convention, every Frenchman aged twenty-five years, domiciled one year, living on the produce of his labour, shall be admitted for the purpose of voting in the assemblies of the communes and in the primary assemblies."

On the 11th it formally declared that it suppressed the division of Frenchmen into active and passive citizens, and it decreased the necessary age from twenty-five to twenty-one years. It modified the conditions of eligibility, whether to the electoral assemblies or the Convention, by fixing the age of eligibility at twenty-five years.

By the same decree it excluded from the rights of active citizens all Frenchmen "being in a condition of domesticity."

It then appeared to nullify this exclusion by a decree of August 21st, in which, recalling the decree of the 11th, it omitted to speak of domestics. But on the 27th, in an explanatory decree, it formally excluded from political assemblies, on the grounds of domesticity, all citizens "attached to the habitual service of persons," while requesting the primary assemblies "not to contest admission or the right of suffrage to any whose ordinary labours are applied to industry, commerce, or agriculture."

The exclusion of domestics was, in fact, maintained.<sup>1</sup> With this restriction, what the Legislative Assembly established on August 10, 1792, was universal suffrage.

The democrats were not entirely satisfied. Many of them, among the Jacobins and Cordeliers especially, had wished for direct universal suffrage, and the Assembly was maintaining the two degrees of suffrage : primary assemblies and electoral assemblies.

The decree of August 10th established universal suffrage only for political elections ; other decrees established it for other elections, and the same electoral assemblies which nominated the members of the Convention also nominated administrators and judges.

It was thus that the fall of the King brought about the fall of the *bourgeois* system ; the popular insurrection against Louis XVI, inspired by patriotic sentiments, by the fear of external peril, ended, on the very day of conquest, in the establishment of democracy.

<sup>1</sup> The decree of August 27th had escaped me when I stated, in my *Études et Leçons*, p. 118, that domestics were not excluded from the right of suffrage.

## CHAPTER III

### THE EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL IDEAS FROM AUGUST 10TH TO SEPTEMBER 22ND

- I. Provincial France subscribes to the Revolution of August 10th.—
- II. The movement against Louis XVI and against royalty.—
- III. The attitude of the Legislative Assembly.—
- IV. The attitude of the people of Paris.—
- V. Journals and pamphlets.—
- VI. Elections to the Convention in Paris.—
- VII. The Jacobin Club.—
- VIII. The republican movement in the provinces.—
- IX. Elections of deputies to the Convention.—
- X. The republican movement in these elections.—
- XI. Proposals for taking another King.—
- XII. Schemes for the organisation of the Republic.

BETWEEN the dethronement of Louis XVI and the establishment of the republic there was a kind of nameless interregnum, which lasted forty-two days ; from August 10th to September 22nd. During these weeks there was neither republic nor monarchy ; at the end of the period the republic was finally established.

It was during this interregnum that public opinion grew gradually less and less monarchical ; more and more republican ; and it is this gradual change that we are now about to consider.

#### I.

Let us first of all remark that the country as a whole accepted the political results of the Revolution of August 10th ; that is, the suspension and incarceration

tion of Louis XVI ; although these results were not presented as a provisional and temporary expedient, as was the suspension of 1791, but as a definitive dethronement ; representing the idea, if not of the immediate suppression of royalty, at least of an approach to that suppression.

In Paris the partisans of Louis could do nothing, attempted nothing. Those who did not escape were imprisoned or terrorised. The Commune suppressed the royalist journals ; the posts were prevented from distributing them ; and such of these papers as did not disappear changed their tone and became " patriotic " at need. Thus, the *Gazette de France*, from August 16th onwards, was known as the *Gazette nationale de France*, and replaced the vignette of its heading, which was decorated with *fleurs-de-lis*, by the words, *Liberté, Égalité*. There were no more anti-revolutionary journals. Absolutist royalism, the royalism of the days of old, was silenced by the gag.<sup>1</sup>

As for the constitutional monarchists, they were reduced to impotence, almost to silence, by the defection or defeat of the Legislative Assembly.

The only authority in Paris which was ardently royalist, the Department, had been decapitated, so to speak, by the collective dismissal of the members of its Directory ; a dismissal effected in July, after the decree by which the Assembly had annulled the suspension of Petion and Manuel. When the Assembly ordained the election of a new Department, it nullified it beforehand by forbidding it (August 12th) to exercise its legal functions of surveillance and superior

<sup>1</sup> We read in the *Correspondance littéraire secrète* of August 24th : " One sees no more aristocrats, at least, none that one knows, in the public places, at the Palais Royal, or in the cafés. The literary *cabinets* of the Palais Royal are diminished by two-thirds. Not a single writer who is not wholly democratic ! "



police work, which was reserved for the Revolutionary Commune.

In Paris, consequently, there was no show of monarchical opposition to the popular revolution of August 10th.

In the provinces the great majority of Councils and departmental Directories subscribed to the Revolution immediately. Only a few at the outset hesitated to accept and register the decrees of the 10th; for instance, the Departments of Somme, Seine-Inférieure, Indre, Creuse, Moselle, Meurthe, Bas-Rhin, Haut-Rhin. The Council of this latter department even went so far as to say, in a proclamation: "We shall maintain Royalty and defend the National Assembly and the constitutional monarch."

But this opposition did not last; these departments before long submitted.

In the department of the Ardennes alone a serious and alarming opposition was attempted; here also occurred the only serious example of military opposition.

La Fayette, who was commanding the army of the North, his headquarters being at Sedan, persuaded the municipality of Sedan to refuse to recognise the insurrection of the 10th; and the departmental administration of the Ardennes subscribed to this refusal. Three commissaries from the Legislative Assembly were imprisoned by the authorities of Sedan; and La Fayette, as great a royalist in France as in America a republican, attempted to induce his army to declare itself in favour of the King. But his army was obdurate; he, with his staff, had to leave the country on August 19th. The Army as a body, expecting only a few officers, accepted the events of the 10th.

Addresses of approval flowed in from the communes; the authorities, for the most part, gradually followed their example.

We may say, in short, that France agreed to the dethronement of Louis XVI.<sup>1</sup>

## II.

Let us mark how this movement against Louis became a movement against royalty. Let us observe in what manner France, still monarchical in the early days of August, had attained to such a frame of mind by September that the Republic was established without opposition.

Was this the effect of a well-planned republican propaganda? No! The republican publicists rarely risked the word "republic." Organised republican party there was none; and the cry of "*Vive la République!*" was heard but seldom in these forty-two days. Rather would men have cried, "*Down with the King!*" But there was no popular rallying cry at all; it even seems that the question of the future form of government was not one that roused men's minds.

Was public opinion influenced by the kind of object-lesson which resulted from the duration and success of the nameless interregnum, which was, in fact, republican? Yes; up to a certain point. The Executive Council, which replaced the King, exhibited some of the qualities (not only political, but moral) which in the King had been peculiarly lacking. The energetic activity of Danton, the eloquent proclamations of the virtuous Roland, the obviously patriotic attitude of the new rulers of France, gave the impression that this

<sup>1</sup> We read in the *Patriote français* of August 21st: "We should be guilty of nothing but monotonous repetition, were we to give a detailed account of the acts of subscription, the addresses of congratulation and thanks, which the National Assembly is receiving from all the communes of France, from all the administrative bodies, and even from those whose moderation was the greatest, the most inclined to Feuillantism."

government by *polyarchy* (although polyarchy had been denounced by Siéyès as nothing but anarchy) was, in fact, a national government ; that the King could really be dispensed with.<sup>1</sup>

But what chiefly disgusted the people with royalty were the written proofs of the King's treason. Papers seized by the victors, and immediately printed, were scattered throughout the country ; with the result that all were convinced that the King had been in communication with the *émigré* nobles, and the enemies of France ; above all, the accounts found among the papers of Laporte, the intendant, proved that the expenses of the most perfidious and treacherous of the anti-revolutionary pamphlets and journals had been defrayed by the civil list.

There was a surge of anger, of disgust. This, then, was the King ! This was what it was to be a king ! Good : let us have no king ! So men reasoned ; or so, more exactly, did they feel.<sup>2</sup>

But the fact which shook men's souls to the foundation, and thus prepared them for change, was the invasion of France by Austria and Prussia. On August 19th they crossed the frontier, and entered the department of Moselle. On the 20th they invested Longwy ; on the 30th, Verdun. On September 2nd they captured

<sup>1</sup> Thus we read in an address from the administrators of the department of Cantal to their fellow-citizens, dated September 29th : "From the time when the suspension of Louis XVI was pronounced to the time when royalty was abolished, the nation has made a trial of government without royalty ; there has seemed to be no hiatus in the conduct of the State, except for those who used to share the spoils ; we all know now that a State can exist without royalty."

<sup>2</sup> See an address drawn up by Brival, to the inhabitants of the eighty-three departments, printed by order of the Jacobins, dated August 19th : "The veil is rent ; the day of exposure has come. On August 15th the proofs were found that the King was corresponding with his brothers and the *émigrés* : proof of his understanding with the enemy," &c.

Verdun. On the 5th they prepared to march on Paris. On the 6th they laid siege to Thionville. Soon they would be in Champagne.

At each of these disasters France trembled. Men felt in the depth of their being the blow that destroyed the monarchist in them for ever. What did the invaders seek? To replace Louis on the throne. Well, the French had upset the throne ; they would save their country themselves ; they would save themselves without a king. In this way republicanism was born — out of the exasperation of patriotism.

### III.

Such were the chief events which converted the country to republicanism.

Let us now consider the most characteristic manifestations of this conversion. To begin with, let us take the Legislative Assembly.

On August 10th the Assembly had saved what it could of the monarchy, by decreeing no more than the suspension of the King, and announcing the nomination of a governor for the Prince Royal.

These conservative tendencies, these monarchical afterthoughts, were to vanish quickly enough, under the influence of the Revolutionary Commune, which, as we shall see, declared against the institution of royalty.

In the first place the Assembly delivered the King to the Commune, authorised it to confine him in the Temple, there to be treated as a prisoner awaiting judgment ; not as a suspended monarch who might one day remount his throne.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The transfer of the Royal Family to the Temple was marked by violent and boorish manifestations against Louis and Marie Antoinette. Michaud, deputy for Doubs, writes in a private letter of the 14th :

It did not proceed to nominate a governor for the Prince Royal.

On August 15th, after receiving a petition from the section of the Louvre, it decreed that the seal of the State should be altered: "It shall bear a figure of Liberty, armed with a pike surmounted by the bonnet of Liberty, and shall bear the legend: *In the name of the French nation.*" It was enacted that the name of the King should be effaced from all deeds, acts, and from all official emblems whatsoever.<sup>1</sup>

This suppression of the word *king* did not cause excessive astonishment; the same thing had been done in 1791, and that republican interlude had ended in the re-establishment of the monarchy. And it is possible that one party of the Assembly had still, on August 15th, the intention of sacrificing Louis only, not royalty itself.

It was Gensonné who, in the name of the Extraordinary Commission, had presented the draft of the decree concerning the altered seal, and this draft commenced as follows: "The National Assembly, considering the necessity of determining upon a new form of words for all the actions of the executive power until such time as the National Convention shall have pronounced itself with regard to the dethronement, decrees," &c.

Cambon maintained that the Convention would be obliged not only to "declare the dethronement of the King or the reconstruction of the executive power," but

"The removal of Louis XVI to the Temple was effected very slowly. People were obliged to keep their hats on under pain of death. During the whole journey, the people never ceased crying: 'Down with the pig! Down with the Austrian traitress!'" Insulting caricatures were printed. The prestige of not only the King was destroyed, but also that of royalty.

<sup>1</sup> This general suppression of the word *king* did not immediately take place everywhere. Thus many of the *procès-verbaux* of the electoral assemblies which nominated the members of Convention are sealed with the Constitutional seal: *the nation, the law, and the King.*

to "judge if the sovereign people desired a king, or if they would no longer maintain one." No one raising objection, it was decided that these words : *Until such time as the National Convention shall have pronounced itself with regard to the dethronement*, should be replaced by these : *Until such time as the National Convention shall be assembled*. The same night, in an address to the Parisians, the Assembly said : "The Convention will decide upon the nature of the Constitution."<sup>1</sup>

Thus the Assembly accepts and proclaims the idea that the Convention can substitute a republic for the monarchy.

It goes farther : the Assembly itself pronounces against royalty.

This, be it remarked, is while the news of the military reverses is coming in ; when the patriotism of the Parisians becomes delirious, during the massacres of September. The Assembly can conceive of no better means of calming men's minds and giving them courage.

The initiative came from the Executive Council. On the evening of September 3rd, the Minister of War proposed to the Assembly various measures for restoring confidence and pacifying the people. "While it is being said through all the frontier departments that the Duke of York has been called to the French throne, it is being said in Paris that Louis XVI should be restored. . . ." He demanded that an address on the subject should be prepared, and the Extraordinary Commission was instructed to do so.

<sup>1</sup> During the same session Cambon had the Committee of Assignats and Moneys instructed "to present a draft of a decree replacing the effigy of Louis XVI on moneys." Ducos says : "This scandalous effigy is still to be seen on the walls of the Assembly : I demand that it shall be covered by the Declaration of Rights." The *Journal des débats* says this was done.

On the morrow, September 4th (here I quote the *procès-verbal*), "a member" (Chabot) announced that the enemies of liberty were publicly spreading the most odious accusations against the Assembly, in order to sow discord and distrust among the citizens, and to divide patriots among themselves; that some said that certain members of the Assembly were working to keep Louis on the throne; that some declared that the Duke of Brunswick was to be created King; and others, some foreign prince; that all these rumours, as false as absurd, were such as might well produce most dangerous results, and in order to deprive the enemies of France of this their last weapon, it was essential for the National Assembly to declare, publicly and plainly, its detestation of kings and kingship.<sup>1</sup>

"The Assembly, by a general movement, rose as one man, and swore\* that it would fight against kings and royalty to the death.

"A member proposed to add to this oath that the Assembly would never suffer a foreigner to give laws to France.

"Another added to this motion the statement that no monarch, whether French or foreign, should defile the free soil of France.

---

<sup>1</sup> "A unanimous cry resounded through the Assembly and the galleries" (*Moniteur*).

<sup>2</sup> *Moniteur*: "Yes, yes! We swear it; no more kings!" According to the *Journal des débats*, immediately after his oath Thuriot said, among other things: "Gentlemen, it is in your hearts, the oath you have just now taken. I should like to think you had expressed the will of the National Convention; but you cannot absolutely determine it. If by an impossibility it befell that the Convention wished to create kings—(*murmurs*)—I am only making a supposition, for I myself abhor tyrants, and no king can be other than a tyrant (*applause*); if the Convention (which is not what I do expect) should express a wish contrary to your hope, you must not rebel against the law; but you can, to-day, not as representatives of the people, but as citizens, swear one by one that you will oppose with all your might the domination of kings." And the *Journal des débats* adds: "The members renewed their oath amid loud applause." Here, again, is how the *Courrier des 83 départements* of September 5th, relates this scene: "It is absolutely

“The National Assembly, subscribing to this last motion, repeated the oath with the same enthusiasm as before.

“A member of the Extraordinary Commission (Guadet) observed that he had been instructed to draft an address which should express the sentiments of the Assembly on the subject of royalty. He read it, and it was unanimously adopted.”

This address ended as follows :

“But this oath which they cannot take as representatives of the people they take as citizens and as individuals ; they swear to fight with all their might against kings and the institution of royalty.”<sup>1</sup>

Need we see in this face-about of the Legislative Assembly an act of cowardice, which it was induced to commit by the pressure of the galleries, the Commune, the man in the street? The Commune had undoubtedly already set it the example of swearing hatred against royalty.

On the other hand, too, on August 29th the Assembly heard, at the bar, the artillerymen of the section of Mail, who said : “We protest our hatred of all kings, and we swear to defend the rights of the people with the right of our cannon.”

essential,’ cries M. Chabot, ‘that the National Assembly should silence this kind of thing. Let us swear that we have a horror of kings and royalty.’ ‘Yes,’ says M. Dubayet, ‘let us swear that no foreigner shall ever make our laws,’ ‘It is not enough,’ cries M. Larivière ; ‘the proposition is too vague ; let us swear on all that is most sacred, on the safety of the nation, on the happiness of the people, to die a thousand times, before any monarch, prince, or king shall be the head of the French nation.’ ‘Yes, we promise !’ cries the whole Assembly, ‘we swear it !’ This oath is repeated by the spectators amidst applause and cries of ‘*Vive la liberté !*’ It is engraven in all French hearts ; they will hold it fast.”

<sup>1</sup> The *Moniteur* ascribes to Fauchet these words : “I observe that the address which has just been read leaves no doubt in this respect ; it is not as legislators but as citizens that we have just sworn this oath ; and in this quality, even if the National Convention were to replace the King on the throne, we should still have the right to refuse to submit to royalty, and to flee a country which consented to live under the yoke of tyrants. (*Unanimous and repeated applause.*)”



The truth is that the members of the Assembly had, like others, suffered psychological changes under the stress of events, and these changes made themselves felt even among some who sat on the Right. We have the confession of one such, Rabusson-Lamothe, as great a monarchist and a conservative as one could find. On July 12, 1792, he wrote to his constituents in respect of the session of July 7th, when the oath was taken of hatred of the republic :

“A witness, an actor in this interesting scene, I myself brought to it all the sensibility, all the frankness of an honest mind, of a representative of the people innately convinced of the sanctity of oaths, and one who had never desired either a republic, nor two chambers, nor anything whatsoever that could be considered as attacking the Constitution.”

On August 16th he wrote :

“At last my eyes are unsealed, the bandage is fallen ; and, to my great astonishment, I have recognised that kings are incorrigible, and that perjury is the one thing in the world they are most familiar with, and I have hastened to rally to those from whom I have hitherto differed, and it is with a full heart that I have sworn to die, if need be, to uphold equality and liberty.”<sup>1</sup>

This is how the Legislative Assembly, elected to uphold and conduct the monarchy, was led, by the faults and the downfall of Louis XVI, to renounce it.

#### IV.

What was the attitude of the people of Paris? Immediately after the victory of the insurrection, the people threw down the statues of all kings,<sup>2</sup> even

<sup>1</sup> Rabusson-Lamothe was not the only one of his party thus to change his opinions. At the Jacobins, on the 17th, a member stated that in the Assembly the Right side now voted with the Left.

<sup>2</sup> See the *Révolutions de Paris*, xiii. p. 640, and especially the engravings included in that issue.

that of Henri IV, popular as it was, and the section Henri IV took the name of Pont-Neuf.<sup>1</sup> Certainly this section let it be understood that if it could not help itself it would put up with a king so long as he was constitutional, and it also said, at the bar of the Assembly, on August 14th : "The virtues of Henri IV checked us for some time, but we remembered that he was not a constitutional monarch. We saw in him only the despot, and suddenly down came the statue."<sup>2</sup> But the spontaneous character of the simultaneous attacks on the statues of the kings of France, these manifestations against all the attributes of royalty, together with the absence of any manifestation in favour of the monarchy—do not these prove clearly enough that on the morrow of the 10th Paris was finally disgusted with royalty?<sup>3</sup>

The idea of any king whatsoever, Bourbon, York,

<sup>1</sup> The section Place Louis XIV took the name of Mail ; that of Place Royale called itself the section of the Place des Fédérés ; that of the Roi-de-Sicile, section Droits-de l'Homme ; that of the Palais Royal, section Butte-des-Moulins. I speak here only of sections whose names recalled royalty. Many others changed their names.

<sup>2</sup> *Moniteur*, xiii. p. 419. We read in the issue of August 17th : "To the Editor: Yesterday, Sir, I saw, while passing the Pont Neuf, a man standing still opposite the place where the statue of Henri IV. had stood. He appeared to be absorbed in serious reflection. I remained at his side for some time without speaking. Two or three minutes later, I said to him: 'Can you believe it is the statue of the brave and good Henri IV that has been thrown down there?' 'Yes, sir,' replied my man. 'Cannot you see it is?' 'Well, no!' I replied, 'it is not Henri IV I see lying on the ground; it is Louis XVI.' The man, astonished, looked at me with an air that I thought less depressed than before, and I passed on my way." This article was reproduced by several papers.

<sup>3</sup> The *Correspondance littéraire secrète* of August 31st reports that public opinion betrays "an antipathy for royalty." The anonymous editor states : "The deputies who will form the coming Convention will find in this new revolution a mandate they will hardly be able to violate, and I doubt if one of them will find the courage to pronounce the name of king."

or Brunswick, angered the people, and it was to allay this anger that the Assembly, as we have seen, took the anti-royalist oath of September 4th.

This oath responded so well to the feelings of the Parisian populace that on the evening of September 4th the deputies sent out to the sections reported that they had everywhere found the people exhibiting their hatred of kings and royalty. On September 6th the mayor of Paris and the municipality came to repeat the oath at the bar of the Assembly. On the 5th the artillerymen of the section of Mail had done the same ; next came the section of the Luxembourg, the section of Fontaine-Montmartre, and " five or six thousand water-carriers."

If Paris will have no more to do with kings, is it because she desires a republic? Doubtless ; very soon the electoral assembly will manifest this desire. But how folk hesitate to speak the word " republic " ! It is not popular, and Robespierre has, in a way, consecrated this unpopularity. If the word is pronounced, it is often to say that the speaker thinks better of the thing than of the word. Gonchon, the orator of a " deputation of the men of July 14th and August 10th," says, at the bar of the Assembly, on August 16th : " No, legislators, no ! Let us no longer cap Liberty with a crown ! She is so fair in her woollen bonnet ! Republic or monarchy—president or king ? Ah, childish people ! what do words matter, so long as we have a government in whose shadow we can live happy and be free ? "

Hatred of royalty : hesitation to speak the word " republic " : these were the two feelings, contradictory, yet real, that co-existed in the hearts of the people of Paris ; above all before the republican manifestations of the electoral assembly and of the Jacobins (September 12th), which we shall presently describe. Only after these manifestations was the question of monarchy

or republic put on the "order of the day" of public opinion.<sup>1</sup>

The attitude of the Revolutionary Commune was the same; I have not found the word "republic" in its proceedings. But it declares itself enthusiastically as against royalty.

On August 14th "it was proposed to send delegates to the National Assembly to demand that the name of the King should be erased from the list of public officials, and that it should no longer be employed in the proclamations issued by the Legislative Assembly. This proposition was adopted with enthusiasm." On the 21st, the Commune ordered the demolition of the Gates of Saint-Denis and Saint-Martin, to destroy in the shops and on the houses all royal and feudal emblems, &c., and it adopted, "with enthusiasm," the motion of Manuel, which suggested "replacing the bronze horse over the door of the Commune by a tablet of marble bearing the following inscription:

"Hear the decrees of the people: in all things learn to obey;  
Men were citizens long ere ever the masters were.  
The rights that our forbears lost we resume and we hold them dear;  
A weary time were the people abused by the kings: to-day  
They are tired of the sceptre: the sceptre is broken and thrown  
away.

*"The 10th of August, 1792, the Year IV of Liberty  
and the first of Equality."*<sup>2</sup>

There were also ardent anti-royalist manifestations on the part of individual members of the Commune.

<sup>1</sup> Thus, about September 15, the section of the Panthéon-Français announced a meeting for the deliberation of this question. What its result was we do not know.

<sup>2</sup> "Obéissez au peuple, écoutez ses décrets;  
Il fut des citoyens avant qu'il fut des maîtres.  
Nous rentrons dans les droits qu'ont perdus nos ancêtres.  
Le peuple par les rois fut longtemps abusé;  
Il s'est lassé du sceptre, et le sceptre est brisé."

Thus, towards the middle of September, Méhée de la Touche, assistant secretary-recorder to the Commune, invited by the section of the Panthéon-Français to the meeting at which the question of monarchy or republic was to be deliberated, excused himself in a public letter, in which he said : " If ever the thing we used to call a king, or anything resembling it, should dare to show itself in France, and you should be in need of some one to stab him, kindly put down my name among the candidates for the post." <sup>1</sup>

The Mayor of Paris, Petion, does not exhibit an anti-royalist zeal to equal that of the would-be regicide, but in a letter addressed to the forty-eight sections on September 19th he says : " Royalty, that root of all our ills, has been torn from the heart of the French nation."

Such, in the August and September of 1792, was the anti-royalist attitude of the Commune of Paris.

## V.

Let us now examine the attitude of the journals during this period.

That of Hébert, *Père Duchesne*, is not one of the most important, but as this prudent journalist has a habit of following the manifestations of public opinion

<sup>1</sup> It is possible that Méhée had this letter posted up. In any case, we see in the *Feuille de Paris* of September 21st, p. 4, that the section of the Panthéon-Français denounced to the Commune a placard written by Méhée, and demanded the dismissal of the assistant secretary-recorder. The Commune adjourned the matter until the next day. But the *Feuille* for September 22nd is not to be found in the Bibliothèque Nationale, so that we do not know the sequel ; and what we know does not throw much light on the political opinions of the section of the Panthéon-Français. However, Méhée exercised his functions as assistant secretary-recorder for some considerable time ; was still there in March, 1793.

without ever outrunning them, his paper may be taken as faithfully reflecting the changes of popular opinion after the dethronement.

On the morrow of August 10th, what Hébert chiefly regrets is the monarchy under Turgot. "If Louis XVI had followed the good advice of Turgot, would he not have caused his reign to be called blessed? While now, curse it, he is as much loved as the grey wolf. Little as he knew of faith and honour, shouldn't he have kept Roland, Clavière, and Servan as the apple of his eyes?" "Don't let Louis the False re-ascend the throne; turn out a blasted race that has done us more harm than famine, war, and the plague together." The Bourbons once expelled, is it necessary to set another dynasty on the throne? Hébert sees the people overturning the statues of kings, and writes that it would be better to have no king at all. But he is not certain that his readers are not monarchists in spite of their anger against Louis XVI. So he resigns himself to the eventual maintenance of the monarchy, and now he even sketches a plan for a constitutional monarchy.

"If," he says, "the boobies absolutely must have a king, he must only be a simple magistrate, the equal of any Frenchman; he must have no grandeur about him, except when dealing with foreigners, no power except against enemies of the State; and his head must always be bent under the yoke of the law. To make such a king, there is no need of holy oil; consecrated by the love of the people, he will be raised a thousand fathoms above all other kings."

But the publication of the secret papers of the monarchy, and the progress of the Austro-Prussian invasion, is visibly "de-royalising" public opinion. So then Hébert cries: "No more kings, no more tyrants, damn it!" "All nations who have a king don't know what freedom is." "No more king, no more civil list!" Now come the elections of the Parisian members of the Convention, and the electoral assembly

declares itself republican : “ No, damn it all, no, no more kings in France ! That’s what we must shout in the ears of those we send to the National Convention.”

Intriguers—

“ are going to wag themselves head and tail to give you a king ; they will say the republic won’t suit you, because they don’t like a government where there is no master, these fellows who have made up their minds to be yours. But you, curse you, have nothing more to do with them ; you who have sworn to be free ; you who have armed twenty-four millions of men against your tyrants, you have not done it for fun. The deuce ! you know by now who are the cruellest enemies of man, and you will never consent to live under a king.”

Thus did Hébert, thus did the people of Paris, pass little by little from monarchism to republicanism.

No journal was founded after August 10th for the purpose of upholding republicanism ; even the only openly republican paper which had existed, before the dethronement, the *Journal des hommes du 14 juillet*, disappeared on the 11th.

Excepting Hébert’s *Père Duchesne*, I have found the word “ republic ” in two papers only.

In August the *Révolutions de Paris*, which was then said to be edited by Robert, affirmed that France was lost, unless the National Convention were—

“ composed entirely of the class of men who are falsely called extreme, and whom people have rendered odious by calling them factious and republican.” “ The French people must have something in place of the ancient institution of royalty ; they must have a chief of the executive powers, who must no longer bear the name of royalty ; he must be neither hereditary, nor elected for life, nor must he enjoy any of his ancient prerogatives ; he must not resemble the old head of the executive in anything that pertains to the exterior forms and shows which speak to the eyes. Then the primary assemblies must recommend their Convention deputies to change the form of the government. *No more kings ! no more kings !* must be the first imperative mandate of the people’s representatives.” †

---

† xiii. 324.

In the *Chronique de Paris* of September 5th Condorcet declares himself a republican, as in July, 1791. This declaration comes late, for Condorcet was embarrassed by the memory of the recent trial of the monarchy, to which he had lent himself; but it is as definite as possible.<sup>1</sup>

The other journals do not utter the word "republic," but there are those that make profession of their anti-royalist faith.

Thus, the *Courrier de l'Égalité*, by Le Maire (the author of another *Père Duchesne*, more monarchical than that of Hébert), prints a letter in which it is stated (September 14th) "that a nation which desires to be free must contrive to dispense with a king." Brissot protests his hatred of kings in the *Patriote français* of September 4th, and we read in the same paper, on September 18th: "Kings and kingship have been judged in this country." Gorsas writes in the *Courrier des 83 départements* of September 5th: "No more kings! Death to tyrants! Liberty and equality! Let this sacred and salutary cry resound in every heart." Carra, who has to wipe out the memory of his complaisance in lately suggesting that a foreign dynasty, a prince of the house of York or Brunswick, might well be enthroned in France, now attacks royalty more violently still: "We invite all the electoral assemblies," he says in the *Annales patriotiques* of September 1st, "to require all the deputies they return to the Convention to swear that they will never

<sup>1</sup> Although Condorcet waited until September 5th to write the word "republic," he did not wait until then to declare himself against the monarchy. In the *Chronique* for August 15th he had said: "Those who have followed the progress of public opinion since the Revolution can see that monarchical prejudices are being threatened as religious superstitions are. The cannon fired against the palace of the Tuileries have been heard across all Europe, and all thrones, shaken by this terrible sound, are tottering on their ancient foundations."



propose either king or monarchy, on the pain of being buried alive in their departments on their return."

Robespierre himself, so obstinately monarchical, sees that he can hold out no longer against the tide of popular opinion which is forming against the monarchy. If he still, after August 10th, persists in calling his journal the *Défenseur de la Constitution*, at least he writes therein: "Either the King or the French must give way. Such is the situation in which you are placed by the glorious struggle you have so far maintained against royalty." In this struggle Robespierre had certainly taken no part. On the contrary, he had formally, on every possible occasion, disowned republicanism. Now we see him rally to the new faith of the people. He does so without enthusiasm, in this one phrase, which marks his evolution. But he will never turn back now; he will remain faithful to the republic, although before August 10th he had always been its enemy.

Alone, or almost alone, Marat disdains to change with events and the minds of men. In his journal, in his pamphlets, between August 10th and September 22nd, I have found no word of subscription to the republic, nor any phrase definitely anti-royalist. Monarchy or republic, it matters little to him. What he wishes is a dictator.

Passing from the journals to the political books and pamphlets which appeared about this time, and the various public statements of writers and statesmen, we must note a republican work by Lavicomterie, the author of the *Crimes des rois*. He published a book entitled *La république sans impôts*, in which he evidently could not conceive that the Convention could establish any other form of government than the republic.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Two other pamphlets demanding the republic were: *Opinion sur la royauté sur Louis XVI et sa famille, sur l'établissement d'une république française*, by Dumouchet; *Ce que doit faire la Convention nationale*, by F. N. Lefèvre.

After the flight to Varennes, Kersaint had written, without daring to publish, a short republican essay, entitled *La monarchie sans roi*; he finally published it in the *Chronique du Mois* of September, 1792.

Roederer, ex-constituent, procurator-general-syndic of the Department of Paris, published in August his *Observations*, in which he most expressly supported the republic.<sup>1</sup>

Grégoire published a sermon delivered in honour of the dead of August 10th, in the cathedral of Blois, in which he furiously denounced all kings. He did not formally demand the republic. He even said that it mattered little to him though the head of the executive power were called "king, gonfaloniere, landgrav, emperor, or syndic," provided the sovereignty of the people were recognised. But he eventually accepted the republican system, and to those who objected that the "extent of our empire" was unsuited to such a system, he replied that "we already have a popular government under another name."

One of the most remarkable anti-royalist manifestations of the time was a public letter from Rabaut Saint-Étienne to Garat, dated August 25th. Saint-Étienne, who in September, 1789, at the tribune of the Constituent Assembly, had declared it "impossible to suppose that any one in the Assembly could have conceived the ridiculous proposal of converting the kingdom into a republic," now wrote stating that "This King has delivered us from all kings whatsoever. A year of his treachery has done more than a century of reasoning could have done to destroy the royalty that six thousand years of idolatry has ripened and sanctified."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Later, Roederer seemed to forget his support of the republic. In 1832 he wrote, at the beginning of his *Chronique de cinquante jours*: "The downfall and death of Louis XVI were part of the mistakes, not the progress, of the Revolution."

Thus not only did the democratic ex-deputies renounce the monarchy, in the person of their leaders ; but we see one of the most notable defenders of the monarchical system doing the same.

## VI.

Paris found in the elections for the National Convention a legal occasion for exhibiting her changed political opinions.

The primary assemblies appointed the electors on August 26th and the following days ; the electoral assembly named the twenty-four deputies and the eight *suppléants* (substitutes) between September 5th and 23rd.

These elections have usually been regarded as being above all things an episode of the quarrel between the Girondists and the Mountain, the moderates and the progressives ; and it has been stated that the progressives won, since the men on Marat's list were for the most part elected.

But it is false to say that there were then two definite parties, wearing the labels and the mottoes which later historians popularised. Certainly there is a mention in the *Révolutions de Paris* of a "Robespierre party" and a "Brissot party" ; and we know that Brissot and Robespierre were in open conflict since Robespierre had opposed the policy of war. Yet now that a state of war existed the object of this quarrel no longer existed. Certainly there was division between the patriots : Robespierre, Danton, and Marat seemed to be in one camp, Brissot and the deputies of the Gironde in another. But in each camp what differences between man and man ! And the limits between the camps were confused, undefinable ; there were continual goings and comings between the two ; exchanges of ideas and of persons ; so that contemporaries plainly saw that there

were quarrels, but never clearly what the quarrels were about. That we see better to-day, from a greater distance, with a wider view. To begin with, we can see—and this is of most importance—that the object of contention was not the form of government.<sup>1</sup> Almost all those who took part in the electoral struggle in Paris were hostile to royalty ; many were republicans, in Robespierre's camp as well as in Brissot's ; although the Brissot party passed as being, at heart, more republican than Robespierre's.<sup>2</sup> What did divide them, although they did not yet perceive it, and perhaps did not definitely feel it, was the question as to whether, in this critical hour of national defence, Paris and its Commune should dictate to the rest of France. Marat and Robespierre upheld this dictatorship ; Brissot and his friends opposed it.<sup>3</sup> Danton would have desired the reconciliation of these adversaries.<sup>4</sup> The policy of Marat and Robespierre seemed to

<sup>1</sup> Certainly the Robespierrists accused the Brissotins of seeking to enthrone a foreign dynasty. But this was a mere libel without serious basis.

<sup>2</sup> Buchez (xix. 21) says the Girondins were the first to speak of a republic. This is not correct, for the republican party was born in Mme. Robert's *salon*. But the principal Montagnards were certainly slower than the Girondins to rally to the republican standard, as is proved by the silence of Marat, Danton and Robespierre on the question of the form of the government, between August 10th and September 22nd.

<sup>3</sup> In a placard dated August 28th, Marat says that "these scoundrels [Brissot, Condorcet, Vergniaud, Guadet, &c.] have carried their scoundrelism so far as to write to all the departments that the National Assembly is under the knife of the Commune of Paris, directed by thirty extremists, in order to make the choice of some town gangrened with aristocracy for the National Convention to sit in, which body they think they can lead as they like."

<sup>4</sup> The reader may possibly wonder that in these inquiries into the origins of the French Republic there is so little question of Danton, whose apologists have often presented him as the true founder of the Republic. Danton certainly played a considerable part in the organisation of the national defences—at the period we are dealing with,

triumph in the Paris elections ; for neither Brissot, nor Vergniaud, nor Condorcet, the three chief units of the group hostile to the dictatorial preponderance of the Commune, was elected deputy for Paris.

The electors of Paris returned nearly all the democrats of note, and, excepting Condorcet and Fauchet, too plainly hostile to the Commune, all the notable republicans too ; all those who had presided over the republican movement in June and July, 1791 : Billaud-Varenne, Lavicomterie, Robert, Boucher Saint-Sauveur. It is remarkable that these newly-born republicans, as we may call them, obtained each more votes than Robespierre ; who, although appointed first, obtained only 338 out of 525. The results of the elections in Paris were thus definitely republican. We have seen that the Mountain triumphed over the Gironde ; but above all the republic triumphed over the monarchy.

It must not be supposed that these republicans were elected only as democrats.

The Electoral Assembly of Paris imposed on its deputies a mandate enjoining them to vote : Firstly, "for the absolute abolition of royalty, and for the penalty of death against those who may propose to re-establish it ; secondly, for a republican form of government."

On the other hand, we read in the proceedings of

August and September, 1792. But I have found not a single reference from which we can conclude that Danton declared for the republic before the Convention met. His circular to the law-courts, dated August 19th, is an accusation of Louis rather than of the monarchy. M. Vidal, in his *Histoire de la révolution française dans le département des Pyrénées Orientales*, says that at the provisional Executive Council, in September, 1792, Danton made this declaration : "The 10th of August has divided France into two parts, one of which is attached to royalty while the other desires a republic. The latter, whose extreme minority in the State you cannot but admit, is the only party you can count upon to fight." But M. Vidal does not indicate his authority.

the session of the electoral assembly presided over by Robert :<sup>1</sup>

“The cannoneers of the section of 1792 are introduced ; they are leaving for the frontiers ; the spokesman of the deputation asks to be allowed to take before the electors the oath to conquer the enemies of liberty. While they assure the liberty of their country with their cannon, they hope that the deputies of the Convention will establish, on an unshakable foundation, a good *republican* government. At this word the whole assembly rises, and, to the acclamations of the citizens in the galleries, takes the oath to establish the republic.

“The President replies to the deputation.

“The Assembly orders the speeches of the spokesman to be printed, and also the reply of the president, and an extract from the proceedings giving the account of the oath taken ;<sup>2</sup> it orders the distribution of these leaflets among the electors, the citizens in the galleries, the sections, the cantons, the eighty-three departments, and the armies.”

Thus did Paris, by the voice of its electors, proclaim the republic before the fact. This, for us, is a very important fact, and we see by it that the capital directed the country towards its new destinies. However—and how can we explain the omission?—the journals made no mention of this scene of enthusiasm, of which the account has remained unknown until now. But the subscription of the electoral assembly to the republic was made known throughout France by the care of the Jacobins.

## VII.

The Jacobin Club followed and expressed, through all this period of flux, the changes of public opinion with fidelity and prudence.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Robert presided at this *séance* in his quality of vice-president of the electoral assembly, and in the absence of the president, who was Collot d'Herbois.

<sup>2</sup> I have not been able to find this impression.

<sup>3</sup> It is the only club as to which we have information from the point of view, and at the time, with which we are dealing. The Cordeliers' Club has left hardly any traces of its activity in August and September.

The first manifestation of royalty which occurred in this club was an individual manifestation : that of Anthoine ; who declared, at the meeting of August 12th, that the Legislative Assembly had "made an attack upon the sovereignty of the people in decreeing that they would occupy themselves with the task of naming a governor for the Prince Royal. . . . What ! you have cried *haro* upon royalty,<sup>1</sup> you have overturned the statues of the kings, and now they are decreeing the education of the Prince Royal ! " He declared that "the people had struck down royalty." "We must therefore set aside all ideas of royalty. You might name me king to-day and I might be a traitor to-morrow. The nature of the executive power must therefore be changed ; for a king or a regent will never be anything but an absolutely useless machine, since he must always have ministers who are actually the executive power." He persuaded the Club to adopt his ideas in part, and on the 13th a petition from the Jacobins was drawn up, one article of which reads as follows :

"The petitioners request the National Assembly to revoke the decree concerning the governor of the Prince Royal, seeing that the nation wishes to be free, and that to seem to be concerned with a successor to the throne is to prejudice the wishes of the nation and the operations of the National Convention."

However, the Jacobins dare not openly support the anti-monarchical ideas of Anthoine. On August 19th Théodore Giot proposes this motion :

"I propose that as we have no Constitution, and as it was by the Constitution and the whole Constitution that they tried to force us back

We find only that it prepared or adopted the motion of Jean de Bry for the organisation of volunteer tyrannicides. We read in the *Révolutions* : "We congratulate the Cordeliers' Club on its tyrannicides, who so far have killed no one."

<sup>1</sup> The Jacobins had not cried *haro* upon royalty. Anthoine attributes his own feelings to his audience.

into slavery—I propose, I say, that the Society shall cease calling itself the Society of the Friends of the Constitution, and shall take the title of the Society of the Friends of Liberty and Equality.”

This motion, “applauded by a few members, was refused with general murmurs.” Giot had much difficulty in getting the discussion “postponed until such time as the Society shall be present in greater force.”

But the publication of the papers proving the treason of Louis XVI having aroused a general indignation against kings and the monarchy, the Jacobins followed the course of opinion. In a meeting on the 27th, at which Destournelles was heard to demand that “Louis the False” should be the last French king, a bust of Brutus was brought into the hall, “amid universal applause.” Said Manuel :

“It was here that the downfall of kings was prepared, the downfall of Louis the Last ; here should repose the image of him who first of all desired to purge the earth of kings. Messieurs, here is Brutus, who will remind you at every instant that in order to be a citizen one must always be ready to sacrifice all, even one’s children, to the happiness of one’s country. Let us remember, above all at this moment when we are busy with the elections—let us recall that if in the National Convention there be found one such head as that, France will be saved, because she will no longer have a king. We ought all to swear an oath, and I will swear it first : In whatever position I find myself placed, all my efforts will be directed toward this important end—to purge the earth of the pest of royalty.”

“All hands,” says the *Journal des Jacobins*, “rise at the same moment, and the oath is energetically pronounced.”

It only remained to pass from the idea of suppressing royalty to that of establishing the republic. The electoral assembly of Paris persuaded the Jacobins to this step forward ; the latter, on September 2nd, in an address to the affiliated societies, engaged them “to steep themselves in the spirit of the proceedings of the electoral body of Paris,” and sent them those resolutions



among which, as we have seen, was the declaration as to "the republican form of government."<sup>1</sup>

In this manner the Jacobins, after a little hesitation, were converted, with all Paris, to the republic; and, through their numerous affiliated clubs, began to hasten the change of opinion throughout France.

### VIII.

The documents are lacking that might tell us how the Jacobin societies, each in its own district, set to work to "de-royalise" provincial France. Yet the time has come to consider how it was that provincial France changed from monarchism to republicanism. For this purpose, we ought to have a large number of good local histories; as a matter of fact, there are hardly any, and they are almost silent upon this particular subject. To arrive at a general definitive purview of the matter one ought to ransack the departmental and communal archives; but a man's lifetime would be too short for such a task. But here is what I have learned from such texts as I have been able to consult in Paris, and in the archives of a few departments and certain cities.

We have seen that France accepted the suspension of Louis XVI; the communes with enthusiasm; the departments less eagerly, often with hesitation.

Patriotism turned opinion against the King; patriotism turned it against royalty.<sup>2</sup> The first anti-

<sup>1</sup> All these extracts are from *La Société des Jacobins*.

<sup>2</sup> Later on, the intelligent opponents of the republic understood that it was the sense of the necessities of national defence that led to its establishment. Thus, the ex-constituent Toulangeon wrote under the Consulate, explaining the defeat of the republican attempts of 1791: "The republic would not have been possible until necessity had made it inevitable; when the dangers were such that it only was the salvation of the State; at a time when, to assume its true title, the executive power took the name of Committee of the Public Safety" (*Histoire de France depuis la Révolution de 1789*).

royalist manifestation I know of in the provinces emanated from the volunteers. In the Legislative Assembly, on August 16th, François (of Neufchâteau) drew attention to the enthusiasm burning in all men's hearts in the department of the Vosges. The law relating to the suspension of the King had just been proclaimed; a large number of volunteers left for the frontiers, crying: "*Vive la nation sans roi!*"<sup>1</sup>

Was this cry immediately repeated by all France? To believe Gorsas, yes. "From the Landes to the Jura," he says in the *Courrier* of August 29th, "from the Alps to the Pyrenees, all Frenchmen are repeating in chorus: '*Vive l'égalité! Plus de roi!*'" Gorsas takes the desire for the reality. I can hear nothing of this chorus. There was evidently a good deal of hesitation. France, and especially rural France, was slow to understand what the pother was about. She scarcely understood until the moment of the Convention elections; and even then we cannot say that the cry of "No more king!" was unanimous.

Still, I find here and there manifestations of considerable interest.

Thus, the citizens of Rochelle, in an address to the Commune of Paris (August 20th) rejoice that "the statues of the kings are broken."<sup>2</sup>

And the judges of the district tribunal of La Roche-sur-Yon certainly demanded the republic, when they wrote to the Legislative Assembly: <sup>3</sup> "He has fallen,

<sup>1</sup> *Moniteur* xiii. 438. This news was welcomed with "repeated applause." I do not see that we can say that there was a republican party in the Army before the establishment of the republic. However, at least one general officer subscribed to the republic before it was established. Valence wrote to Dumouriez on September 9th: "Those whose constant principle has been the sovereignty of the people will run to embrace the republic with delight; and I am of their number."

<sup>2</sup> *Procès-verbaux de la Commune de Paris*, Tourneaux' ed. p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> Undated address received September 2nd, cited by Chassin: *La préparation de la guerre de Vendée*, iii. 37.

the King of Coblenz, and our hope is that he will never rise again. The sovereign nation and nothing else ! ”

The *Sentinelle* of August 25th announces that at Strasbourg the citizens welcomed the delegates from the Legislative Assembly by cries of “ *Long live equality, and no king!* ”

A Federal from Brest, arriving in Paris on September 6th, writes on the 8th that everywhere on his journey he heard the wish “ forcibly expressed ” that there should be no more kings, no more royalty.<sup>1</sup>

On his return from a mission to Normandy, Chaumette is so pleased with the change of opinion he has witnessed, that he feels justified in writing, in his report : “ All France desires the republic.”<sup>2</sup>

On September 14th, Merlin (Thionville), returning from his mission, states that in the district of Soissons he encountered only a horror of kings and kingship.<sup>3</sup>

The *Chronique de Paris* of September 19th, in the account of a journey to Montargis recently made by Manuel, notes these incidents :

“ At the time of his departure the only living creature who still cried *Vive le roi !* was a parroquet. The ladies, even those who were fondest of play, had undertaken not to touch the cards until they no longer bore the images of the kings and knaves.”

In an address signed by numerous citizens of Nantes, dated September 12th, we read :

“ They (the undersigned) assure you that they detest kings, because they have sworn the oath of equality, which a hereditary king destroys in its most essential point, and because they have been betrayed by the King whom the constitutional law gave them. They reject royalty because it is in itself a continuous cause of corruption,” &c.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Documents published by M. A. Corre in *La Révolution française*, xxxiii. 465.

<sup>2</sup> *Compte rendu par P. G. Anaxagoras Chaumel (sic) à ses concitoyens de la Commune de Paris.*

<sup>3</sup> *Moniteur*, reprint, xiii. 699.

<sup>4</sup> National Archives.

The administrators of the department of the Charente write on September 20th that the citizens of this department "for the most part have a horror of kings and monarchy."<sup>1</sup>

These few instances will seem insufficient to give any true idea of the change of opinion in so large a country. However, even if we knew no more than this, the fact that I have nowhere been able to unearth a single manifestation of a royalist nature occurring at this period, with the exception of La Fayette's (which found no echo in the country), sufficiently proves, I think, that all France was becoming republican.

## IX.

But we are not reduced to a few isolated facts : to a partly negative proof. We have a general testimony as to the state of opinion in provincial France in the *procès-verbaux* of the elections to the National Convention.<sup>2</sup>

These elections took place by universal suffrage, in two stages. The primary assemblies met on August 26th, the electoral assemblies on September 2nd and the following days. In Paris the elections were not completed until September 23rd ; in the departments, in general, they were finished by the 10th or sooner.

The title National Convention, in the political

<sup>1</sup> National Archives.

<sup>2</sup> Nearly all these *procès-verbaux* exist in MS. in the National Archives. In this collection only those of the departments of Nord, Seine-et-Oise, and Haute-Vienne are wanting, and these are found among the archives of these departments, where I have been able to consult them or have had them inspected. The majority were printed at the time ; but I have seen only three or four of such impressions. They are of very unequal interest ; some are very detailed, others rather dry.

language of the time, denoted an assembly convened for purposes of revision. Thus, in convoking the Convention the Legislative Assembly had implicitly determined that the Constitution should be revised. At the same time, the Assembly had itself revised the Constitution in one of its essentials, since it had destroyed the property suffrage and the *bourgeois* system, and established universal suffrage. What, then, remained to be revised? The articles organising the monarchy. Could the Convention go so far as to suppress the monarchy? Yes; since the Legislative Assembly, by a decree of August 11th, had invited the primary assemblies to "invest their representatives with an unlimited confidence." It had released the citizens from their oath of fidelity to the King by instituting this new oath: "I swear to maintain liberty and equality, or to die in defending them."

How far were these elections truly representative of French opinion? How far were they free?

We have no general statistics as to the number of citizens who took part in the primary assemblies. We have only a few individual statistics. Thus, we know that in Le Gard the number of voters was not more than a quarter of those on the register. At the beginning of things, in these first gropings of political life in France, very few voted. However, it would seem that nearly all thinking citizens took part in these elections.

Was the suffrage really universal? Could all Frenchmen, who fulfilled the conditions as to age and domicile, really obtain access to the urns? I cannot find that the *bourgeoisie* made any attempt to maintain their political privileges by force, except in one single assembly, the primary assembly of Vitteaux (Côte-d'Or),<sup>1</sup> where only the former active citizens were

<sup>1</sup> For this reason the electoral assembly of the department of the Côte-d'Or refused to admit the electors nominated by the primary assembly of Vitteaux. See the *procès-verbal* of this electoral assembly.

permitted to vote. In a small number of primary assemblies citizens who had the reputation of entertaining anti-revolutionary sympathies were refused admittance.<sup>1</sup> A few electoral assemblies thought it their duty to proceed to a solemn purging of their number; among others, the assemblies of Aveyron and Paris. The former decided to exclude citizens who had signed "uncivic" petitions, or had belonged to anti-revolutionary clubs. As a matter of fact, both in Paris and in the departments, scarcely any one was excluded. In all France perhaps only a score of electors were refused their votes.<sup>2</sup>

Were the elections free? There was assuredly no pressure on the part of the Government, which abstained from intervention absolutely. The provisional Executive Council was equally careful, in its various enactments, proclamations, and decisions, to express no opinion on the future form of government. If there was any pressure exerted, it was on the part of the Jacobin clubs, the interpreters and controllers of "patriotic" opinion. Did this influence vitiate the elections? Or was there any influence but that of opinion influencing itself, fomenting itself by its usual organs? One thing we know: that municipal politics, at once democratic and consolidative, directed the voters in a republican sense, and outweighed departmental, monarchical, and federal politics altogether. The influence which weighed most on the patriotic mind was that of the invasion, of the advance of the Austro-

<sup>1</sup> Here my only source is the *procès-verbaux* of the electoral assemblies. Those of the primary assemblies in the various departmental archives ought to be investigated.

<sup>2</sup> The question of "the validity of the elections made by electoral bodies who restricted the admission of electors" came up before the Convention during its first session, on September 20th. The Convention proceeded to the order of the day, "as the sovereign people united in primary assemblies had, by its silence, ratified and supported the action of the electoral assemblies."

Prussian troops ; but this influence I have already described.

We may also consider that the elections were not completely free, because several electoral assemblies, amongst others those of Bouches-du-Rhône, Cantal, Charente, Corrèze, Drôme, and Hérault, adopted the open verbal vote.<sup>1</sup> Again, we find that the electoral assemblies did not allow their members to express monarchical opinions ; the few electors who, here and there, had received mandates to support the Constitution, had to excuse themselves, retract their opinions, or leave the assembly.

But even if the elections were not absolutely free, if the National Convention did not represent the whole nation without exception, we may say, above all if we compare these elections and this Assembly with those that came after, that they were as free as was consistent with the manners of the time and the circumstances, and that the Convention was more truly representative of France than any later Assembly down to, but excluding, that of 1848.

## X

What was the significance of these elections with regard to the form of government to be bestowed on France?

Let us remark to begin with that there was no royalist deputy. There were a few, such as Henry-Larivière and others, who became royalist later. At this moment, in September, 1792, none of them claimed,

<sup>1</sup> The *procès-verbal* of the assembly of Paris is silent on this point. However, Robespierre affirmed, at the Tribune of the Convention, on November 5, 1792, that the elections of this assembly took place by verbal vote (*Moniteur*). In the majority of *procès-verbaux* this question is not mentioned. In that of the assembly of Haute-Vienne we see that the motion to vote aloud verbally was put and rejected (Departmental Archives of Haute-Vienne).

and I do not suppose that any believed, that the maintenance of the monarchy was compatible with the necessities of national defence.

A few primary assemblies, as we have seen, demanded the continuation of the monarchy; there were five in Allier, one in Ariège, one in Doubs, three in Gironde, two in Lot-et-Garonne, and one in Lot, a total of thirteen, out of many thousands.<sup>1</sup>

Not one electoral assembly appeared to have any thought of maintaining the monarchy, and all, explicitly or implicitly, granted their deputies unlimited powers.<sup>2</sup>

As for the mandates: many assemblies gave none; or, if they gave them, did not include them in their *procès-verbaux*.<sup>3</sup> Among those which did give them, the greater number made no declaration as to the form of government desired, and those which did so declare suggested only a more or less negative solution, with the exception of the electoral assembly of Paris, which alone inscribed the word "republic" on its mandate.

<sup>1</sup> I give these statistics from the *procès-verbaux* of the electoral assemblies. If we consulted those of the primary assemblies we might perhaps obtain a higher figure. We find, however, that in the case of the monarchical primary assemblies they were denounced so zealously that it would be strange if any were overlooked. To gain some idea of the few monarchical mandates given to the electors, see the *procès-verbal* of the electoral assembly of Doubs (Nat. Arch.). This contains a declaration on the part of the primary assembly of Mouthe "that it is not convenient to give the deputies unlimited powers; but they should be directed not to remove the essential bases of the constitutional government and of the form of government established thereupon by the National Assembly in the years 1789-91." The elector nominated by this primary assembly was excluded, and the primary assembly itself presently disowned its *procès-verbal*.

<sup>2</sup> A few electors of Haute-Vienne were, I believe, the only ones to express any objection in this respect, fearing lest "liberty should be endangered by too great a measure of power." But they did not insist.

<sup>3</sup> The theory that mandates were given but not copied in the *procès-verbaux* is justified by the fact that the mandate of the assembly of Paris does not figure in the *procès-verbal*, and is only known to us through an address of the Jacobins.



However, there were many assemblies which, although they might avoid the word "republic," proved clearly that they desired the thing.

In the electoral assembly of Bouches-du-Rhône, for example, Barbaroux, the president, said that the word "republic" was not definite unless qualified; that it was most essential to make it clear that they desired neither a despotic republic, an aristocratic republic, nor a federative republic. "We must," he said, "have a republican government; but one adapted to our moral and physical condition." In support of this opinion, the assembly declared: (1) that it rejected with horror any kind of royal or hereditary executive power; (2) that it desired a free government, in which the people as a sovereign could exercise its sovereignty.<sup>1</sup> Evidently this would mean the republic; but in defining such a government instead of naming it the electors of Bouches-du-Rhône had the advantage of saying clearly what they did not want; of eliminating such forms of republican government as were bad in themselves or unsuited to France—that is to say, nearly all the forms then existing or having existed. What they wished to establish was a new republic, without precedent—that is, a democratic, unitarian republic.

The assembly of the Jura exhibits a similar frame of mind; and it is certainly demanding a republic when it says, "Let royalty be abolished, and let the temporary, removable executive power be nominated by the people."<sup>2</sup>

Other assemblies limited themselves to demanding

<sup>1</sup> Pierre Baille praised the "republican virtues of the electoral assembly" and said, "It is royalty that we must destroy." Bayle and Durand-Maillane also spoke against royalty. The electoral deputies formally subscribed to the above declaration.

<sup>2</sup> This expression is dated September 8th. The primary assemblies of Lons-le-Saunier had demanded on August 27th that the Convention should abolish royalty, and that it "should not constitute any post that was not temporary and elective."

the suppression of royalty. In the department of Aube, at the reading of a letter from Rabaut Saint-Étienne, who, elected by this department, swore "an immortal hatred of kings and royalty," all the assembly took the same oath. In Charente-Inférieure "the assembly manifested its disapproval of kings and royalty." In the assembly of Loiret—

"a member recalled the fact that the National Assembly, during one of its last sessions, had sworn eternal hatred against kings and royalty. Scarcely had he expressed the wish to repeat this oath than all the electors, rising, repeated it with the most vehement energy, and it was enacted that all the deputies sent from the department of Loiret to the Convention should be required to sign the *procès-verbal*, as an unequivocal testimony of their complete adhesion to this new oath."

Including that of Paris, six electoral assemblies expressly declared themselves against royalty.

Other assemblies implicitly made a like pronouncement.

Thus, when the electoral assembly of Doubs excluded an elector because he had received a mandate to uphold the monarchy, it was responsible for an act of anti-royalism as clearly as if it had sworn its hatred of royalty. In the assembly of Dordogne, a member having demanded that there should no longer be a monarchy, and the procurator-syndic of the district having come to express the same desire, powers were given to the deputies to amend all the articles of the Constitution contrary to the Declaration of Rights. Was not royalty contrary to this Declaration? And I think we can count as anti-monarchical such mandates as that of the assembly of Ariège, which enjoins the deputies to "give the French a form of government worthy of them, worthy of a free people, a people that has a keen feeling of its independence, and which will contrive to preserve it, or perish rather than fall back into slavery"; or the mandate of

Aveyron, "to ensure to the French people for all time the exercise of its sovereignty and all the benefits of liberty and equality." It is hardly probable that the assembly of Côte-d'Or wished to maintain the monarchy, when it expressed a desire that the Convention should create "a government proper to free men" and should make laws suited "to the genius of the nation and its love of liberty and equality." The electors of Drôme promise "a hecatomb of kings." In the assembly of Hérault, the procurator-general-syndic of the department made a speech against royalty. The president, Cambacérés, stated that they expected from the Convention a constitution resting "on the immovable foundations of reason, justice, liberty, and equality." Several members demanded that the wish that royalty should be abolished should be expressed. Without expressing it, the assembly "declared that it invested its deputies to the National Convention with unlimited powers, relying on their wisdom and prudence to make such use of them as would be best for the security and prosperity of the empire; and ordered that they should be supplied with the *procès-verbaux* of such of the primary assemblies as made known their wishes as to the form of government to be established." Unhappily we have not these *procès-verbaux*. But we see that the assembly of Hérault seemed more or less resigned to the suppression of the monarchy. In Loire-Inférieure the elected deputies swore to "form a constitution which should have no other basis than the sovereignty of the people." The instructions of the deputies from Morbihan are "to die at their post rather than suffer that the kings and tyrants of the world should ever make the least attempt upon the independence and sovereignty of the French people." The electoral assembly of Nord "gives the twelve deputies they have elected to the Convention a power without bounds or limits to consent

to all changes, reforms, and establishment of powers emanating from the nation, so that its sovereignty shall never at any time run the danger of usurpation, and the sacred rights of man shall never be violated or compromised." The assembly of Rhône-et-Loire gives its deputies instructions "to save the country from the imminent danger in which it finds itself, and to obtain for the French nation a type of government that shall ensure its welfare, and establish upon unshakable foundations the principles of liberty and equality."

Thus, in Ariège, Aveyron, Côte-d'Or, Doubs, Drôme, Hérault, Loire-Inférieure, Morbihan, Nord, and Rhône-et-Loire there were manifestations tending to establish the future government on the foundations of liberty and equality, and which seemed to denote that the principles of the electors were anti-royalist.

In the assembly of Seine-et-Marne there was an extraordinary exhibition of hatred against Louis XVI.

"A member," we read in the *procès-verbal*, "carried away by the excess of his hatred of the treacherous assassin of the people, demanded that a cannon should be cast with a calibre equal to the diameter of his head, and that it should thus be sent to the enemy. The applause of the Assembly testified to its entire approval of this proposal, inspired by outraged patriotism. Following upon this motion, which was an instance of the horror merited by tyrants, the motion was put and carried instantaneously and unanimously, that Louis XVI should never again be recognised as king. A solemn oath was the seal of this determination."

This oath was repeated in these terms by the deputies :

"I swear to maintain the sovereignty of the people, the national independence, liberty, and equality, and to propose nothing during the course of the National Convention that can in any way injure or betray the cause of the sovereign people, and to make felt the vow, formerly expressed in the electoral assembly, in the name of the primary assemblies, never again to recognise as king Louis XVI or any of his family."

Well: did the electors of Seine-et-Marne wish to maintain the throne by calling in a foreign dynasty? I do not believe it. They were in the greatest hurry to eliminate the Bourbons. Their deputies were to organise the Government on the foundations of liberty and equality.

At the same time, the electoral assembly of Meurthe, in an address which it sent to the Convention on September 22nd, before it knew of the decree abolishing royalty, declared that "the first of its wishes" was to be delivered from tyranny.

"The fall of the tyrant Louis XVI and all his race is one of the first means to present itself; your wisdom will dictate others; and whatever may be your resolution in this respect, we applaud in advance the constitutional law which shall assure us of the destruction of despotism."

The sentiments of the electoral assembly of Seine-et-Oise are similar. It charges its deputies (September 18th) to pronounce, at the beginning of the session, "the downfall of Louis the traitor and his race." But it does not dream of calling another dynasty to the throne, for, on September 5th, it applauds a deputation from the club of Saint-Germain-en-Laye which comes to swear "no longer to recognise loyalty." One of its deputies, Grangeneuve, who declared for the Gironde, writes:

"That royalty has so long been idolised in France only enables us the better to exhibit to Europe its hideous features and its emptiness. He who shall have contributed to abase it will be able to say that he has laboured for the welfare of his country and has prepared the way for the liberty of all nations; he will have lived long enough."

Carra, who declared for Saône-et-Loire, "swears by the hatred he bears toward kings, that he will uphold liberty." Marie-Joseph Chénier declares

“that he will oppose aristocracy, fanaticism, and royalty to the death.”<sup>1</sup>

If we were to judge of the sentiments of the electoral assemblies by their *procès-verbaux* alone, then the electors of Yonne would seem to have shown the least anti-royalist zeal. One of them having proposed “no longer to recognise any other sovereign than the French people,” the assembly confined itself to registering the wish “that the future Constitution might be ratified by the people.” Must we conclude, therefore, that they desired the monarchy? No; for among their deputies were Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau, Maure, and Bourbotte, all ardent republicans.

The example of Yonne shows us that the mandates given to the deputies are not sufficient evidence of the opinions of the electoral assemblies; besides which, many assemblies furnished no mandates. We can, and should, also judge of the opinions of the electors by those of the elected. We have seen that Paris elected several republicans known as such. Other republicans were elected in the provinces. Thomas Paine was elected four times: for Aisne, Oise, Pas-de-Calais, and Puy-de-Dôme; Condorcet, five times: for Aisne, Eure-et-Loir, Loiret, Sarthe, Gironde; Brissot, three times: for Eure, Loiret, and Eure-et-Loir; Cloutz, twice: for Oise and Saône-et-Loire; and Fauchet for Calvados. Among the notable republicans only one, Nicholas Bonneville, did not enter the Convention.

The most famous of those who, without pronouncing the word “republic,” had exhibited the greatest zeal as anti-royalists, were rewarded with seats in the Convention. It was on September 1st that Carra, in the *Annales*, proposed to bury alive such future deputies

<sup>1</sup> Although Brissot and Condorcet would have consented to an adjournment of the republic, to a new trial of the monarchy, they were known through all France as republicans on principle.

as might propose to re-establish the monarchy, and this issue reached the various electoral assemblies in the midst of their operations. Well: Carra was he who obtained the greatest number of elections. He was elected in eight departments: Bouches-du-Rhône, Charente, Eure, Loir-et-Cher, Orne, Somme, Saône-et-Loire, Seine-et-Oise. Gorsas, so bitter against royalty, was elected in Orne and Seine-et-Oise. Bishop Grégoire, who in August had preached so furiously against kings in Blois Cathedral, was elected in Loir-et-Cher.

We may therefore say that the elections to the National Convention, in the departments as in Paris, proved that there was a general movement in France, a very obvious and energetic movement, against the monarchy.

## XI.

Are we to suppose that by September, 1792, no royalists were left in France? No; there were certainly still royalists. But they were silent; they no longer dared acknowledge their opinions. This silence, this fear, was one proof the more that France was becoming anti-royalist; for royalism was more than unpopular; it was proscribed.

And it was not only royalism of the absolutist, anti-revolutionary stamp that was now reduced to silence by the change in the temper of the public. The royalist "patriots," the partisans of the Constitution, were no less discredited, no less unpopular. No one ran the risk of proposing to maintain Louis on the throne.

Was the idea of raising the Duc d'Orléans to the throne, or the idea of a regency, any more popular? Did an Orléanist party exist after August 10th? Here is what we know on the subject, and what we may conjecture:

Under the Convention, the Gironde accused the Mountain of having wished, and of wishing still, to place the Duc d'Orléans on the throne. Then the Robespierriest party retrospectively accused Danton of Orléanism. Considerably later, in the year IV, a journal denounced the Dantonists in general as agents of the Orléans faction. It is certainly true of Danton that from August 10th to September 22nd he never publicly expressed any opinion against the monarchy. Perhaps he believed, like Marat and so many others, that the people was not ripe for the republic. But if he for a moment dreamed of raising Orléans to the throne (and nothing proves that he did), he must have been discouraged by the fickleness and weakness of a prince who had disgusted almost all his supporters since Mirabeau's death.<sup>1</sup>

So that if there was an Orléanist plot, were there Montagnards other than Danton concerned in it? It seems that the greater part of the Montagnards thought only of drawing Orléans into their party by intimidation. It is pretended that Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau said to him: "When one has £25,000 a year one must be either at Coblenz or on the summit of the Mountain." What is certain is that Marat, who had in vain demanded money from Roland, the Minister of the Interior, for the purpose of publishing his works, made a public appeal to Orléans on September 2nd, in the form of a poster-placard, which read as follows :

"As I do not care to waste my time in playing toady, I break with Roland in order to address myself to you, Louis-Philippe d'Orléans, you whom honour has overwhelmed with the gifts of fortune; you whom nature has allowed to share the soul of a simple citizen; you to whom wisdom should give the heart of an honest patriot; for—how pretend otherwise?—in the present state of affairs you can no longer

---

<sup>1</sup> His best known supporters at this date were Sillery, Laclos, and Voidel.



ensure your own safety outside the ranks of the breechless. You emulate them : be their benefactor. In the name of the country, give your help to-day in the propagation of the light essential to the public welfare, by furnishing the *Ami du peuple* with the means of publishing his works without delay. The modest sum of £600 will suffice to buy paper and pay the printers," &c.

Marat got nothing from the Duc ; but he had flattered him. Did he wish to make him king? It is not absolutely unlikely ; for at this time he never wrote a word against royalty. Did he see in the Duc the dictator he was always demanding? That is very possible. In any event, Orléans was encouraged to become a candidate for the National Convention.<sup>1</sup>

He thought to popularise himself by an ultra-demagogic attitude ; and in order to flatter the passion for equality, he asked the Commune of Paris, on September 14th, in a letter which he published, to give him a family surname, as he could no longer bear his own since the decree of the Assembly proscribing all titles of royalty. The Commune deliberated on the matter on the 15th. One member proposed the name *Publicola* ; another, *Bonne-Aventure-Libre*. The name *Égalité* was decided on. In transmitting this decision to the interested party, Tallien, the president of the Commune, praised his civic feeling, and his love of liberty. Orléans replied that he accepted "with extreme gratitude" a surname which could not be "more in conformity with his sentiments and opinions."

It was on September 19th, when the electoral assembly of Paris had only one more deputy to name, that the Duc d'Orléans was proposed. By whom? We do not know. The *procès-verbaux*, the journals,

<sup>1</sup> He even wished to get his eldest son elected—the Duc de Chartres—although he was not of the age required. He tried to benefit by the popularity of his sons, whom Fayau represented, in the Convention, as defending the right of the people musket on shoulder (December 19th).

are silent on the point. It appears that Robespierre and Merlin spoke against his candidature. Louvet affirmed, later, that the Cordeliers had proposed him. But what Cordeliers? Marat, or Danton? If Philippe Égalité had had supporters as famous as these, we may be sure that later on, when the Gironde was accusing the Mountain of Orleanism, they would have been denounced as such. Very probably the Duke was proposed and supported by some obscure Cordelier. In any case he did not easily obtain election. Of all the deputies of Paris it was he who obtained the least votes : 297 out of 592. One of three secretaries declared he had obtained 302 ; another, that he wanted three more votes to be elected. There was a long debate. The assembly decided "that two scrutinies of the scrutators pronouncing a majority, and one only not pronouncing it, the majority was admitted in favour of the citizen Égalité." We may say that his election was as dubious and equivocal as his character and his whole political career. And there was in Paris at least one protest against his election ; that of the section of Bondy, which refused to recognise him as deputy.

The adversaries of the Mountain did not hesitate to accuse them of having wished to make the Duc king or dictator. On December 16th Lanjuinais said in the Convention that this new Collatinus had not been introduced into the Assembly without design. And Louvet wrote in a pamphlet :

"Who will assure me, in this growing republic, in which I see a former Prince in the Senate, and his children, already covered with laurels, in one of our victorious armies, there may not be preparing himself some audacious Protector, who, after making secretly and for some time common cause with false republicans, who, no matter how, have gained some measure of popularity, may cause the keenest anxiety to men who are truly free, and ready for death before the yoke of royalty re-established under no matter what name?"

What foundation was there in this indictment of the Montagnards, especially of Marat and Danton? Did they think of raising Égalité to power under any title whatever? It is hardly probable that one so perspicacious as Danton thought of doing so; but to Marat such an idea might have occurred. The data are lacking from which we might form a plausible opinion. In any case, this is how the Duc d'Orléans offered himself to all the chances of popularity, on the eve of the establishment of the republic.

Were there any proposals, any plots, with the object of calling a foreign prince to the throne?

It is certain that before August 10th certain folk had thought either of the Duke of York, the second son of the King of England, whom marriage with a princess of Prussia had made sympathetic to the "patriot" supporters of the alliance with England and Prussia, or to that philosopher prince, the Duke of Brunswick.

In the *Annales patriotiques* of August 25, 1791, Carra praised the Duke of York as capable of making an excellent Grand Duke of Belgium, with all the powers of the French King.

We have seen that on January 4, 1792, he proposed a motion, at the Jacobin Club, that an English prince should be called to the throne if Louis were to fly a second time, and that after the declaration of the war he renounced this proposal in order to accept the republic in advance, in case it should be necessary to depose Louis XVI.

He then fell in love with the Duke of Brunswick, who was waging war upon France despite his own wishes, and wrote in the *Annales* of July 25 (1792):

"He is the greatest soldier and the greatest politician of Europe, this Duke of Brunswick: he is extremely learned and extremely amiable; he perhaps lacks only a crown to be, I will not say the greatest being on earth, but the true restorer of liberty to Europe. If he comes to Paris I wager his first action will be to come to the

Jacobins and there don the red bonnet. Messeigneurs of Brunswick, Brandenburg, and Hanover have rather more wit than Messeigneurs of Bourbon and Austria."

Carra could hardly have spent his time more ill than in praising Brunswick in this way, for the famous manifesto appeared almost immediately, and the name of Brunswick became execrable to every Frenchman. Whereupon Carra, seized with fear and remorse, proposed, as we have seen, to *bury alive* the upholders of royalty, and we may believe that neither he nor his friends intrigued again in favour of a foreign dynasty.

But Carra had furnished the adversaries of the Gironde with a formidable grievance. On the evening of September 2nd, at the Commune, Billaud-Varenne and Robespierre denounced "a plot in favour of the Duke of Brunswick, whom a powerful party wished to place on the French throne." The *procès-verbal* does not give the names of the authors of the proposed plot. But we read in the *Patriote français* of September 4th the following declaration by Brissot :

"Yesterday, Sunday, I was denounced to the Commune of Paris together with part of the deputies of the Gironde and other men equally virtuous. We were accused of wishing to deliver France to the Duke of Brunswick ; of having received millions, and of having agreed to escape to England. I, the eternal enemy of kings, who did not wait until 1789 to express my hatred of them ! I, the supporter of a duke ! Rather perish a thousand times than ever recognise such a despot, and above all a foreigner !"

Commissaries from the Commune examined Brissot's papers and discovered nothing suspicious.

Then rumours of enthroning a foreign prince were consecrated, as it were, by the Government. On September 3rd Servan, the Minister for War, declared before the Legislative Assembly "that the news was being spread in the frontier departments that the Duke of York had been called to the throne of France." On

the 4th, Chabot spoke of the candidature of the Duke of Brunswick. It was partly to put an end to the disturbance caused by these rumours that the Assembly swore its hatred of royalty.

It seems that Condorcet was accused by name of plotting in Brunswick's favour, for he protests against this accusation in the *Chronique de Paris* of September 5th.

These rumours continued down to the eve of the Convention. Gorsas, in his *Courrier* of September 18th, speaking of the members of Convention already in Paris, said that an attempt was being made to "royalise" them in favour of a foreign prince, whose emissaries were at work.

However, I cannot believe that any of the more notable patriots had seriously thought, after August 10th, of calling either York or Brunswick to the throne of France; it was evident that the extreme sensibility of the new patriotism would not have tolerated an attempt so contrary to the principles and feelings which had just welded the French peoples into a nation.

## XII.

We have explained how slowly, and with what hesitation, the French passed from the negative idea of the suppression of royalty to the positive idea of establishing a French republic. What conception of the kind of republic to be organised did the audacious spirits who risked this passage hold: those who had desired this form of government—and those who had resigned themselves to it?

It is evident that they wished to establish a democratic government.

We have seen the Commune of Paris, consecrating a new era, adopting this formula: *The 10th of August,*

*1792, the Year IV of Liberty and the First of Equality.* At the head of one of the publications undertaken by the electoral assembly of Paris<sup>1</sup> we read the legend: *Liberty, 14 July, 1769; Equality, 10 August, 1792.* The fact is that the French of that time considered the revolution of August 10th as not only political, but also, and especially, as a social revolution. They saw and welcomed in it the destruction of the *bourgeois* rule; the end of the distinction, so contrary to the Declaration of Rights, between citizens active and passive; and the establishment of universal suffrage, or democracy.

To begin at the beginning, since they had returned to first principles, how was the popular sovereignty, now finally recognised in its entirety, to translate itself into terms of action? The Legislative Assembly had maintained the two stages of the suffrage: primary assemblies and electoral assemblies; but as a provisional method, and because it was essential to follow the uniform regulations which alone would enable the Convention to assemble promptly. It had even declared, in the preamble of the decree of August 11th invoking the electors, that "it had no right to enforce imperative regulations as to the exercise of the sovereign power," and that it was merely addressing an invitation to the citizens "in the name of liberty, equality, and the mother-country." The French followed the prescriptions, but there was, both among individuals and among bodies of citizens, a change of opinion in favour of direct suffrage.

Such an opinion was expressed by Marat, who, in a placard of August 28th, denounced the "secret and perfidious intentions" which had induced Brissot and his friends "to retain the electoral body despite the wishes of the people, in order to afford the enemies of

<sup>1</sup> *Discours à l'Assemblée électorale*, by Collot d'Herbois, September 3, 1791. Paris: Galletti, 1792.

the country the means of electing to the National Convention men devoted to their principles, and in order to enter it themselves."

Robespierre, with more moderation, expressed the same preference for direct suffrage :

"It would have been desirable that the Assembly should have undertaken the devisal of a method of election to the Convention of a simpler and shorter nature, and more favourable to the rights of the people. It should have suppressed the useless and dangerous intervention of the electoral bodies, and assured the people of the right of choosing its representatives itself. The Assembly has been more affected by motives than by principles. But we must at least praise it in that it proposed this method of election only in the form of advice and invitation, and so far did homage to the sovereignty of the people united in the primary assemblies."

This question was debated from the tribune of the Jacobins. On August 12th, Anthoine demanded that the primary assemblies should be elected directly :

"One of the chief causes of our evils," said he, "is the method of election employed for the Legislature. As long as you have electoral bodies you will have unfortunate elections. You have a very striking example of this fact in the sensible difference apparent between the municipalities, chosen directly by the people, and the departments and tribunals, chosen by the electoral bodies. The best, the only means of ensuring a proper choice is that it should be made by the people, the whole people, and none but the people. It is easy to win over three or four hundred electors in a department : but eighty thousand citizens cannot be tampered with."

And on the following day, the 13th, in a petition to the Legislative Assembly, the Jacobin Club demanded direct suffrage, basing its claim upon the principle that "the sovereign people should alienate their sovereignty as little as possible."

The method of suffrage by two degrees did not deserve the strictures of Marat, Robespierre, and Anthoine. It filled the Convention with the most capable and energetic men in France. Would the direct

suffrage have resulted in as careful a selection, at a time when the mass of the people was so ignorant?

Be this as it may be, it is to be noted that in the capital there was from this time forward an advanced democratic party which demanded a direct universal suffrage, and which saw therein the most efficient instrument of progress, as well as the method conforming best with the principle of national sovereignty.

The maxim of the Jacobins, that the sovereign people should alienate its sovereignty as little as possible, nevertheless admits a provisional alienation of this sovereignty, a delegation of it into the hand of its representatives.<sup>1</sup> But several means are proposed to ensure that this delegation should not contradict the national will. The electoral assembly of Paris, on September 9th, "recognised and declared as a principle that the imprescriptible sovereignty of the people admits the inalienable right and power of recalling its representatives whenever it shall judge it proper and according to its interests," and that "the decrees of the Convention will only have the force of law after having received the sanction of the people in the primary assemblies." According to the text of this mandate as reproduced in the address of the Jacobins dated September 12th, only *constitutional* decrees required the sanction of the people.

The question of the revocability of deputies was discussed in several other electoral assemblies; as for instance those of Aisne and Haute-Vienne, which adopted the above-mentioned motion; and in that of

<sup>1</sup> Everybody seemed agreed upon the establishment of a representative republic. The idea that the people could and should exercise its sovereignty directly was scarcely formulated, to the best of my knowledge, except by a member of the electoral assembly of Seine-et-Oise, who proposed a mandate according to which the deputies "should demand that the people should exercise its sovereignty not by means of delegates, but of itself." This motion was not even discussed.



Bouches-du-Rhône, which declared that the assemblies would reserve the right of recalling "such deputies as might betray their country, either by expressing principles contrary to free government, or by neglecting or endangering the important interests confided to them." It was demanded of the deputies that they should engage "during the whole duration of the session not to alienate any property they might possess, unless they were authorised to do so by the administrative bodies of the districts in which it was situated, and under urgent and legally proved necessity, in order that such goods, being a hostage to the nation, might become the property of the nation should the deputy possessing them be declared a traitor to his country." The assembly of Dordogne did not declare the revocability of its deputies, but it gave them powers only for eighteen months ; after this time they would be unable to take part in the deliberations of the Convention.

The revocability of deputies is thus desired by a few assemblies, a few democrats. The majority refuse the idea or are not interested. The Jacobins accept it in principle, as they ratify the resolutions of the electoral assembly of Paris, but they listen to one of their members, Simonne, who, on September 16th, raises objection to the difficulties of execution involved ; difficulties which, according to him, arise from the fact that "from the time a deputy is appointed to the National Convention he is no longer the mandatory of the department which has elected him, but becomes the representative of the French people in general."

As for the clause in the Parisian programme which organised a kind of popular *referendum* for the acceptance of the laws, or at least the constitutional laws : it was repeated in the *procès-verbaux* of many electoral assemblies. That the Constitution which the Convention was to bestow on France should be submitted to a plebiscite was, if not a general desire, at least

a very widespread one. It was also, but more rarely, demanded that the primary assemblies should be permanent. This is the application of the programme sketched out as early as 1790 by Loustallot, and then supported by the Cordeliers, which resolves itself into this : that in a democracy the Upper Chamber consists in the primary assemblies ; the French people forms the true Senate of the Republic.<sup>1</sup>

These are the ideas which here and there began to throw some light on the organisation of the national sovereignty before the establishment of the Republic.

Would this Republic, which, as all were agreed, was to be democratic in its nature, be *social*, as we call it, as well? Would it modify the organisation of society with regard to property, such as the laws of the Revolution had determined it?

We must not forget that at the moment when the Republic was established a kind of supplemental social revolution<sup>2</sup> had just taken place, and in the following manner.

<sup>1</sup> This idea is adumbrated in the words of Barbaroux, spoken before the electoral assembly of Bouches-du-Rhône, of which he was president : "Representative government itself would become vicious if the erroneous maxim were persisted in that the people could no longer exercise the powers delegated to their representatives. It is necessary that everything should be referred to the people, as everything comes from the people ; its sovereignty should remain unceasingly active, whether it nominate legislators and a temporary and responsible executive power, or whether it sanction the decrees of the one and judge the conduct of the others."

<sup>2</sup> It was also at this time that manners became still more democratic. The use of *thee* and *thou*, already proposed and practised in 1791, was recommended anew by several publicists. The Directory of the department of Drôme enacted in September that all its members should during the session wear red bonnets. The members of the electoral assembly of Drôme did the same. The president of the electoral assembly of Lot, Jeanbon Saint-André, set the example himself of wearing a red bonnet. The electors of Loir-et-Cher decided to use the forms *sieur* and *monsieur* among themselves no longer.

The Constituent Assembly, on the night of August 4, 1789, had, according to its own words, "entirely destroyed the feudal system"; but it destroyed it only in principle. Only such seignorial rights as implied a personal servitude were thenceforth abolished. The rights then existing were declared redeemable, and, until redemption, were due as before. All these rights, even those which had been usurped? Yes: the Constituent Assembly "preserved the legitimacy of all substantial rights, and made it impossible for the debtor to prove usurpation." And it established a means of redemption which rendered such redemption very difficult and almost impossible. The discontent on the part of the peasants was very marked; here and there there were risings. The Legislative Assembly satisfied the peasants on one point: on June 18th it suppressed all casual rights without indemnity, "at least if the said rights were not proved by the original title of enfeoffment, quit-rent, or lease, to be the price and condition of a concession of soil for which they were collected, in which case the said rights would continue to be collected and to be redeemable." Would it have dared to extend this measure to all the feudal rights if the revolution of August 10th had not shaken the Constitution and opened up an era of equalising reforms? One of the results of this revolution everywhere was to complete the ruin of the feudal system, which, abolished in theory, still subsisted in most of its effects. By the decree of August 25th, all landed property was declared free of all rights, feudal or manorial, and these rights were abolished without indemnity, unless the original deed of enfeoffment, lease, or quit-rent was produced. The situation was thus completely altered, to the detriment of the proprietor of these rights; the proprietors now had the onus of proving their title to their property, and this proof was often, in fact, usually, impossible;

for these original titles, dating back to the fourteenth or the fifteenth century, or to some still earlier period, had for the most part disappeared. This was the supplementary social revolution referred to above ; a sudden and violent change in the position of landed property, it still further "democratised" the Revolution, and the peasants accepted it joyfully. This wind-fall of course helped to wean them from the monarchy, and to rally them in support of the republic.

Was any further change demanded? Yes ; the peasants wished to see suppressed even those feudal and manorial rights to which the original titles were still extant. By the law of July 17, 1793, the republic, we shall see, granted them their wish. But did they wish the territory thus liberated to be distributed anew, and more equally? Was there a movement of opinion in favour of the "agrarian law"? Were there any demands of a socialistic nature?

On August 29, 1792, the provisional Executive Council had named thirty commissaries in order to urge "the extraordinary requisition of men in the sixteen departments surrounding the capital." Two of these, Momoro and Dufour, sent into Calvados and Eure, made a socialist propaganda and distributed a Declaration of Rights containing the two following clauses :

"1. The nation recognises only industrial properties ; it guarantees such and assures their inviolability. 2. The nation also assures to citizens the guarantee and inviolability of what is falsely called territorial property, until such time as it shall have established laws dealing with this subject."

The Normans were greatly disturbed by this threat of the "agrarian law." At Bernay there was a popular rising against Momoro and Dufour.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Mortimer-Ternaux says that Momoro was arrested at Lisieux for preaching the agrarian law there, and does not mention his arrest at Bernay.

people threatened "to cut their throats and to carry their heads to the frontiers."<sup>1</sup> The municipality had them arrested (September 8th) and led before the electoral assembly, whose president, Buzot, warned Momoro, author and signatory of the Socialist Declaration of Rights, "to behave with circumspection and to limit himself solely to the object of his mission," and succeeded in allaying the excitement.

The two commissaries were allowed to leave Bernay unmolested. But their attempt at a socialistic propaganda, of which the news spread all over France, caused a considerable scandal; the most advanced of the journals disowned them and blamed them.<sup>2</sup>

As for the electoral assembly of Eure, in order to calm the public mind after this incident, it was obliged to "charge the deputies whom it had nominated or would nominate to respect the rights of man and citizen, *as well as the rights of property*, and never to depart from these principles, concerning which it gives them a special mandate, under pain of infamy."

Other electoral assemblies also felt obliged, at the same time, to pronounce against doctrines of the kind we now call socialistic. Thus the assembly of Cantal swore to oppose the agrarian law; that of Indre de-

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Momoro and Dufour, September 8th, in the *Révolutions de Paris*. In this they say that they were treated as incendiaries and seditious persons, and Momoro says: "I distributed among several members [of the electoral assembly] examples of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, with some additional clauses appropriate to a National Convention and signed by myself." But the commissaries take good care not to reproduce these clauses, and do not explain what grievance the people of Bernay had against them.

<sup>2</sup> "In truth, such madmen at any other time would deserve pity." "Embracing the dreams of a few dreamers, they would degrade men by lowering them to the state of beasts, and divide the earth in common between them" (*Courrier de l'Égalité: Chronique de Paris*). The Council recalled all its commissaries on September 21st. Momoro was denounced to the Convention on November 26th.

manded the maintenance of property.<sup>1</sup> Neither could then have heard of the scandal provoked in Eure by Dufour and Momoro. There were therefore other socialistic manifestations than those I have described. I have, however, found no account of such in the journals or other prints published before the electoral assemblies met; and after this date only two, to my knowledge, were mentioned. Firstly, in a placard-news-sheet, entitled *Compte rendu au peuple souverain*, of which Fabre d'Églantine was probably the author, there is an ironical attack upon the moderate *friends of property*. Secondly, an article appeared in the *Révolutions de Paris* of September 22nd, in which, while protesting against the idea of the agrarian law, the anonymous writer makes the following declaration: "It is necessary—and without this no equality, and without equality no liberty—it is necessary that some sort of levelling of fortunes should be effected to destroy the vicious principle of the preponderance of the rich over the poor. It should not be permissible for a citizen to possess more than a fixed acreage of soil in each canton." The same writer would also destroy moral inequalities by public instruction.

Even had these articles appeared before the elections to the Convention, would they suffice to explain the fear of socialism, of the agrarian law, which alarmed such a number of Frenchmen at the moment when the monarchy was about to disappear? There must without doubt have been a mouth-to-mouth socialistic propaganda, undertaken here and there by a few eccentrics such as Momoro, of which no written trace remains. It is also likely that the anti-revolutionists, as a matter of tactics, attributed to the democrats and republicans an organised scheme for the introduction of the agrarian

<sup>1</sup> The electoral assembly of Paris, on the other hand, was denounced, but without proof, as desiring the agrarian law.

law, in order to alarm the *bourgeoisie* and the peasants.<sup>1</sup> The *Annales patriotiques* of September 20th denounced this manœuvre of the royalists and spoke of the agrarian law as a scarecrow.

In any case it is undeniable that this spectre of agrarian law did actually alarm people, as is proved by the anti-socialistic mandates voted by some of the electoral assemblies, and by the fact that one of the first decrees of the Convention was passed (September 21st) with the object of placing property under the protection of the nation. There was, then, in August and September, a socialist propaganda, but it had no result beyond immediately provoking a powerful current of anti-socialist opinion. France obviously had a horror of the agrarian law, and wished to maintain the rights of property as they then existed.

Consequently the general opinion in September, 1792, was not that the future democratic republic should be also a social republic, or that property should be divided according to novel principles, and more equally.

How should the executive power of the French Republic be organised?

The *Révolutions de Paris* demanded a single chief, who should not be called king, nor should he be hereditary nor appointed for life; that is to say, a president of a republic. The primary assemblies of Lons-le-Saunier were also, it would seem, demanding a president of a republic, when they expressed the wish that the Con-

<sup>1</sup> The *Correspondance littéraire secrète* of September 14th relates, while refusing to believe in its authenticity, a rumour that Robespierre's party "is dreaming of the agrarian law." "Here, however," says the anonymous writer, "is a fact to which I was witness in a literary *cabinet* at the Orléans Palace: A poor man came in to demand alms; no one responded. After having explained his needs honestly enough, without having obtained anything, the poor man added: 'My brothers, you must not refuse me; we must all share alike; it is the law now.' We laughed, and one of us gave him alms."

vention should abolish royalty, "at least of the kind that prejudices foreign to nature have rendered hereditary." But did France boast of a Washington? Was she not risking a dictator?<sup>1</sup> A dictator? This was precisely what Marat demanded. But he was continually obliged to grace this dictator with the name of *tribune of the people*. I do not find that public opinion supported him in this wish, nor in the desire, equally Maratesque, of a triumvirate of dictators. People were alarmed by such proposals, and thought to see the triumvirate already formed in the association of Danton, Marat, and Robespierre.<sup>2</sup> In September, 1792, this was a bogey which the anti-royalists cleverly manipulated in company with the spectre of agrarian law. France wished for a republic in which equality should be a factor, but she also wished it to be liberal, and since the Executive Council of six members was working very well, she only asked to keep them. There seems to have been a very definite desire for a government of a non-dictatorial character.

Another question had for a long time been predominant: Was the democratic republic to be federative or unitarian?

The federative republic had already been proposed in July, 1791, by Billaud-Varenne, whom nevertheless we shall see in 1793 as an apostle and agent of the unitarian republic, and one of the bitterest enemies of Girondist federalism.

<sup>1</sup> There were even democrats who declared that a single president, even though he were a Washington, would be dangerous to liberty. On the other hand, the proposal to make Robespierre a temporary dictator was perhaps formulated after August 10th. Barbaroux declared in the Convention, on September 25, 1792, that Panis, in a conference with the Marseillais, "had named Robespierre as the virtuous man who ought to be dictator of France." Panis denied this.

<sup>2</sup> Marat declared in the Convention (September 21st) that this idea was entirely his own; that Robespierre and Danton had consistently disapproved of it.



Federalism was once more proposed at the Jacobins, on September 10th, by a certain Terrasson.

“I believe,” he said, “that the federative type of government is the only one suitable for France.” “I do not know what objection one could offer to the philosopher Jean-Jacques, when he says so expressively, in his *Treaty on the Government of Poland*, that a federative government is the only one proper to free men united under a great empire. Now, gentlemen, if this axiom was true for Poland, the extent of that country being what it is, why is it not all the more applicable to France in the position in which she is placed? I insist once more, and, leaning on the authority of the divine Jean-Jacques, regard the federative government as the only form of government suited to us—I insist that the proposition I have made shall be placed on the order of the day: the means of perfecting the federative government.”

He also cited the example of America.

A Jacobin, whose name we do not know, replied to Terrasson that “supposing it were generally decided that a federative government would be the best possible, this would not be a reason for blindly adopting it, for it did not follow that it would necessarily be the best form of government to establish at that particular moment.” Terrasson replied “that there is no question of establishing a government for a moment, and thus it is useless to consider if the federative type is suitable at the present moment; it is necessary to determine whether it is suitable in general; for, I repeat, it is not a question of establishing a government for twenty years or thirty years; we have to establish a government for a very long period, for all time, if that were possible.” This radical theory was not to the taste of the Jacobins, whose policy was rather opportunist, and several speakers maintained that it was essential before all else to take the circumstances into consideration.

Of this number was the vehement Chabot. But he did not merely refuse federalism as inopportune; he

declared it evil in itself as far as France was concerned, and explained in reasonable terms why the American system was not suited to France. According to him the federative republic, by reason of its weakness, would favour the hopes of the party of the Right ; in respect of which he stated that there existed in the Assembly three parties, of which "one was in favour of the separation of the kingdom into large divisions, another, into very small divisions, and a third would have the divisions remain as they are."

The Jacobins made no pronouncement on the subject. But if there was a Jacobin policy, it was anti-federative and unitarian.

The question was scarcely considered in the electoral assemblies. However, I find in the *procès-verbal* of the assembly of Bouches-du-Rhône this very plain declaration of Barbaroux : "The federative government is not suited to a great people, on account of the slowness of executive operations, and the multiplication and confusion of administrative and executive machinery." None of the electoral assemblies showed signs of federal tendencies.

Neither do I find such tendencies in the periodical press of the time ; and as for political pamphlets, I find them only in Lavicomterie's *La république sans impôts*.<sup>1</sup> Lavicomterie supposes a federative republic, a universal federation of the towns and hamlets of each department, and of all the departments together. General laws would be common to all ; there would be local bye-laws. "The name of the capital of the empire would be abolished, as that of the King." However, this federalist proves to be much concerned as

<sup>1</sup> It is curious that before the establishment of the republic none of the future Girondists exhibited federalist tendencies. We have seen that Barbaroux expressly condemned federalism. But such tendencies were exhibited by two of the Mountain—Billaud-Varenne in 1791, Lavicomterie in 1792.

to the national unity, and he does not wish to establish eighty-three autonomous republics in France, in imitation of the thirteen States of North America.

One thing is certain : that unitarian tendencies began to manifest themselves more vigorously on the eve of the establishment of the Republic. It seemed an understood thing that the deputies of each department would represent less that department than France. The intellectuals felt plainly, and the mass of the people confusedly, that in this invaded country, whose independence was threatened, the national defence demanded a powerful centralisation. When the president of the Legislative Assembly, François, saluted the constituted National Convention on September 21st, he avowed, in the name of the French, "the most express desire to maintain between all the parts of this vast empire the unity of which your august assembly is henceforth the common centre and the preserving tie."

These are the ideas which are forming as to the internal organisation of the future republic. What part will this republic play in Europe and in the world? What will be its foreign policy?

To bring the present war to a victorious termination ; to drive the Austrians and the Prussians from the soil of France ; then to form an alliance with Prussia and England against Austria ; such was the principal clause of the programme of the foreign policy, formulated in speeches from the tribune, in articles in the journals, and by the most notable " patriots " of the time.

Will the republic be propagandist? Yes, for the Revolution has been propagandist since the end of the year 1791. One single man is opposed to this movement : Robespierre. Since the declaration of the war he no longer speaks of " armed missionaries." The propaganda may perhaps prove a useful arm of national defence. In this war of liberty one must take the part

of the peoples against the kings, in order to weaken the kings by embroiling them with their peoples. But many patriots continue to see in the propaganda something more than a provisional expedient. It seems to them to be the permanent duty and to the permanent interest of France to free the peoples of Europe ; to extend the French Revolution to the entire world ; to *municipalise* Europe, not only by preaching the rights of man, but, should a people require French assistance, by force of arms. The revolutionary Commune of August 12th, although it counted Robespierre among its members, accepted and published this programme of an armed propaganda, and we read in the *procès-verbal* of its proceedings on August 13th :

“A member proposes to present an address to the National Assembly beseeching it to declare, in the name of the French Empire, that in renouncing all projects of conquest, the nation by no means renounces the furnishing of help to neighbouring powers such as shall desire to escape from slavery. This proposal is adopted.”

The idea of a universal republic was beginning to shape itself. It seems vaguely to haunt the minds of the petitioners who demanded of the Legislative Assembly (August 24th) “that the title of French citizen should be granted to all foreign philosophers who have with courage upheld the cause of liberty and have deserved well of humanity.” In the decree which the Assembly passed in consequence of this demand, on August 26th, upon a report being furnished by Guadet, it declared that the men who had “prepared for the enfranchisement of the peoples” could not be “regarded as foreigners by a nation which their intellect and courage had set free.” Even if France cannot “hope that men will one day form but one family, one association, under the law, as they do now under Nature, the friends of liberty are no less dear to a nation which has proclaimed its renunciation of all

conquest and its desire to fraternise with all peoples," above all at the moment "when a National Convention is about to determine the destinies of France and to prepare, it may be, the destinies of the human race." In consequence France conferred the title of French citizen upon Joseph Priestly, Thomas Paine, Jeremy Bentham, William Wilberforce, Thomas Clarkson, James Mackintosh, David Williams, N. Gorani, Anacharsis Clootz, Cornelius Pauw, Joachim Henri Campe, N. Pestalozzi, George Washington, John Hamilton, N. Madison, H. Klopstock, Thaddeus Kosciuszko, and Schiller.

One of these strangers, the celebrated Prussian republican Anacharsis Clootz, appeared at the bar next day, to take the oath "to be faithful to the universal nation, to equality, liberty, and the sovereignty of the human race." "Always a Gallophile," he said, "my heart is French, and my soul is *breechless*." He was loudly applauded. On September 9th this "orator of the human race," as he called himself, reappeared at the bar, in the name of all printers, to demand the honours of the Panthéon for Gutenberg, and at the same time announced in these terms the apotheosis of the universal republic :

"Would you exterminate all the tyrants at one blow? Declare authentically that sovereignty is the common and consolidated patriotism of the total population of the *unique nation*. This latitude is all the more natural, in that none of the clauses of our Declaration of Rights is adapted exclusively to France. The eternal principles cannot be measured by fugitive names, ephemeral localities, homicidal rivalries. The French, the English, the Germans, and all the members of the sovereign, will lose their Gothic label, their barbarous isolation, their respective independence, contentious, belligerent, and ruinous ; they will lose, I say, the memory of all political evils in the universal brotherhood, in the vast state of *Philadelphia*. Nature, more powerful than denaturalised men, leads us imperiously to the arbitrament of the human family, and this family is unique, as is Nature. The first neighbouring people to amalgamate with us will give the signal for the universal confederation. We shall find in the *unique nation* the best

government possible with the least possible expense. . . . The *universal republic* of the French will make a happier and more rapid progress than the Church Universal of the Christians. The catholicity of an eternal catechism will soon triumph over the catholicity of a sacerdotal principle. Error prostrates all Mussulmans towards Mecca ; truth will raise the faces of all men that their eyes may look to Paris. . . . The art of Gutenberg will henceforth be our principal vehicle. This great art has made you, not the mandatories of eighty-three departments nor of six thousand cantons, but the representatives of twenty-five millions of individuals: it will one day make you the representatives of a thousand million brothers. The universe, divided into a thousand equal parts, will lose the memory of its ancient denominations and national contests, in order to preserve fraternal peace for ever under the ægis of a law which, having no longer to fight isolated and redoubtable masses, will now meet with the least resistance everywhere. The universe will form a single State, the State of *united individuals*, the immovable empire of *Great Germany*, the Universal Republic."

This universal republic was not merely the obscure and isolated dream of an eccentric. Many Frenchmen applauded Cloutz. He was elected deputy to the National Convention by two departments: Oise and Saône-et-Loire.

A democratic republic ; a unitarian republic ; a propagandist republic, tending to become universal ; this was the ideal of a considerable number of people in August and September, 1792. The mass of the nation, still ignorant of the word and hardly understanding the thing, or even disliking it, assuredly had no common ideas as to the organisation of and the part to be played by the future republic. It thought only of the immediate task imposed upon it by the circumstances—that is to say, of driving the foreigners from France, of fighting against kings, and, since France had been betrayed by its King, to save itself. As for the mode of government, the nation was content to support that already existing ; an elective Executive Council governing concurrently with an elective Assembly. Let it be called a republic by all means ; the nation will consent

to that ; then, having seen the republic, will love it ; will feel itself to be republican, as it is already in the intellectual strata whose various manifestations we have considered.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Barère said later (in the Convention, the 3rd of *Frimaire*, Year II) : “Where was the Republic at the beginning of the war? In a few decrees ; in the hearts of a small number of determined men. . . . Where is it to-day? In the constant intentions of the representatives ; in the courage of the armies ; in the will of the people ; in the people’s clubs ; in the victories of Lyons and the Vendée ; and in the hearts of these honest *sans-culottes*, free from monarchical and religious prejudices, knowing only the God of Nature and liberty. . . .”

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REPUBLIC

I. Abolition of royalty (September 21, 1792).—II. The establishment of the Republic (September 22, 1792).—III. How the public welcomed the new Government.

#### I.

THE Legislative Assembly did not wait until all the newly elected deputies had arrived in Paris before convoking the Convention. As soon as it learned that a certain number of them were in Paris the Assembly decided to give way to the new Convention. On September 19, 1792, upon receiving from Lasource a report drawn up by its Extraordinary Commission,<sup>1</sup> the Assembly decreed that "the archivist should convoke the deputies of the National Convention for the morrow, September 20, 1792, at half-past four in the afternoon," at the Tuileries, and that the Mayor of Paris should provide them with a guard.

The first session of the Convention accordingly took place on September 20, 1792.

<sup>1</sup> Decree of August 11, 1792, Article 4: "Each department will name the number of deputies and of *suppléants* which it named for the present Legislature." Now the decree of May 25, 1791, Article 5, had fixed this number at 745. It was then enlarged to 749, because the two districts of Avignon and Comtat-Venaissin had to elect 4 deputies. The decree of August 22, 1792, enacted that besides these 749 there should be present at the Convention 34 deputies from the colonies.



It was a session behind closed doors, during which the Assembly constituted itself. It notified the presence of 371 members out of the 749 who should have been elected. It named its officials by nominal appeal and aloud. Petion was elected president by 235 votes among 253 voters. The secretaries were Condorcet, Brissot, Rabaut Saint-Étienne, Lasource, Vergniaud, and Camus. On the evening of the 21st the officials were completed by naming Condorcet vice-president by 194 votes among 349 voters.<sup>1</sup> In these first votings the Convention exhibited tendencies which were anti-Robespierrist, anti-Maratist, or, one may say, anti-Parisian.

The next morning the Legislative Assembly decided to call upon the National Convention in order to conduct it to its own hall, the Salle de Manège, in which it would have to sit until quarters had been prepared for it in the Tuileries. The speeches exchanged on this occasion by the two presidents give an interesting indication as to the ideas which were then held of the powers and the functions of the Convention. François (of Neufchâteau), president of the Legislative Assembly, stated that the Convention had unlimited power to establish "a free and popular government." Petion, president of the Convention, said that the Constitution was only rendered sacred "by national superstition"; that the nation wished "to assure its rights and its welfare upon more solid bases"; that the Convention held in its hands "the destinies of a great people, of the entire world, and of the races of the future"; and that it was about to "labour for the human species." The same day, speaking from the tribune, Manuel defined the Convention as "an assembly of philosophers, occupied with preparing the happiness of the world"; and Basire also defined it as an assembly of philosophers.

<sup>1</sup> He was replaced as secretary by Chasset.

The National Convention was installed in the Salle de Manège in public session on September 21, 1792.

It did not immediately occupy itself with the great question of the form of government to be instituted; secondary questions were raised at the outset. Thus, Manuel demanded for the president, whom he called "the President of France," extraordinary honours and a lodging in the Tuileries. This motion was dismissed at the preliminary question. The suggestion was regarded as having too much of royalty about it. In opposing it, Chabot and Couthon pronounced against royalty. Mathieu even spoke of the "organisation of the republic."

Danton, consistently with his character and his polity, made directly for the matter which was troubling the public, and said that in order to destroy "the vain phantoms of a dictatorship, the extravagant ideas of a triumvirate, and all these absurdities invented to frighten the people, it must be declared that the Constitution will have to be accepted by the primary assemblies." For what the Convention has to do is to form a Constitution: "Let us remember that we have to review everything, to re-create everything; that the Declaration of Rights itself is not without blemish, and must suffer revision at the hands of a truly free people." France, too, must be reassured, alarmed as she is by the socialist propaganda: "Let us here abjure all exaggeration; let us declare that all territorial properties, all individual and industrial properties, shall be perpetually maintained."

After various observations, in which appeared the unanimous anti-socialist zeal of the Convention, it was decreed: "Firstly, that there could be no Constitution but that accepted by the people; secondly, that persons and properties were under the protection of the nation."

Manuel then insisted that the question of the aboli-

tion of royalty was the first object of the labours of the Convention.

Philippeaux and Quinette stated that it was more urgent to decree the provisional execution of the laws not abrogated, the maintenance of powers not suspended or revoked, and the continuation of the payment of the public taxes. A decree fulfilling the required object was passed.

The abolition of royalty was thus adjourned. It even seemed, after the penultimate decree, that this abolition could only be effected by a plebiscite.

The session was about to rise when speech was demanded by Collot d'Herbois, president of the electoral assembly of Paris, which had given a republican mandate to its deputies: "You have just decided a wise thing," he said. "But it is a matter that you cannot put off till to-morrow; that you cannot put off till this evening; that you cannot postpone for a moment without being unfaithful to the wishes of the nation."

The *Moniteur* informs us that he was unanimously applauded.

Then hesitation showed itself.<sup>1</sup> Quinette objected: "We are commissioned only to establish a positive government, and the people will then choose between the old government, in which royalty found a place, and that which we shall offer it." According to him, it was necessary first of all to think about punishing Louis XVI.

But Grégoire improvised a virulent attack upon kings and royalty in general, spoke of destroying "this magic

<sup>1</sup> Camille Desmoulins, in his *Histoire secrète de la Révolution*, says that in September, 1792, "a large part of the Convention was royalist." But he gave no other proof of this royalism than the "imprecations" of the Girondists against Paris. When he wrote this pamphlet in 1793 Desmoulins wished to ruin the Girondists by presenting them as royalists.

talisman," and provoked a scene of enthusiasm. "All the members of the Assembly," says the *procès-verbal*, "rising in one spontaneous movement, protested, by unanimous acclamation, against a form of government which has inflicted so many ills upon the country." Then there was more hesitation. Basire declared that he mistrusted enthusiasm; he wanted a serious discussion.<sup>1</sup> Grégoire insisted: "Kings are morally what monsters are in physique." Ducos and Billaud-Varenne spoke in favour of immediate abolition. Manuel found abolition inconsistent with the principles laid down; they must confine themselves to *declaring* that the nation wished to dispense with a monarch.

Finally all objections were overcome; hesitation ceased; the deputies rallied against royalty, and the following decree was the result:

"The National Convention decrees unanimously that royalty is abolished in France."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Brissot was of the same way of thinking. He wrote in the *Chronique du Mois* for October, 1793: "I could have wished that the enthusiasm which decreed the abolition of royalty had been accompanied by a discussion as to the necessity of this abolition and upon the possibility of republican government in France." On the other hand, in a speech delivered at the Jacobins on September 23, Collot d'Herbois said: "I say nothing of the decree which abolished royalty; it was passed before we had pronounced it; it was the product of a general feeling, and all good decrees will be passed in such a way. When we were told that we must not pass decrees 'on the hop' we were told shocking nonsense, for all that is inspired is good, and a decree passed without reflection is an inspired decree" (*La Société des Jacobins*, iv. 325).

<sup>2</sup> We read in the *Courrier de l'Égalité*, p. 292: "A member proposes to preface the decree of abolition by a 'consideration' which shall review the crimes of kings. M. Ducos: 'All consideration is useless. The story of the crimes of Louis XVI will do for a review. I demand that royalty shall be wholly and simply abolished in France. The whole people has consecrated this principle, and you will merely repeat the wish already expressed by the whole nation' (*loud applause*). Several formulæ are proposed; this is adopted unanimously amid a thousand acclamations and *bravos*."

It is then decided that the decree shall be despatched by special courriers to the departments, to the armies, and solemnly proclaimed in every municipality. A deputy having proposed that illuminations and salutes by cannon should be ordered, the Convention passed to the order of the day, feeling that the people needed no encouragement in order to express its joy.<sup>1</sup>

The deputies, as well as the public in the galleries, were seized with enthusiasm once the decree was passed.

“It is impossible,” says the *Journal de Paris*, “to picture to our readers the impression which this decree made upon all those who saw it passed. Cries of applause, *bravos*, hats thrown into the air, oaths to make an end of all tyrants together, cries of ‘*Vive la liberté et l’égalité*’—this is a mere hint of what we witnessed. Let us add that all hearts were trembling with emotion, and one may form some slight idea of the spectacle.”

“When this decree was pronounced,” says the *Gazette de France*, “cries of joy filled the hall, and all arms remained raised towards Heaven, as if to thank it for having delivered France from the greatest scourge that has afflicted the earth.” “After this famous decision,” says the *Courrier de l’Égalité*, “all the members rose time after time, raising their hands, throwing up their hats, crying *Vive l’égalité!* and the galleries replied by like acclamations.”

<sup>1</sup> How many members of Convention were present? The *procès-verbal* and the journals were silent on this point. We have seen (p. 145) that when the Convention was constituted 371 were present out of 749; that is, about half the whole body. As all the deputies were *en route*, it is evident that twenty-four hours later there must have been a sufficient number to permit of the statement that the abolition of royalty was voted by the majority of the Convention. However, the Assembly was not complete on September 21st nor even on the 22nd.

## II.

So far, no question of a republic. Nothing shows that the Convention had the intention of leaving the new state of things without a name. But it dared not pronounce the decisive word. It seemed to be waiting for encouragement from without.

This encouragement came that very day.

The Convention heard that the people were crying "*Vive la République!*" in the streets at the moment when the decree abolishing royalty was being pronounced.

Members of the administration of the department of Seine-et-Oise, municipal officers and citizens of Versailles, came to the bar to say that the volunteers of Seine-et-Oise were "proud to come and take the oath to preserve the republic." The Convention applauded. The citizens of the section of Quatre-Nations also came, to say that they would be only too happy to pay with their blood for the "republic" which their deputies had "decreed."

The Executive Council also pronounced the word "republic." Monge, Minister of Marine, declared in the Convention that the members of the "first executive power of the French Republic" would "die, if need be, as worthy republicans." On the same day still (the 21st) the Minister of the Interior, Roland, sent a circular to the administrative bodies, saying: ". . . You are about, gentlemen, to proclaim the republic; then proclaim fraternity; they are one and the same thing."

Thus from the evening of the 21st the people and the Government took the initiative, and opened up the question of declaring that France was a republic. But the Convention waited until the next day before coming to a decision.

The journals give few details as to the session of September 22nd, during which this decision was taken ; the *procès-verbal* gives but a dry account. Here is the account given by the *Journal des débats et des décrets*, which is the fullest of any :

“Session of Saturday, September 22, 1792, ten o'clock in the morning.

“M. Lasource reads the *procès-verbal* of yesterday evening.

“M. Billaud-Varenne demands that in dating the preceding day, in place of dating it the fourth year of liberty it shall be dated the first year of the French Republic. (*Applause on the part of citizens.*)

“M. Salle observes that the epoch of the taking of the Bastille should never be allowed to escape our memory. He demands that we shall still date the year IV of liberty, because in 1789 France began to be free.

“A member replies : ‘We were not free under a king ; we could not be free.’

“Another member supports the remarks of M. Salle. France, he says, must not forget the time when her first representatives proclaimed the Declaration of the Rights of Man.

“M. Lasource : ‘It is ridiculous to call this the fourth year of liberty ; for under the Constitution the people had no real liberty. (*The citizens applaud.*) What, gentlemen ! when the patriots were excluded from public functions, when they were driven out of the armies by intriguers, when they were persecuted, oppressed in every way by tyrannical authorities, the citizens of France were free ! No, gentlemen, we have been free only since we have had no king ! (*Applause.*) So I demand that we call this the first year of the Republic.’

“M. Salle withdraws his amendment, and the National Assembly decrees that, counting from September 22, 1792, we shall date from the Year One of the Republic.”

The decree of establishment of the Republic is specified thus, in the form of an extract from the *procès-verbal* :

“A member demands that we shall henceforth date all documents, &c. : *the first year of the French Republic.*

“Another member proposes to join to this the calendar now in use : *the fourth year of Liberty.*

“This amendment is defeated, and it is decreed that all public documents shall henceforth bear the date of *the first year of the French Republic.*”

It is then decreed—

“That the seal of the National Archives shall be changed, and shall bear the impression of a woman leaning one hand upon a fasces, holding in the other a lance surmounted by a bonnet of liberty, and for legend these words : *Archives of the French Republic*, and that this alteration shall be extended to the seals of all the administrative bodies.”

Some one demanded that the national cockade should be altered by removing the royal colour. It was replied laughingly that this motion must be referred to a committee of *marchandes de modes*, and the previous motion was adopted.

On the occasion of these important discussions the journals recounted no scenes of enthusiasm nor even of applause. There was no solemn proclamation of the Republic, as there was in 1848 and 1870. It was merely stated, and then in an indirect manner, that since royalty was abolished a Republic existed. The decree was not read in the streets of Paris, nor sent by special courier into the departments. The Executive Council made no haste to promulgate it ; it waited until September 26th to apply it to the seals of State. Not all of the journals mention it ; one looks for it in vain in the *Moniteur's* report of the session of the 22nd. It seems as if the French Republic was introduced into history furtively, and the Convention had the air of saying to the nation : “There is no possibility of doing otherwise.”

The truth is that to many Frenchmen the word “republic” seemed still equivocal and alarming ; and the Convention was afraid that the nation would misunderstand it. The only large republic in existence—that of the United States of North America—was a federal republic. Now in the France invaded by the Austro-Prussians, which had scarcely issued from the feudal anarchy in which the provinces had often



appeared to form isolated nations, would it not be endangering the independence of the country and the very Revolution to adopt a name which seemed inseparable from a federalist system of government?

The Convention hastened to allay this anxiety, and to explain what it meant by the word "republic." It declared, on a motion of Danton's, on September 25th, "that the French Republic is one and indivisible." Promulgated the same day, saluted by the applause of the patriots, this was the decree that in reality founded the Republic.

### III.

How did the French receive the establishment of the Republic?

To judge from the Parisian journals alone, the first welcome was chilly enough.

If the *Patriote français* salutes the "sun of the Republic," if the *Révolutions de Paris* refutes the opponents of republicanism, the other journals celebrate the abolition of royalty rather than the establishment of the Republic.

We have seen that Brissot, in the *Chronique du Mois*, expressed his regret that the decree abolishing royalty had been passed so precipitately. "Louis XVI is greatly detested," he adds, "and royalty is yet more detested as the source of all evils; but people are carried away by sentiment rather than by reason."

The Jacobin Club took great care not to anticipate the decree of the Convention, or to speak of the Republic immediately after the abolition of royalty, as the ministers Monge and Roland had done, the citizens of Versailles at the bar of the Convention, and various gatherings in the streets. At their evening meeting on September 21st they were invited by Gerbet the younger

to take the name of *Friends of the Republic*; but the Jacobins rejected the motion, as prejudicing the constitutional operations of the Convention, and took the name of the *Society of the Jacobins, friends of liberty and equality*. Not until September 24th did they decide to date their *procès-verbal* the first year of the Republic.

As for the sections of Paris: although two of them spoke of the Republic (the sections of Quatre-Nations and of the Tuileries), nine others, on the other hand, which afterwards agreed to the abolition of royalty, did not mention the word.

It would seem that Paris was still afraid of this word; afraid that it would still be misunderstood, and welcomed but coldly in the provinces.

Paris was mistaken: witness the numerous addresses from departments, districts, and communes, preserved in the National Archives.<sup>1</sup>

Certainly a great number of these addresses merely congratulated the Convention on the abolition of royalty, without saying a word about the Republic. The fact is that they were for the most part drawn up on receipt of the decree of September 21st, which was that abolishing royalty, and was sent out by special couriers; while the decree of the 22nd, establishing the Republic, was sent in the ordinary way, and was not known, over a great part of France, until several days later.

As soon as it was known, however, it received the most unequivocal and widespread support. The people's clubs and the communes distinguished themselves by

<sup>1</sup> Nat. Arch. C, 233-250. The deputy Fockedey, who from September 22nd to the 24th was travelling on the road from Douai to Paris, to present himself at his post, writes in his memoirs that during his journey it seemed to him that opinions were divided on the subject of the Republic. But Fockedey doubtless wrote long after the events; and the decree of the 22nd may not have been known to the countryside he passed through.

the ardour of their congratulations. Some people's clubs even persuaded themselves that they had always been republican. Thus that of Dôle wrote on September 29th: "We were republicans already, before the Bastille was taken." Here are some examples of the addresses sent out by communes which had not, up to that time, as far as we know, given any exhibition of republican sentiments.

The general council of the commune of Saint-Yrieix, in an address which is undated, but which was read at the session of November 9th, expresses itself thus: "Citizen legislators of France, the decree which you have passed for the establishment of the French Republic has brought consolation to our hearts, because in future we shall have no despot but the laws." A number of the members of the general council of the commune of Amiens write on September 26th: "Citizens, the reign of liberty still allowed royalty to strike us with its iron sceptre. Long live the Republic! Life to the strenuous men of 1792, who are making the present so fair for France! Yes, the French, proud of the glorious name of republicans, will know how to deserve this. . . ." The municipality of Lisieux, in conjunction with the district administration, writes on the 25th: "Yes, the republican government is a fitting one for us, and the only one fitting for a free people, whatever the extent of their territory." The municipality of Saint-Marcellin (Isère) writes on October 9th: "You declared that France was a Republic: by that you taught all the citizens of France that they were now only a single family, a people, a nation of brothers. . . . In improving the quality of men you have, like a new sun, filled the soul with a new warmth. . . ." The rural communes themselves in some regions declaim in chorus with the cities. Thus on October 27th the district of Beauvais sent up the adhesion of the 95 municipalities of its arrondisse-

ment to the decrees "which abolished royalty and erected France a Republic."

It might have been feared that the departmental administrations, of which a very considerable number had protested against the doings of June 20th, would oppose the Republic. Not one protested against it; and of the whole 83 no less than 42 sent addresses of support and adherence: Aisne, Basses-Alpes, Ardèche, Ardennes, Aude, Calvados, Cantal, Cher, Côtes-du-Nord, Deux-Sèvres, Dordogne, Doubs, Finistère, Haute-Garonne, Gers, Indre-et-Loire, Landes, Loir-et-Cher, Loire-Inférieure, Lot, Lot-et-Garonne, Lozère, Maine-et-Loire, Manche, Marne, Haute-Marne, Meurthe, Nord, Basses-Pyrénées, Bas-Rhin, Rhône-et-Loire, Saône-et-Loire, Haute-Saône, Sarthe, Seine-et-Marne, Tarn, Var, Vendée, Vienne, Haute-Vienne, Vosges, Yonne. Some of these addresses are enthusiastic. Thus the department of Basses-Pyrénées writes on October 2nd: "We have published the news of the Republic, and we are singing the hymn of the Marseillais." As the Convention had decreed on September 22nd that all the administrative bodies should be renewed, one might suspect that this enthusiasm was principally caused by fear of the electors. But the administrators of Tarn (for example) knew neither of this decree nor of that which established the Republic, when, on hearing read the account of the session of the Convention of September 21st, they all rose "in one spontaneous movement," and cried: "*Vive la République!*" And even when it was true that the departmental administrators did subscribe to the Republic only out of fear of the electors, did not this precisely prove the force of the current of republican opinion which was at this period forming throughout the country?

As for the administrations of the 41 departments which did not feel obliged to send addresses to the Convention, or whose addresses are lost, there is nothing

to give us reason to suppose that any of them exhibited the least hesitation in accepting and proclaiming the decree establishing the Republic ; those whose registers I have been able to consult seem even to have proclaimed the decree with enthusiasm.

Two important facts result from the preceding details. Firstly, the departments and the municipalities were no longer in disagreement as to the question of monarchy or republic ; secondly, republicanism, which was formerly prevalent in the south-east of France, had now spread itself through the whole country ; was becoming general ; so that in Normandy there were now republican manifestations fully as ardent as those in Provence.

The armies helped to strengthen, propagate, and consolidate republican opinion.

The most popular general in the army, who was regarded as the saviour of France, immediately subscribed to the Republic. Dumouriez wrote to the Minister of Finance, Clavière, on September 26th : " I am enchanted to know that we have taken the jump and become a republic."

The commissaries from the Convention, Carra, Prieur, and Sillery, passed the army of the Ardennes in review, Dumouriez being present, on September 29th. Prieur, on horseback, made a republican speech to the soldiers. He had "lungs of brass," and his voice carried far over the plain. The whole army acclaimed the Republic. Only a few officers murmured ; one of them dared to say : " For whom, then, are we going to fight in future ? " Prieur pressed his horse towards him : " You will fight," he said, " for your firesides, your women and children, for the nation, for the Republic. If you have neither the courage nor the intention to defend our noble cause, take yourselves off ! " They remained, and the army of the Ardennes surrendered itself without contradiction to the greatest republican enthusiasm.

The commissaries to Montesquieu's army wrote from Chambéry, on October 6th, that "these brave soldiers of liberty were animated by patriotism only," and that the cries of "*Vive la nation!*" "*Vive la République français!*" were unanimous.

Later, although disgusted with the Republic, Dumouriez admitted in his memoirs that the troops passed from the constitutional to the republican condition unanimously and instantaneously. And under the Consulate we shall find the monarchist Toulangeon writing, in his History of the Revolution :<sup>1</sup>

"The word *republic* produced the same effect on the armies as did the words *Third Estate* at the beginning of the Revolution ; if there had been any hesitation in the determination of the leaders, the determination of the soldiers would have sufficed to carry them forward."

The Republic made its appearance at the moment when the enemy, conquered, was beating a retreat. It was, for the soldiers, the personification of victorious patriotism. It personified, for France also, patriotism victorious. They had broken with the King, for he had not saved his country when she was threatened by foreigners. They rallied to the Republic, because it was hardly born before they saw it triumph over the stranger, in its task of saving France. It seemed absolutely certain that the Republic was the best means of national defence, since men learned everywhere, and at the same moment, the news of the existence of the new Republic, and the news that the enemy was vanquished. Here is the explanation of this precipitate change of public opinion, which from being monarchist immediately became republican. It was the victory of Valmy and the retreat of the Prussians that converted France so swiftly.

<sup>1</sup> It was then that the *Marseillais* permeated the armies. At Valmy the soldiers sang the *Ça ira*. Kellermann, after Valmy, wished to have the *Te Deum* sung. The Minister of War, Servan, invited him (September 26th) to substitute the *Marseillais* for the *Te Deum*, sending the words and music.

## CHAPTER V

### THE CONSTITUTION OF 1793

- I. Condorcet's proposal.—II. Public opinion.—III. The debates in the Convention on the proposal of Condorcet.—IV. The proposal of Héroult de Séchelles.—V. Discussion and adoption of de Séchelles' proposal.—VI. General character of the Constitution of 1793.—VII. Adjournment of the Constitution.

THE Convention established the Republic on September 22nd, and determined its form on the 25th. How would the Convention organise the republic?

It created simultaneously provisional institutions and permanent institutions.

The provisional institutions were what we call the Revolutionary Government. The permanent institutions, or institutions intended to be permanent, constituted the Constitution of 1793, and that of the year III.

The history of these various institutions, like the entire history of the Democratic Republic, is divided into two distinct periods by the events of the 9th of *Thermidor*. Before the 9th of *Thermidor* the French were seeking to organise democracy by permanent institutions, or to prevent it by provisional institutions. After the 9th of *Thermidor* they gradually drifted into organising a *bourgeois* system by permanent institutions or seeking to prevent it by provisional institutions. It is therefore natural to divide our recital into two parts, corresponding to these two periods, and to study first of all the institutions as they were before *Thermidor*, then as they were after *Thermidor*.

With regard to the first period, that extending from the establishment of the Republic to the fall of Robespierre : we will first consider the permanent institutions, or those intended as such, before speaking of the provisional ones ; of the Constitution of 1793, before speaking of the Revolutionary Government. To be sure, the Constitution of 1793 was not applied, because abnormal circumstances postponed its application. But it was made ; it was apparently made for normal circumstances, in order to organise a democratic republic in France. It is in the Constitution that one can best perceive the political designs of the Convention before the month of *Thermidor*, and an understanding of these designs will enable us the better to comprehend the formation and the vicissitudes of provisional institutions.

In the first place, therefore, let us consider the Constitution of 1793.

## I.

We have seen that France expected a constitutional reform from the Convention. One of the first decrees passed by this Assembly (September 21, 1792) declared "that there can be no Constitution but that which is accepted by the people." Here, at a word, the Convention condemned in principle the Constitution of 1791, which had not been submitted to a plebiscite. It also ratified the wish for the establishment of a popular *referendum*, which dated from the very beginnings of the democratic party, and had recently been expressed by several of the electoral assemblies. But the Convention was forced immediately to enter upon the opportunist and revolutionary courses which it was obliged by circumstance to follow throughout its whole career ; having proclaimed



principles which were suited to normal times and to peace, it had to displace them by exceptional, often dictatorial measures, suited to the conditions of warfare and the abnormal circumstances from which it was unable to extricate itself. A few minutes after declaring that no constitutional reform could be valid except it were submitted to a plebiscite, it abolished royalty without consulting the people. The next day, September 22nd, it established the Republic, again without consulting the people; proclaimed it one and indivisible on the 25th, and rejected, on October 16th, a motion of Manuel's which suggested that the establishment of the Republic should be submitted to a plebiscite.

So far, these were constitutional articles, not a constitution. How could one be made with the Austro-Prussian army still in Champagne?

Nevertheless, on September 29th the Convention decreed the establishment of a Committee of Constitution, which it composed (October 11th) of the nine following members: Siéyès, Thomas Paine, Brissot (presently replaced by Barbaroux), Petion, Vergniaud, Gensonné, Barère, Danton, and Condorcet.<sup>1</sup>

This election was a victory for the Rolandist or Girondist party. At the Jacobins, on October 14th, some one having proposed to send an address to the Committee of Constitution, Chabot said: "I demand the adjournment of the previous question. I know that the Committee of Constitution includes Danton, Barère, and Condorcet; but the address in question will serve as well in the hands of our three friends as if placed at the disposition of the whole Committee; for after all those in our favour are still only three against six." Danton himself obtained a decision that

<sup>1</sup> There were six *suppléants*: Barbaroux, de Séchelles, Lanthenas, Jean de Bry, Fauchet, and Lavicomterie.

in order to counterbalance the influence of the Girondists, the Jacobin Club should itself elect an "Auxiliary Committee of Constitution."

Although the Girondins were perhaps more anxious to establish a Constitution than were the Montagnards—the polity of the Girondins, in fact, tending to establish a normal condition of things in which the departments would have the same legal influence as Paris—yet the Committee of Constitution took great care not to be precipitate in its labours. On October 19th it obtained the decree :

"At the request of the Committee of Constitution, the National Convention invites all the friends of liberty and equality to put before it, in any language, such plans, tendencies, and means as they think it proper to give a good Constitution for the French Republic ; the Convention authorises its Committee of Constitution to have such suggestions translated and printed, and submitted to the Convention."

The announcement of what must evidently be a long inquiry showed plainly that there was no disposition to hasten.

Public opinion seemed to become indifferent to the idea of a radical constitutional reform. The *Chronique de Paris* of the 23rd noted this with a certain bitterness :

"We have seen the happy days when the French, occupied only with things and not with men, lent themselves with enthusiasm to the discussion of public interests. Our booksellers' shops were full of excellent works, written by the finest spirits of the century, and our most learned men. Go into the booksellers' to-day : ask what books they are printing and selling, and you have the thermometer of the public mind."

It was not that the public was asleep ; but it saw that the work of national defence was proceeding satisfactorily, and did not feel the necessity of withdrawing from the *status quo*, whatever contradictions or internal evils might exist. Robespierre, in his journal, declared

at this time that the Constitution of 1791, slightly altered, would answer very well.

The Jacobins, again, were in no hurry to set their Auxiliary Committee to work. This Committee was first of all instructed to hold a preliminary inquiry, precisely like the Convention Committee, and to stimulate an exchange of views with and between the affiliated Jacobin Clubs. The Committee was to consist of twelve members. Only six of these were named at first (October 19th): Collot d'Herbois, Billaud-Varenne, Robespierre, Danton, Chabot and Couthon. Then, at a date unknown to us, there was a fresh election in which four of these members were eliminated, and the Committee was composed of eight members: Jeanbon Saint-André, Robert, Thuriot, Bentabole, Robespierre, Billaud-Varenne, Anthoine, Saint-Just. It was not until February 18, 1793, after the Convention Committee had presented its report, that the Jacobins completed their Committee, by electing or re-electing Dubois-Crancé, Collot d'Herbois, Cloutz, and Couthon. No traces of the activities of this Montagnard Committee remain. It is evident that it seemed to the Jacobins impossible to establish a Constitution at this period. In any case, their chief anxiety was that if a Constitution were established it should not be Girondist and should not give the Girondins power.

As for the Committee of Constitution of the Convention, we know nothing or almost nothing of its private debates.<sup>1</sup> It left neither registers nor papers of any sort. We know only that Condorcet was appointed chairman, and it is evident, not only from

<sup>1</sup> Its principles seem to have been those of David Williams. Concerning his stay in Paris, and his influence, see Mme. Roland (*Œuvres*). He seems to have left France on February 1st. His ideas are explained in his *Observations on the last French Constitution, with Suggestions for the Formation of the new Constitution*. It contains a curious criticism of the Declaration of Rights. It was translated into French, and published in 1793 in Paris.

the style, but from the ideas, that he was the chief author of the first *Proposal for a Constitution*. This proposal we have in two forms ; the one official, the other published by the *Moniteur*. The text given by the *Moniteur* is evidently that of a first draft, which differs in several points from the final draft ; but these differences are unimportant, do not bear upon any essential point, and give us only the vaguest idea of the discussions which must have taken place at the meetings of the Committee. However, it seems from Condorcet's report, which preceded the draft, that among the questions debated that which occupied the Committee longest was whether there should be two Chambers or one only ; or whether this single Chamber should not be divided into two sections (as was the legislative body of the year III.). The writer has the air of resuming the debate in a passage wherein he exposes at some length, and with a certain predilection, the two-Chamber system, which he would, we feel, prefer under normal conditions. However, the Committee and Condorcet himself supported the idea of a single Chamber, with a system of internal regulation calculated to prevent over-hasty voting.

At the session of the Convention of February 15, 1793, Condorcet read his report. The weakness of his voice would not allow him to complete the reading of it ; Barnave finished it for him. Then Gensonné, during the same session, began to read the proposed Constitution, and completed his reading of it on the 16th. This proposal, signed by all the members of the Committee with the exception of Danton,<sup>1</sup> was

<sup>1</sup> Are we to think that Danton disapproved of the proposal, or that he wished, Machiavelli-like, to leave the responsibility to Condorcet (whom the Montagnards perhaps were already ceasing to regard as a supporter) and the Girondists ? Nothing shows that at this date there was any disagreement of outlook between Danton and Condorcet ; it may be that Danton's dislike of desk-work and office-work led to his neglecting the sessions of the Committee.

printed by order of the Convention and distributed throughout France.

The proposed Constitution was preceded by a Declaration of Rights, containing thirty-three articles, while the Declaration of 1789 contained only seventeen. The ideas and formulæ are the same ; but far more explicit, with many more definitions. It marks a more definite liberalism. Thus, this article in the Declaration of 1789 : " No one may be molested on account of his opinions, even religious, provided their expression does not disturb the public order established by the law," an article which in effect only granted a simple tolerance, was replaced by an article which really established the liberty of conscience : " Every man is free in the exercise of his religion." The old Declaration granted liberty of the press " subject to responsibility for the abuse of this liberty in the case determined by the law," while the new Declaration read : " The liberty of the press and of all other means of publishing thought cannot be prohibited, suspended, or limited."

There were also novelties in harmony with the new condition of the State, which had just passed from the monarchical system to the republican. All " hereditary in functions " was declared " absurd and tyrannical." The first Declaration declared sovereignty to be in the *nation* ; the second in the *entire people*—that is, it ratified the establishment of universal suffrage. It promised the people legal means of resisting oppression. It said, moreover : " Public relief is a sacred debt of society, and it is for the law to determine its extent and application." And, if it did not touch the rights of property, if it was not socialistic, it nevertheless took another step towards the ideal of equality in this very democratic article : " Education is the need of all, and society owes it equally to all its members."

As for the plan of the Constitution ; the Constitution of 1791, which served as basis and model, was

doubtless to be found in it, but democratised and republicanised. It stated that "the French nation constitutes itself a Republic one and indivisible." It was a democratic republic with universal suffrage, excluding neither servants nor foreigners. All men twenty-one years of age were French citizens and inscribed on the civic register of a primary assembly, provided they had resided for a complete year on French territory, and for three months in the commune in which they wished to exercise the right of suffrage.

Nearly all functions were elective, as in the Constitution of 1791. But the suffrage was no longer in two degrees; or rather there was, for all elections, a scrutiny of presentation and a definitive scrutiny.

1. *Scrutiny of Presentation*.—Each citizen writes or has written on his voting paper a number of names equal to that of the posts to be filled. The departmental administration collects these votes and draws up a reduced list of presentation, "consisting of the names of those who have obtained the greatest number of votes, to three times the number of the posts to be filled."

2. *Definitive Scrutiny*.—The list of presentation will be sent to the primary assemblies, who will choose from it the functionaries to be elected, whom they can choose only from this list.

The following were the authorities instituted by the proposed Girondist Constitution :

1. *Administrations of Departments*.—There will be in each department [this territorial division was maintained intact] an Administrative Council of eighteen members, of whom four will form the Directory. These Councils will be subordinated to the National Government—that is to say, to the Executive Council—in all that pertains to the execution of the laws and administration in general. The central power will be represented in the departmental administrations by a national commissary, whom it will choose from among the members of the administration.

2. *Municipalities*.—Here the territorial subdivisions established by the Constituent Assembly are greatly modified. There will be no more districts. Each department is to be divided into large communes, formed “so that there cannot be more than two and a half leagues from the farthest habitation to the centre of the headquarters of the commune.” Each commune is to be divided into municipal sections and primary assemblies; it will have an administration composed of twelve members and a mayor, subordinated to the administration of the department. Each section will have a secondary agency, entrusted to a single citizen, who may have assistants. The reunion of these secondary agents with the administration will form the Council General of the commune. This is the system of “canton municipalities,” to be realised by the Constitution of the year III.

3. *Executive Council of the Republic*.—This Council will be composed of seven Ministers, namely, a Minister of Legislation, a Minister of War, a Minister of Foreign Affairs, a Minister of Marine, a Minister of Public Taxes, a Minister of Agriculture, Commerce, and Manufactures, a Minister of Public Works, Establishments, Relief, Sciences and Arts. Each Minister will preside over the Council in turn, for a fortnight at a time; and the Council will be responsible to the Legislative Assembly. The people will nominate the Council according to the mode of scrutiny already described. The administration of each department, with the scrutiny of the primary assemblies, will form a list of thirteen candidates for each portfolio. The primary assemblies will definitively elect the Ministers from this list.

4. *Legislative Corps*.—Each department will elect one deputy “for fifty thousand souls,” by the method of election employed for the departmental and communal officials. This single Chamber will be renewed each year. It will issue laws and decrees.

Finally, there will be a National Treasury, a Bureau of Accounts, Tribunals or Courts of Law, and a High Court, all elected by the people.

This projected Constitution offers the popular *referendum* which had so long been demanded by the democratic party. It was called the "people's censorship of the acts of the national representation." When a citizen wishes to effect the repeal of a law, or to get a law passed, or any measure of general politics undertaken, he may, by collecting fifty signatures, demand the convocation of his primary assembly. If this assembly agree, the other primary assemblies of the same commune will be convoked. If there be then still a majority in favour of the proposition, all the primary assemblies of the department will be convoked. If there be still a majority in favour of the proposition, it will be sent to the Legislative Assembly,<sup>1</sup> which decides without appeal. But if another department adhere to the proposition, the Legislative Assembly will be obliged to convoke all the primary assemblies of the Republic. If the majority of these assemblies adhere to the proposition, the Legislative Assembly will be renewed, and the new Assembly will legislate accordingly, but its decision will still be submitted to the exercise of the right of censure.

As for the revision of the Constitution, a "National Convention," which will sit in a town situated over fifty leagues from Paris, must be convoked by the Legislative Assembly, "when it shall have been judged necessary by the majority of the inhabitants of the Republic." In any case, at the end of twenty years a National Convention must be held.

One section of this Constitution, Section VI., is

<sup>1</sup> At this time all the democrats rejected the idea of two Chambers, despite the example of the United States, where among thirteen States only two, Georgia and Pennsylvania, had only one Chamber originally. In 1790 Pennsylvania established a Senate.



devoted to "means of guaranteeing civil liberty." In this section are detailed, minute, and ingenious prescriptions for avoiding all possibility of any kind of tyranny whatsoever. The liberty of the press is also ratified anew, and is unlimited, "except when calumnious."

The external polity of the French Republic is regulated according to the principles of the propagandist policy. The Republic is to annex the territories whose inhabitants shall have freely expressed the desire to be united to France. The French generals, in such foreign countries as they may occupy, will be expected to ensure for the citizens of these countries the entire enjoyment of their national, civil, and political rights. "They may not, under any pretext, nor in any case, protect, with the authority with which they are invested, the maintenance of usages contrary to liberty, equality, or the sovereignty of the people." In its relations with foreign nations the French Republic will only respect institutions "guaranteed by the general consent of the people."

## II.

Such was the first project for a Constitution submitted to the Convention. The press welcomed it rather coldly; it was considered over-complicated.

The Jacobins welcomed it but ill, for entirely different reasons.

At the session of the Jacobin Club of February 17th, Couthon criticised the Declaration of Rights, which was, according to him, "affectedly abstract," nor did it sufficiently expound man's natural rights. The method of election appeared to him to offer "only the appearance of a popular method." He declared that to make the Executive Council a rival power to the

national representation was a dangerous thing. He demanded that the Auxiliary Committee elected by the Jacobins should present a project of their own.

This motion was voted, after being seconded by Thuriot ; who, surprised that a philosopher like Condorcet had not blushed to raise the question of two Chambers, denounced the system of republican federation which was perfidiously included in the proposal, and pretended that the Girondist faction had sought to profit by the state of anarchy then existing in France in order to gain the general assent by surprise. In reality, the project of Condorcet was so democratic that the Jacobins could make no precise objections to it ; they were hostile to it only because it emanated from their adversaries, the Girondists.

The Convention seemed to find that the Committee of Constitution was too hasty in presenting its project. It had not waited for the results of that consultation of opinion ordered by the decree of October 19, 1792. As soon as the reading of the project was completed (on February 16th) a decree authorised the deputies to print, at the expense of the State, such proposals for a Constitution as they had drafted and wished to submit. Thus the discussion of Condorcet's proposal was implicitly postponed, and for weeks and weeks the Convention no longer seemed to be thinking of establishing a Constitution.

It was only when the military reverses of March, 1793, and the treason of Dumouriez, had placed the Republic in the most critical situation, that the Convention began to occupy itself once more with the construction of a Constitution ; doubtless with the idea that a Republic constitutionally organised would have better chances of concluding alliances, or even peace, and also with the idea that a Constitution might cause the internal disturbances to cease. But it continued to proceed with intentional slowness. The Committee

of Constitution, in conformity with the decree which established it, was dissolved on the very day it presented its projected Constitution. On April 4th the Convention nominated a new kind of Committee of Constitution, under the name of the "Committee of Analysis," or the "Commission of Six," which was composed of Jean de Bry, Mercier, Valazé, Barère, Lanjuinais, and Romme ;<sup>1</sup> and instructed it to present an analysis of the various projects for constitutions whose preparation had been invited by the decrees of October 19, 1792, and February 16, 1793.

The Commission of Six made a first report on April 17, through the medium of Romme. Of this report we have only some unimportant analyses, and a "Part Three," which contains a proposed Declaration of Rights. But we have three undated reports by Lanjuinais, in which we learn that the Commission did not confine itself to analysing the various proposals emanating from individual initiative, and that it also, with the help or on account of these proposals, submitted an appreciation of the Girondist proposal.

At the outset this appreciation referred only to the parts relating to territorial divisions and the exercise of the right of suffrage ; and it was favourable. From these two points of view Lanjuinais declared that out of "more than three hundred essays or proposals, printed or in manuscript," not one had seemed preferable to the plan of the Committee of Constitution. As to the question of the number of departments, some proposed to increase the number, some to diminish it. "From three to eighty-five, from eighty-five to five hundred ; we have to choose," said the reporter. A citizen of Bordeaux even suggested that there should be no more departments, but that France should be divided into twenty-five thousand municipalities, and

<sup>1</sup> The *suppléants* were Delmas, Danton, Saint-Étienne, and Jeanbon Saint-André.

that there should be no other divisions whatever. But the Commission of Six did not find any good reasons for change in any of these proposals, and was in favour of maintaining unchanged the division of France into departments.

Would the districts be suppressed? "Almost all [the authors of these proposals] demand the entire suppression or the reduction of the districts; <sup>1</sup> the general desire is for suppression." This was a reason for taking the advice of the Committee of Constitution, which had decided to suppress the districts.

Would it be necessary to municipalise the cantons? The first idea of Siéyès and the Committee of Constitution of the Constituent Assembly "was to make of all the communes in each canton a single commune or municipality." This was the advice of the Committee of Constitution of the Convention also, and the Commission of Six supported it, without mentioning any objection to the proposals which it examined.

As for the right of suffrage, Lanjuinais does not hesitate to open the question of feminism. "The Committee," he says, "would apparently exclude women from political rights; several of the projects protest against this exclusion, of which our colleague Romme has already complained, and concerning which Guyomar has given you an interesting dissertation." We have not the speech of Romme's that Lanjuinais refers to, but the brochure by Guyomar we have; it is called *Le partisan de l'égalité politique entre les individus*; <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Incidentally Lanjuinais draws attention to the fact that the idea of the districts is a souvenir of the system of provincial assemblies.

<sup>2</sup> Guyomar wanted complete equality between man and woman. "Is the Declaration of the Rights of Man common to woman? There is the problem which exists in fact; it seems to me easy to resolve it by right. Consequently I say yes; I will wait for a more enlightened man to say no." Williams, less radical, is not disposed to admit married women to the exercise of political rights. He expresses himself as follows: "Although the physique of women, their destiny and

in this the vindication of the political rights of women is clearly formulated, and also in the *Observations on the late French Constitution* by Williams ; and, according to Lanjuinais, by two projects in manuscript ; one by the Abbé Moriet, curé of Saint-Lô, the other by De Grawers. There was, therefore, at the time when the French Republic tried for the first time to organise itself constitutionally, a movement in favour of realising to the profit of women the equalising principles of the Declaration of Rights. This movement was not seconded by Condorcet, although he had been an apostle of feminism in 1790. But the Commission of Six did not meet the feminist claims with an absolute refusal. On the contrary ; it made this exclusion of women from the State politic only for reasons of opportunism, declaring such exclusion to be only provisional and of short duration. "The vices of our education," says Lanjuinais, "make this exclusion necessary at least for a few years longer." Lanjuinais' report also informs us that the establishment of universal suffrage was not regarded favourably by the English democrats. "The majority of the projects sent from England," he says, "refuse the right of active citizen to those who pay no tax." The Commission of Six was entirely in favour of universal suffrage, and made no mention of any French objectors. Lanjuinais even says that "domesticity should not be excluded from political rights." He accepts the proposal of the Committee of Constitution, but proposes a fresh

their employments, keep them from many of the duties of the active citizen ; although, according to public opinion, the man and woman united by the tie of marriage must be regarded morally as one creature with a single opinion, it is none the less true that in other cases, where women remain unmarried or have become widows, they have incontestably the right to vote ; a right the deprivation of which, by reducing their talents to obtaining an indirect influence by intrigue, is an injustice from which much inconvenience results."

draft, containing once more the phrase "active citizen," to denote such citizens as fulfil the conditions of age and residence which give them the right to vote.

### III.

On April 15, 1793, the Convention decreed that "constitutional questions should be on the order of the day on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday of each week." The discussion commenced on April 17th and continued until May 29th. It was not an unbroken debate ; it was continually interrupted by the serious questions evoked by internal and external dangers. The military reverses, the insurrection of La Vendée, the quarrel between the Girondists and the Montagnards, of necessity occupied almost the whole attention of the Assembly, and absorbed nearly all its efforts ; only at rare intervals did the dangers of the country allow them to draw breath, and to resume their constitutional labours. They worked at the Constitution absently, by fits and starts, and their constitutional labours had so little interest for the public that the journals furnished only incomplete accounts of them.

From what we know of these debates, it does not seem that they took place in the presence of two sides in definite opposition. It would seem that the differences between the Gironde and the Mountain betrayed themselves only on two points, and under two sets of circumstances. On April 17th André Pomme proposed that the Declaration of Rights should be placed, as before, under the auspices of the Supreme Being. Vergniaud succeeded in effecting the rejection of this motion. But did he put forward the theory that the State was atheistical or purely secular? No ; he merely observed that "the existence of a God does not depend on any declaration of the fact that may be made by

man." Nothing in this incident authorises us to say that the Montagnards wished the Republic to be established upon a mystic basis, or that the Girondists wished to found it upon a positive and rational basis. At the most we may conjecture that in rejecting the name of the Supreme Being, dear as it was to Robespierre, the Girondists wished to annoy yet once again their irascible adversary.

The other circumstance, in which there appeared to be a difference of doctrine between the two parties, was more remarkable. Article 18 of the projected Declaration of Rights was conceived in these words: "The right of property consists in the fact that every man is the master of, and may dispose to his liking of, his goods, his capital, his land, his revenues, and his industry." On April 24th Robespierre criticised this article in an important speech, during which, after making the most conservative statements, he declared himself plainly as a socialist. "You must know," he said at the outset, "that this agrarian law of which you have spoken is nothing but a scarecrow created by knaves to frighten fools. . . . The equality of possessions is a chimera." This was only an oratorical precaution of his, taken in order that he might finally reproach the authors of the projected Constitution for not having said of property what they did say of liberty: that its limits are the rights of others. He proceeded to propose these four articles, which pointed to nothing less than a new social revolution, and even to the agrarian law whose possibility he had only just scouted:

"Firstly: Property is the right of each citizen to enjoy and to dispose of the portion of goods which is guaranteed to him by the law. Secondly: The right of property is limited, like all other rights, by the obligation to respect the rights of others. Thirdly: It must not endanger either the security, liberty, existence, or the property of others. Fourthly: All traffic that violates this principle is essentially illicit and immoral."

He also desired to "ratify the basis of the progressive impost" decreed in principle on March 18th; while modifying this decree to the advantage of the proletariat, so that "citizens whose revenues do not exceed a sum necessary to their subsistence shall be released from contributing to the public expenditure." On the other hand, the Girondist proposal for the Declaration said merely that "public aid and relief are a sacred debt of society"; and that "it is for the law to determine their extent and application." Robespierre wanted a plain statement of the right to work, couched in these terms:

"Society is obliged to provide for the subsistence of all its members, whether by procuring them work or by assuring the means of existence to those who are not in a condition to work. The succour necessary to those who lack necessities is a debt owed by him who possesses a superfluity; it belongs to the law to determine the manner in which this debt should be acquitted."

This famous Declaration of Rights of Robespierre's, which later, under Louis-Philippe and the second Republic, was to become, as it were, the charter of the French Socialists, had been solemnly approved by the Jacobin Club on April 21st. It would certainly seem that at this moment—in April, 1793—the Montagnards were socialists, and in opposition to the Girondists. But this is an illusion. The Girondist proposal for a Constitution was so democratic that in order to make it less popular, and to make it appear moderate, it was necessary to have recourse to socialism. Robespierre and the Jacobins accordingly had recourse to it; not because they really wished to effect a radical reform of society, but merely as political tactics. The proof is that once triumphant over the Girondists, after June 2nd, when they were the masters and could make their ideas prevail, the Montagnards abandoned their



socialism, and did not insert in their Declaration of Rights any of the articles which Robespierre had proposed. Robespierre was not contented with merely failing to propose them anew ; he disavowed, or did something very like it, the article in which he had demanded that poor citizens should be exempted from all taxation. It was, I repeat, only in appearance that the Montagnards and the Girondists, in the debates on the Constitution, were divided on the question of property ; the two parties were, with some individual exceptions, agreed upon postponing any supplementary social revolution.

Robespierre had created the illusion that he was a socialist in order to appear more democratic than the Girondists. At the same time, in order to gain the support against the Mountain of those ultra-democrats who dreamed, with Anacharsis Clootz, of the universal Republic, he contrived to appear more "propagandist" than Brissot himself. We have seen that the projected Girondist Constitution tended to spread the principles of the French Revolution by force of arms, and to invite voluntary annexations to France. It referred to the propagandist policy as possible, as desirable. Robespierre, who formerly had opposed this policy so violently, now maintained that the Declaration should represent it not merely as a right, but as a duty ; and his projected Declaration ends in these four articles :

"The men of all countries are brothers, and the different peoples ought to assist one another according to their ability, like citizens of the same State.—He who opposes one nation declares himself the enemy of all.—Those who make war upon a people in order to arrest the progress of liberty and abolish the rights of man should be pursued by all nations, not as ordinary enemies, but as assassins and rebellious brigands.—Kings, aristocrats, tyrants, whosoever they may be, are slaves in revolt against the sovereign of the world, which is the human species, and against the legislature of the universe, which is nature."

And Robespierre, in proposing these articles of intolerant propagandism, wished not only to surpass the Girondists ; he wished also to oppose the foreign policy of Danton, who, on the preceding April 13th, had induced the Convention to disown both the propagandist articles of the projected Girondist Constitution and the whole system of propaganda, and had secured the important decree by which the French Republic declared "that it would not in any manner become involved in the government of other powers." In reality Robespierre was no more in love with the propagandist policy than with socialism ; when the Montagnard Constitution was drafted, in June, 1793, not only did he fail to request the insertion of the propagandist articles which he presented in April, but he made no opposition whatever to Article 119 of this Constitution, although it reproduced the decree of April 13th.

Although, in the debate on the Constitution, the Montagnard party did not really disagree in principle with the Girondists on any important point, this does not mean that all the members of Convention without exception then expressed the same conceptions as to the essential bases of the democratic State about to be organised. Thus, on April 24, 1793, Anacharsis Clootz proposed anew his "republic of the human species" ; and on May 10th Isnard demanded that the "social pact" should not be definitive ; that the French nation should consent to it only for thirty years ; namely, until 1823. Although during the same session Robespierre, as we have seen, put forward his propagandist ideas, which might have seemed to favour the German's chimerical dream, we cannot say that the "republic of the human family" was really demanded by the Montagnards then or at any other time. As for Isnard's "social pact," it does not seem that any of the Girondists supported the idea.

I repeat : the opposition of the Montagnards to the projected Girondist Constitution does not, if we go to the bottom of things, entail any doctrinal difference of opinion. If they attacked the proposition, it was entirely because it emanated from their adversaries. At need they did not hesitate to oppose, in this proposal, their own political aims, and—amazing thing !—they opposed them with arguments that were Girondist rather than Montagnard. Thus, Condorcet had organised the executive power securely enough, by making it result from a popular vote. If there was one political idea which seemed particularly that of the Montagnards, was it not that of a strong executive power? Well; Saint-Just (on April 24th) denounced this executive power as a possible dangerous rival of the national representation, and Robespierre (May 10th) pronounced this eulogy of decentralisation :

“ Avoid the ancient insanity of Governments, the mania of wishing to govern too much ; leave to individuals, leave to families, the right of doing what in no way molests or harms others ; leave the communes the power of regulating their own affairs in all things that do not essentially appertain to the general administration of the Republic ; in a word, leave to individual liberty all that does not naturally appertain to public authority, and you will have left all the less to the grip of ambition and arbitrary power.”

It is remarkable, on the other hand, that the two parties, which were fundamentally in agreement as to principles, should often be in agreement during this debate in seeking to adjourn the application of the proposed Constitution. Thus, the article of the proposed Constitution establishing the freedom of worship was certainly consistent with the unanimous feelings of the members of the Convention. However, they decided, during the session of April 19th, to omit this article. Why?

“It has been claimed with reason,” said the *Patriote français* of April 21st, “that this article should disappear; it has been observed that legislation ought to have no influence over the relations between man and the Divine; that to declare that worship is free would be to suppose that it might be otherwise; that the liberty of creeds ought not to be specified any more than the liberty to walk, eat, or drink; that if the Declaration of the Constituent Assembly did especially establish the liberty of worship, it was because fanaticism had not then been dethroned, because all kinds of prejudices were still triumphant. These principles, developed by Vergniaud, Danton, and Salle, had an easy victory; and on the motion of Gensonné the article was withdrawn from the Declaration of Rights, and the discussion of it was adjourned until the time when the chapter of the Constitution dealing with civil liberty should be under consideration.”

Thus, according to the *Patriote*, it was because the principle of the liberty of worship appeared incontestable that the Convention refused to insert it in the Constitution. Certainly this is what the majority of the orators of the Convention said; but they said more than this. The deputy (the journals do not give his name) who first demanded the suppression of the article certainly declared that the principle of the freedom of belief was above the laws, but he added: “If by worship we understand an external worship, I maintain that your Declaration cannot ratify the liberty of worship; for perhaps a time will come when there will be no external worship but that of liberty and public morality.” Vergniaud says:

“The article under discussion is a result of the despotism and superstition under which France has for so long a time groaned. The maxim of the Catholic Church, *Without the Church no Salvation*, did not establish the Inquisition in France, but it filled the prisons.

“When the Constituent Assembly gave the first impulse towards liberty, it was necessary, in order to put an end to the frightful intolerance which was rampant, and to destroy the prejudices which could not be attacked from the front, to ratify the principle of tolerance; here already a great step was taken. But to-day we are no longer at the same point; men’s minds are freed from their shameful fetters; our chains are broken, and in a declaration of social rights, I do not see that you could ratify principles absolutely foreign to social order.”

We see it ; the idea of giving a check to Catholicism, of preparing for what would later be called the reign of reason, was not unfamiliar to at least two of the orators who were opposing the proclamation of the principle of the liberty of worship. However, it does not seem that the vote of the Convention was inspired by the idea of "dechristianisation." The decisive argument was indicated, in covert phrases, by Danton :

"If superstition seems to have still some part in the movements which agitate the Republic, it is because the policy of our enemies has always made use of it ; but remark that everywhere the people, once freed from the suggestions of malevolence, are recognising that whosoever wishes to interpose himself between them and the Divine is an impostor. Everywhere the deportation of fanatical and rebellious priests has been demanded. Beware of despising the national reason ; beware of inserting an article involving such an unjust presumption ; and, in proceeding to the order of the day, adopt a kind of prefatory motion in respect of the priests, which will do you honour in the eyes of your fellow-citizens and of posterity."

Salle spoke more lucidly : "I beg the Convention to draft a law by which every citizen, whatever his creed, shall engage to submit himself to the law of the State." It was because the priests were then abusing the liberty of worship, because they were fomenting the Vendéean insurrection, that Danton and Salle advised the adjournment of the proclamation of religious liberty ; and it is infinitely likely that this was the argument, entirely opportunist in character, which decided the Convention to vote this adjournment.

In this matter the Montagnards and the Girondists were able to act in agreement against their common enemies, the anti-revolutionary priests. It would be extremely difficult to perceive in what manner they were seriously in disagreement, in this debate on the Constitution, if the only question which really divided them in the matter of politics, namely, the question of the

pre-eminence of Paris, had not finally presented itself, at a time when the quarrel between Parisian and departmental politics had become most acute. On May 22nd Rabaut-Pomier definitely advised that cities of over fifty thousand inhabitants should be divided into several municipalities, and Buzot spoke with hatred against Paris, against this usurping municipality whose unity he declared must be destroyed. The Montagnards defended Paris with eloquence. "Never let us accuse Paris," said Saint-Just on May 24th; "let us in friendship give her the credit of the evils she has suffered for us. The blood of her martyrs is mingled with the blood of other Frenchmen; her children are buried in the same tomb with others. Does each department wish to recover its corpses and separate them?"

The Convention did not adopt the motion of Rabaut-Pomier. Already, on May 21st, it had implicitly repulsed the project of canton municipalities, by maintaining the *status quo*—that is to say, the division of France into departments, districts, and municipalities. This noteworthy proposition, of which the object was to organise the commune for good, and thus to give the Revolution a solid foundation, was not even honoured by a serious discussion. The Montagnards feared that if any alteration were made in municipal organisation in general, the position now held by Paris the capital, Paris the commune, might be threatened; and we must own that Rabaut-Pomier's motion was not likely to allay these fears.

Another point of difference between the Girondins and the Montagnards was that the latter did not wish to establish a Constitution under the circumstances, while the former were in haste to see the Constitution finished. The Jacobins demanded an adjournment of the whole matter. On April 26th Thuriot proposed to the Convention that the discussion should be post-

poned until the return of the numerous Montagnard deputies then absent on missions. This motion was rejected, and the discussion continued. When incidentally interrupted, cries of "The Constitution!" "The Constitution!" were heard from different quarters of the hall. But as far as we can judge from the incoherent and incomplete accounts which are all we have, the Montagnards nevertheless sought on every possible occasion to obstruct the discussion and to make it drag on indefinitely. Finally, on May 10th, the first Article was voted, proclaiming the Republic to be one and indivisible. On the 13th the Commission of Six implicitly rejected Condorcet's project, and, undoing all the labours of the Committee of Constitution, succeeded in obtaining the adoption by the Convention of a totally different plan of discussion, in the form of a series of chapters and of questions.<sup>1</sup> The intention of refusing to come to any definite conclusion so long as the Girondins were not politically annihilated was at last so obvious that Condorcet (and this is the only time he intervened in this debate) proposed, on May 15th, that the Convention should fix upon a final date for the completion of the Constitution. If the primary assemblies had not been convoked for the purpose of pronouncing upon the Constitution before November 1, 1793, they would have the right upon that date to elect another Convention, which should enter upon its functions on December 15th. This motion was not accepted; but the Convention voted four articles dealing with territorial divisions, and completed them on the 21st by a fifth article. Then the discussion was interrupted for eight days.

On May 29th Barère presented and obtained the adoption of the final draft of the Declaration of Rights. At this date only six articles of the Constitution had

<sup>1</sup> I have reproduced this plan in the *Révolution française*, xxxiv. 552.

been voted ; the first ratified the one and indivisible Republic ; the other five, dealing with territorial divisions, maintained the then existing state of things ; that is, with the exception of a Declaration of a more democratic quality than that of 1789, the Convention had decreed nothing that did not exist already. It seemed as though the Girondist majority had failed ; that it was incapable of giving the Republic a Constitution ; and the political tactics of the Montagnards throughout the whole debate whose most characteristic incidents I have related were precisely to draw attention to this failure and this impotence.

#### IV.

It was evident that Paris would not accept a Constitution at the hands of the Girondists ; that she would reject it, whatever its quality, as a symbol of Federalism. On the other hand, it became equally evident that in this crisis of the quarrel between the departments and the capital a Constitution was the sole means of ensuring peace, of reconciling the French people. Those who, like Danton, wished not only to destroy the political preponderance of the Girondists, but also to prevent Paris and the people from rising against them, thought it possible to anticipate the violence threatening them by rapidly obtaining the adoption of a Constitution drawn up by the Montagnards. With this in view, on May 30, 1793, "at the request of the Committee of Public Safety," the Convention associated with this Committee Hérault de Séchelles, Ramel, Saint-Just, Mathieu, and Couthon, "to bring forward the articles of the Constitution."

This measure was taken too late, and did not prevent the popular *coup d'état* of May 31 and June 2, 1793, when there broke out a formidable insurrection of the departments against Paris.



The Committee of Public Safety judged that the only means of saving France was more than ever to manufacture a Constitution ; a Constitution which should gain the support of the departments ; and to manufacture it quickly, immediately, scamping it even if necessary.

This task was entrusted to the facile and graceful pen of Héroult de Séchelles.

We know very little concerning the debates which took place in the Committee on the subject of the Constitution, and the particular part played by Héroult. Saint-Just, later on, in his report of the 11th of *Germinal* in the year II, remarks : "We remember that Héroult was, to his disgust, the silent witness of the labours of those who were sketching out the plan of the Constitution, of which he cleverly made himself the unabashed reporter." It is possible that the dilettante Héroult listened with ironical calm, mute or silent, to the sentimental effusions of Couthon and the juvenile declamations of Saint-Just.<sup>1</sup> One

<sup>1</sup> In a collection entitled *Isographie des hommes célèbres* (Paris, 1828-30), there is a facsimile of the following autograph letter from Héroult de Séchelles to the keeper of printed documents : "7 June, 1793, Year II of the Republic. Dear fellow-citizen : charged, with four of my colleagues, to prepare by Monday the plan of a Constitution, I pray you, in their name and mine, to procure immediately the laws of Minos, which ought to be contained in a collection of the Greek laws. We have urgent need of them. *Héroult (de Séchelles)*.—Health, friendship, and fraternity to the brave citizen Desanays." With regard to this letter : the Montagnards in general, and Héroult in particular, have been accused of the grossest ignorance ; Héroult, for imagining that any text existed of the "laws of Minos." But Héroult was a scholar and a man of refined culture, as is proved by his various writings, and particularly by his *Voyage à Montbard* (which I republished through Jouast in 1890). In this journey he mystifies Buffon with the most amusing irreverence. It is evident to me, at any rate, that he wished, by this letter to Desanays, to mystify one of his colleagues (Saint-Just or Billaud-Varenne?), who perhaps had referred with emphasis to the laws of Minos. I think any one who will read the *Voyage à Montbard* will agree with me.

thing is certain : it was he who held the pen. In the National Archives there is not only his report, written in his own hand, but the proposed Constitution and the proposed Declaration, in the form of much-erased rough drafts.

He went ahead quickly ; taking only six days to re-draft his plan. This is proved by the fact that he submitted it to the Committee on the evening of June 9th, and the events of May 31st and June 2nd would assuredly not have allowed him to set to work before the 3rd. The Committee adopted his plan during the morning of June 10th, and Hérault read it before the Convention the same day.

At the head of the document were reproduced the Declaration of Rights adopted by the Convention on May 29th, and the few articles decreed. For the rest, we may regard it essentially as a simplification of Condorcet's plan. There are differences, but they do not seem to spring from a different conception of democracy ; the most important are the following :

As a consequence of the previous votes of the Convention, the idea of large communes or cantonal municipalities was abandoned. Why?

“Can we fail,” said Hérault, “to preserve the municipalities, however numerous they may be ? To do so would be an act of ingratitude towards the Revolution, a crime against liberty. What am I saying ?—it would be to annihilate popular government. What a blow to the citizens, if, in some of these communes (and however little they were reduced the reduction could not affect less than fourteen thousand), they were deprived of the consolation of fraternal self-administration ! The human species is composed of families scattered here and there, more or less numerous, but all having the same rights of government and happiness ; the sash which covers rags is as august as that of the most populous cities ; the man who wears it would no more consent to abandon it than to give up his vote or his musket. Besides, what objection can there be to the present condition of things ? No ; the idea of reducing the municipalities could only have originated in the heads of aristocrats, whence it has fallen into the heads of the Moderates.”

Consequently the *status quo* in the matter of territorial divisions was decidedly to be maintained.

As for the organisation of the universal suffrage, the too ingenious and complex system of candidatures was abandoned, except for electing members of the Executive Council. The suffrage was to be exercised sometimes directly, as in the nomination of deputies and municipal officers; sometimes in two stages (primary and electoral assemblies), as in the nomination of departmental administrators, district administrators, and judges; and even in three stages, in the election of members of the Executive Council.

Elections to the Legislature would take place by a method like the *scrutin d'arrondissement*. Each electoral arrondissement would be formed of the union of the primary assemblies resulting from fifty thousand souls, and would name a deputy directly. Thus it was hoped "to avoid federalism and prevent the deputies from speaking henceforth in the name of their department."

The Legislature was to be elected for one year only.

The Executive Council, composed of twenty-four members, was to be nominated thus: "The electoral assembly of each department names a candidate. The legislative body chooses from the general list the members of the Council." This Council is renewable by one half each year. It nominates from its own body the chief agents of the general administration of the Republic. In particular it names the officials of the National Treasury and Department of Accounts, whose election was in Condorcet's plan entrusted to the people.

The working of the popular *referendum* was organised on the same principles as the Girondist plan. The legislative body would propose laws and issue decrees. Decrees could be issued without the sanction of the people; laws could only be executed

if the people did not oppose them. The people put a check upon a law if, at the end of thirty days, in ten departments, one or several primary assemblies protested ; and the draft enumerated the matters that would be the subjects of decrees and laws respectively.

Hérault also proposed, but unsuccessfully, the establishment of a "grand national jury . . . to guarantee citizens against the oppression of the legislative body and the Council."

Finally, in the matter of foreign politics, the reporter of the Council proposed to efface all traces of propagandism, and to ratify the system of non-intervention proclaimed by the decree of April 13, 1793.

## V.

The progress of the Federalist insurrection invited the Convention to hasten the Constitution, and the deputies on missions to demand it, in their letters to the Committee, as the only means of putting an end to the civil war. Hérault's plan was discussed and adopted with almost feverish precipitation, in the space of thirteen days. Commencing on June 11th, the debate was concluded on the 24th. The chief incidents of this period were as follows :

On June 11th the Convention adopted the first seven articles, "in order to check the progress of federalism," and added these words : "The sovereign people is the entirety of French citizens."

On the 12th Thuriot and Danton criticised a detail of Hérault's plan ; it would have enacted that elections should take place by secret scrutiny. They demanded an oral and public vote. The oral vote, Ducos objected, would make the influence of the rich and of employers preponderant. But Barère recommended this mode of scrutiny as a means of directing the selection of

candidates on the part of the Government party. "I observe," he said, "that the secret of the scrutiny would give weak or corrupt men the chance of making a bad choice, and, moreover, we must not deny good citizens the right of being courageous." The Convention decreed that "the elections should take place under scrutiny or by voice, according to the choice of each voter." It added, truly, "that a primary assembly could not in any case prescribe a uniform method of voting." But Barère had excluded in advance from the category of *good citizens* those who should vote by secret scrutiny. There would thus be no liberty. The fact is that the republican party did not yet feel very certain of having a majority in the country; it seemed to fear that the unlettered masses, left to themselves, might relapse into royalism.

On June 15th there was a lively debate on the articles dealing with the election of administrators and members of the Executive Council, which was to take place by a suffrage of two or three degrees. The reappearance of the "electoral assemblies," so often denounced at the Jacobins as imbued with the departmental and anti-Parisian spirit, was regarded with uneasiness. Guyomar and Chabot pleaded the cause of direct suffrage as being more democratic. Robespierre and Levasseur stated, on the contrary, that by an indirect suffrage they would avoid a "dangerous rivalry" between the Executive Council and the legislative body which would not fail to ensue if the Council were nominated directly by the people, as were the deputies. The Convention agreed with them and maintained the electoral assemblies.

The same day, in respect of this article of the plan: "The deputies cannot at any time be prosecuted, accused, nor judged on account of the opinions they may have expressed in the legislative body," the question was raised of the revocability of the deputies by the people,

a question which had already been raised in September, 1792, at the time of the Convention elections. What ! said Rühl ; deputies may express royalist opinions with impunity? Could they express federalist opinions? said Thuriot. Basire demanded the establishment of a national jury to judge deputies should they wish to nominate a tyrant. Robespierre supported these views, but asked what practical means would be taken to realise them. He suggested that the people might censure the outgoing deputies ; and requested that this idea should be referred for consideration to the Committee of Public Safety. The Convention voted the article proposed by Hérault just as it was, and thus refused the people the right, formerly claimed by so many democrats, of recalling such deputies as seemed to them to have exceeded or disregarded their mandates.

On the 16th, however, the Convention set aside the proposal of a "grand national jury" proposed by Hérault to safeguard citizens from oppression. It decided only, on the motion of Robespierre, to resume the discussion of this idea at a later date.

Was there any debate in the Convention on the question of the popular *referendum*, on the distinction between decrees, executed without the intervention of the people, and laws upon which the people must pronounce judgment? I have found no trace of such debate in the reports of the journals. However, Hérault's plan, or at least those articles relating to laws and decrees, was seriously modified ; and the matter is of so much importance in the history of the organisation of democracy that it will be as well to put before the reader the draft of the reporter and the text as adopted.

Here is Hérault's plan :

1. The Legislative Corps proposes laws and issues decrees.
2. Under the general name of *law* are comprised the enactments of the Legislature concerning :

- Civil, criminal, and ordinary police legislation ;  
 The national property and establishments, the various branches of  
 the general administration of the revenues and ordinary expenses  
 of the Republic ;  
 The standard, weight, imprint, and denomination of moneys ;  
 The nature, extent, and collection of taxation ;  
 Public honours to the memory of great men.
3. Under the particular title of *decree* are comprised the enactments  
 of the Legislature concerning :
- The annual establishment of the land and sea forces ;  
 Permission or refusal of passage of foreign troops over French  
 territory ;  
 The introduction of foreign naval powers into the ports of the  
 Republic ;  
 The precautions taken to ensure general security and tranquillity ;  
 The annual and casual distribution of relief in the form of public  
 works ;  
 Unforeseen and extraordinary expenses ;  
 Orders for the fabrication of all kinds of moneys ;  
 Local measures particular to a department, to a commune, to a de-  
 partment of labour, &c. ;  
 The declaration of war, the ratification of treaties, and all things  
 relating to foreign relations ;  
 The appointment and removal of commanders-in-chief of armies ;  
 The enforcement of the responsibility of members of Council and of  
 public functionaries, the accusation and trial of those guilty of  
 conspiracies or attempts against the general security of the  
 Republic ;  
 National awards.

Here is the text as adopted, forming Articles 53 to  
 55 of the Constitution :

53. The Legislative Corps proposes laws and issues decrees.
54. Under the general title of *law* are comprised the enactments of  
 the Legislature concerning :
- Civil and criminal legislation.  
 The general administration of the revenues and ordinary expenses of  
 the Republic ;  
 The national possessions ;  
 The standard, weight, imprint, and denomination of moneys ;  
 The nature, amount, and collection of taxes ;  
 The declaration of war ;

All general redistributions of French territory ;  
 Public instruction ;  
 Public honours to the memory of great men.  
 55. Under the particular title of *decree* are comprised enactments of the Legislature concerning :  
 The annual establishment of land and sea forces ;  
 The permission or refusal of the passage of foreign troops over French territory ;  
 The introduction of foreign naval forces into the ports of the Republic ;  
 Measures of general security and tranquillity ;  
 The annual and casual distribution of relief and establishment of public works ;  
 Orders for the fabrication of moneys of all kinds ;  
 Unforeseen and extraordinary expenses ;  
 Local measures particular to an administration, a commune, or any kind of public works ;  
 The defence of the country ;  
 The ratification of treaties ;  
 The appointment and removal of commanders-in-chief of armies ;  
 The enforcement of the responsibility of members of council and public functionaries ;  
 The prosecution of those accused of conspiracy against the general security of the Republic ;  
 All changes in the division of French territory ;  
 National awards.

We see that the Convention thought it proper to class the declaration of war amongst the laws ; that is to say, to submit it to the ratification of the people. This change had an important bearing ; it was to render almost any offensive war impossible ; it was to ratify the pacific principles established by the Constituent Assembly ; it was almost equivalent to disowning the various declarations of war made by the Legislative Assembly or by the National Convention itself. On the other hand, the Convention, in contradiction to Hérault's plan, removed from the sanction of the people " ordinary police legislation."

On June 19th, with reference to this article : " No citizen is released from the honourable duty of con-



tributing to the public expenses," Levasseur demanded that it should be decreed that no taxes should be required from those who possessed only what was absolutely necessary, and that in conformity with the decree of March 18th, taxation should be established on a sliding scale in proportion to the wealth of the taxpayer. The Girondist Ducos supported the former of these proposals, but did not speak of the second, which no one seconded. Cambon, Fabre d'Églantine, and Robespierre spoke against the exemption claimed for poor citizens. "For a moment," said Robespierre, "I shared the error of Ducos; I believe I have even written to that effect somewhere; but I go back to the principles involved, and I am enlightened by the good sense of the people, who feel that the kind of favour offered them is only an insult." It would be to decree "the degradation of the purest part of the nation," and "the aristocracy of riches." It would establish "a class of proprietors and a class of helots." Conclusion: "One thing is both just and popular: the principle ratified in the Declaration of Rights, that society owes the necessities of life to all those of its members who cannot procure them by their labour. I demand that this principle be inserted in the Constitution; that the poor man, who owes an obolus for his taxes, shall receive it from the nation, in order to return it to the public Treasury." Not a word as to progressive taxation. Robespierre renounced the "socialism" which he had preached in April, doubtless to diminish the popularity of the Girondists. The Convention adopted the article presented by Hérault. Then Couthon demanded that the Committee of Public Safety should draw up Robespierre's proposition in the form of an article to be inserted in the Constitution. Thuriot objected "that it was in the Declaration of Rights," "It is not there in the sense I give to it," said Robespierre. "I demand moreover that the Committee be

instructed to revise the Declaration of Rights, several articles of which do not match with the Constitution, but even contradict it." A decree was issued conformably with his demand, and in this way the Convention abandoned the Declaration it had voted on May 29th.

The articles dealing with the relations of the French Republic with foreign powers were voted almost word for word as Hérault proposed them. These are they :

- 118. The French People is the friend and natural ally of all free peoples.
- 119. It does not meddle with the government of other nations ; it does not allow other nations to meddle with its own.
- 120. It gives asylum to foreigners banished from their country for the cause of liberty. It refuses it to tyrants.
- 121. It does not make peace with an enemy who occupies its territory.

These principles, so contrary to the propagandist articles which Robespierre had proposed in April, were adopted without opposition from Robespierre or from any one. Sentimentality, it would seem, was abandoned in matters of foreign politics. Thus, Grégoire having proposed a "Declaration of the Right of Nations," Barère invited the Convention "not to waste its time over philosophical opinions," and obtained the order of the day.

The last article was the provoking cause of a well-known incident. Mercier inquired : "Then you flatter yourselves that you will always be victorious? Have you concluded a treaty with Victory herself?" Whereupon Basire, loudly applauded, cried, "We have concluded one with Death!" Robespierre and Barère immediately paraphrased the exclamation.

On the same day (June 18th) an article of Hérault's plan, relating to the "guarantee of rights," was under discussion : "The Constitution guarantees to all

Frenchmen the right of petition, the right to unite in popular societies (people's clubs), and the enjoyment of all the rights of man." Robespierre claimed that common instruction should be added to these. Boyer-Fonfrède, raising anew the question of the liberty of worship, which the Convention had already debated in April, demanded that this liberty should be inscribed among the rights guaranteed. "Do not speak of worship in the Constitution," said Levasseur; "the French people recognises none but that of liberty and equality." Barère did not agree. "I am not," he said, "either superstitious or a bigot; but I believe freedom to worship as he likes is one of the rights of man." And he cited the example of the United States.

But Robespierre stated that to his mind the circumstances would not permit of the declaration of religious liberty.

"I fear," he said, "that conspirators may find in an article of the Constitution which ratifies the liberty of worship, a means of destroying the liberty of the public; I fear that men wishing to form anti-revolutionary associations may disguise them under religious forms. Then, if you were to say to them: 'You are meeting on the pretext of worship, but you are actually conspirators,' they would answer: 'The Constitution and the laws are on our side; it is no business of yours to interpret our intentions and disturb our religious ceremonies.' Under this mask of hypocrisy conspirators might strike a blow at liberty."

He demanded the order of the day, on the grounds that the principle of liberty of opinions was ratified in the Declaration of Rights. The Girondist Boyer-Fonfrède seconded this motion, and the Convention adopted it; it then decreed the amended article in these terms: "The Constitution guarantees to all Frenchmen a common education, public relief, the right of petition, the right to unite in popular clubs, and the enjoyment of all the rights of man."

This article, like all the others, had now passed only a first reading. A second reading of the whole Con-

stitution took place on June 24th, being completed during the same session. In order to proceed more quickly, it was decided "that all the articles against which there shall have been no protests shall be regarded as definitively adopted." From this second reading the article dealing with the guarantee of rights issued modified and enlarged as follows: "The Constitution guarantees to all Frenchmen equality, liberty, security, property, the public debt, the free exercise of worship, a common education, public assistance, the unlimited liberty of the press, the right of petition, the right to unite in popular clubs, and the enjoyment of all the rights of man." We know by the *procès-verbal* that the indefinite liberty of the press and the public debt were additions effected by amendments improvised during the second reading. But how was it that the free exercise of religious worship, so explicitly refused at the first reading, was now re-established in the final text? Evidently the Committee of Public Security was the author of this addition; under the influence of Danton, it was now inclined to moderation in respect of the Vendéens, whose priests persuaded them that the Republic wished to destroy Christianity.

If we recall the fact that Cambacérès proposed the establishment of the jury in civil affairs, that Robespierre and the Committee of Public Safety opposed this motion, and that the Convention refused it (June 19th), we shall have noted the most important incidents arising from the debate on the Montagnard Constitution.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Among other amendments of Héroult's project the most interesting were as follows. His plan demanded only three months' residence for admission to the primary assemblies; the Convention demanded six. Héroult proposed to form electoral districts of 50,000 souls for the election of deputies; the Convention settled on 40,000 as the figure. In the plan there were assistant deputies (*suppléants*); there is no mention of them in the final text. The working of the *referendum* was far easier in the plan than in the text adopted. Plan: "Thirty days after the publication of the projected law, if in ten departments one or

There remained the Declaration of Rights, which the Convention had entrusted the Committee of Public Safety to draft anew. Hérault de Séchelles presented it on June 24th. The Convention decreed during the same session that it adopted the draft as a whole, and proceeding at once to the second reading, it ratified it by a final vote.

If we compare it with the Girondist Declaration as adopted by the Convention, we see that it is fundamentally the same thing. The differences are chiefly differences in form, and so conceived as to make it appear a little more democratic.

Here are the more interesting of these differences :

The Girondist Constitution implicitly admitted domestic servants to the exercise of the right of suffrage. But there was no question of admitting them in the Girondist Declaration. The Montagnard Declaration declares, in Article 18 : "The law does not recognise domesticity ; there can only be an engagement of tasks and of recognition between the man who works and him who employs him."

The Girondist Declaration admitted the right of insurrection only when all legal means of resisting oppression had been exhausted. The Montagnard Declaration speaks more boldly :

33. Resistance to oppression is the consequence of the other rights of man.
34. There is oppression against the social body when a single one

---

more primary assemblies have not protested, the Legislature finally admits or rejects the law." Text adopted : "Forty days after the publication of the projected law, if, in half the departments plus one, a tenth of the primary assemblies of each department have not protested, the project is accepted and becomes law." In the plan, to convoke a revisional assembly, one or more primary assemblies in half the departments plus one must demand it ; the Convention requires that this demand should be made by at least one-tenth of the primary assemblies.

of its members is oppressed ; there is oppression against each member when the social body is oppressed.

35. When government violates the rights of the people insurrection is, for each portion of the people, the most sacred of rights and the most indispensable of duties.

Is the Montagnard Declaration more "socialist" than the Girondist? Let us consider Article 17 of the latter : "The right of property resides in the fact that every man is free to dispose as he chooses of his possessions, his capital, his revenues, and his industry." Article 16 of the Montagnard Declaration is worded thus : "The right of property is that which belongs to every citizen, of enjoying and disposing as he pleases of his possessions, his revenues, and the fruit of his labour and industry." What of the socialistic articles formerly proposed by Robespierre? There is no longer any question of them.

However, we may say that there are certain socialistic tendencies in some of the articles of the Montagnard Declaration. Thus the first words of Article 1 : "The end of society is the common happiness" will serve as a formula of Babeuvism. The Girondist Declaration confined itself to saying that "public succour is a sacred debt." The Mountain adds : "Society owes the means of subsistence to unfortunate citizens, either by procuring them work, or by assuring the means of existence to those who are past work." But these were no novelties. The theory of "common happiness" and that of the "right to work" had often been expounded from the tribune and in the press by the men of 1789.

It will be remembered that at the time of the first debate on the Girondist Declaration the Convention had rejected the liberty of worship ; the Montagnard Declaration proclaims this liberty, which is also confirmed in two places in the new Constitutional Act.

## VI.

The Constitution of June 24th, 1793, was the most democratic of all the French Constitutions. Not only was it based upon popular sovereignty exercising itself by means of universal suffrage, but this sovereignty was so organised that the people did not entirely delegate its powers, but participated itself in the making of laws by means of the right of veto, which made the people united in their primary assemblies the actual Senate of the French Republic, according to the desire long expressed by the most advanced division of the democratic party.

If this Constitution was so far democratic, it was not because the Mountain had drafted it. In some respects the text adopted on June 24th was less boldly democratic than the Girondist plan. In the latter the primary assemblies had the last word in the nomination of the Executive Council ; in the Montagnard Constitution the Legislature named the Council from a list of candidates drawn up by the departmental electoral assemblies. The Girondists would have had the people elect the officials of the Treasury and Department of Accounts ; the Montagnards had them named by the Executive Council. Suffrage in two stages, abolished by the Girondists, was in certain cases re-established by the Montagnards ; notably in the choice of administrators : " The people itself," said Hérault in his report, " is not fit to choose them." We see that the Montagnards had less confidence than the Girondists in the intelligence of the people. This is proved by the way in which they organised the *referendum*, the sanctioning of the laws by the people. According to the Girondist plan a law could be arrested by a majority in one or two departments ; the Montagnard Constitution demanded a condition far more difficult in operation :

namely, that at least one-tenth of the primary assemblies in at least half the departments plus one must pronounce against the law. On the other hand, the right of insurrection was more clearly proclaimed by the Mountain, and their Declaration of Rights exhibited a few socialistic tendencies. But these differences were differences of style rather than of ideas; of appearance, rather than of reality. Taking all things together, the Montagnards had restricted the power of governing themselves directly with which the Girondists had endowed the people; and their Constitution was in this less democratic than that of the Girondists.

However, it befell that the Montagnards appeared warmer friends of the people, more democratic, than the Girondists. As the latter led the attacks of the departments upon Paris, with the result that they were accused of federalism (as they seemed to be the allies of the royalists and anti-democratic moderates during the insurrection of June and July, 1793), people imagined that their project was tainted with royalism and moderatism. Although the Montagnard text was only an adaptation of the Girondist text, people saw in it an original text; and although the democratic boldness of the Girondins had in many places been attenuated, it was regarded as the most democratic of systems. It was more especially during the reaction of *Thermidor* and under the Directory that the Constitution of 1793, then abolished, became the symbol of democratic claims. When the system of the property suffrage was re-established by the Constitution of the year III; when the survivors of the Gironde made themselves the advocates of this system; when the death penalty was decreed against the partisans of the Constitution of 1793, this Constitution became in the popular imagination a mysterious and magical text, the gospel of democracy. The insurrections of *Germinal* and *Prairial* of the year III were fought in the name of the Mon-



tagnard Constitution ; the Babeuvist conspiracy of the year IV was contrived in the same name. Finally, this Constitution was invoked years later by the democrats and socialists under Louis-Philippe and during the second Republic.

It has been said that if it was not applied it was because it was inapplicable. It was in fact inapplicable ; because it was incomplete, unfinished. It left to the future legislative body the task of determining "the rules of subordination" of the various administrative bodies ; it did not delegate to these bodies any representative of the central power. Now, an Executive Council of twenty-four members with elective local administrations, of which the subordination was not clearly regulated, would have been anarchy, even in times of peace, and now there was war. This is why the Constitution of 1793, such as it was, without organic laws, was impossible of execution.<sup>1</sup>

Did so grave an omission as this proceed from the stupidity of the Montagnard drafters of the Constitution? I think not ; since they had signalled the omission by leaving the future legislative body the task of filling it. That they did not fill it themselves was due to the fact that they feared to irritate the departments yet further, as they were already aroused and more jealous than ever of their independence. And here we perceive the true historical character of the Montagnard Constitution. It was a democratic programme, but for the future. It was also, and above all, an expedient to meet the present circumstances ; to put an end to the civil war. A Constitution alone could unite the divided French, who were at one another's throat. It must be such as to satisfy the

<sup>1</sup> It was doubtless because of this impossible character of the Constitution that Mme. Roland treated it as so much verbiage.

two warring parties, the Montagnard party and the Girondist ; or, to be more precise, the Parisian party and the departmental party. To the Parisian democrats the Constitution accorded the right of labour, the right of insurrection, the promise of " common happiness " ; words and phrases with which they were content. To the departmental moderates it made more real concessions. These concessions were as follows :

The departments feared the dictatorship of Paris. The Constitution, by means of the *referendum*, gave the last word in general matters of politics to the departments.

They feared also the dictatorship of a man : Robespierre or Danton. The Constitution confided the executive power to twenty-four citizens, in whose nomination all the departments would take part.

What else had the departments to fear : especially those of the west, which were up in arms under the priests ? They feared lest their churches might be closed, their religion abolished. The Constitution promised twice over the free exercise of religious worship.

Thus in the matter of their more essential grievances the departments received entire satisfaction. They welcomed the Constitution with enthusiasm.<sup>1</sup> After feeble attempts at warfare, the arms of the Girondist insurgents fell from their hands. The republican party, finally reconciled and united, struggled as a whole against the royalist insurrections in La Vendée, Lyons, and Toulon, which, reduced to their own unaided strength, were overcome.

<sup>1</sup> There are numerous proofs of this in the letters of deputies away on missions. Paganel to d'Agen, October 1, 1793 : " The republican Constitution universally adopted by the French is worshipped enthusiastically by the citizens of Lot-et-Garonne." The armies held festivals in its honour.

## VII.

On June 27th, 1793, the Convention decreed that "in a week from the reception of the present decree, the Declaration of Rights and the Act of Constitution will be presented for acceptance to the primary assemblies therefore convoked." This plebiscite did not take place at the same date all over France. In Paris the assemblies voted between July 2nd and 4th ; in the departments, between the 14th and 22nd.

What was the result?

The Convention had decreed that it would be proclaimed at the festival of August 10th. The commission of scrutiny was to present its report on the 9th. But the data still being incomplete, the reporter, Gossuin, confined himself to the assurance that acceptance was certain ; he could not give the figures. The next day, August 10th, in the Champ de Mars, Héroult de Séchelles spoke as follows :

"Frenchmen, your mandatories have in eighty-six departments questioned your conscience and your reason ; eighty-six departments have accepted the Act of Constitution. Never has a more universal desire organised a greater and more popular Republic. A year ago our territory was occupied by the enemy ; we proclaimed the Republic ; we were victorious. Now, while we are constituting France, Europe attacks us on all sides. Let us swear to defend the Constitution till death. The Republic is eternal !"

On August 20th the commission of scrutiny was able to publish the figures. Out of the 4,944 cantons composing the Republic there were 516 from which the *procès-verbaux* had not yet been received. The Constitution had been accepted by 1,784,377 votes against 11,531. On the 1st of *Pluviôse* in the year II a supplementary statement was received ; since August 20th the *procès-verbaux* of 92 cantons had been received, containing 17,541 votes for and 79

votes against the Constitution ; so that at this date the Constitution was accepted by 1,801,918 votes against 11,610. The *procès-verbaux* of 424 cantons were still lacking ; but no further question was made of them, and as far as I am aware no other statistics were published.

If these results are not absolutely complete they are at least sufficient to show that the Constitution was accepted almost unanimously by the voters. Certainly the number of abstentions was enormous ; but only by comparison with the habits of modern electors ; not by comparison with the electoral habits of the time. Even under the constitutional monarchy, under the property-owners' suffrage, only a very small minority of citizens took part in the primary assemblies. Very often only one-fifth of the registered voters were present. Everything points to the belief that the voters who abstained from voting in July, 1793, did so, in general, through negligence, through ignorance of their rights, through inexperience. The fact that nearly two millions voted was, to judge from precedents, almost a revolution in the electoral life of the nation.

It must be added that the plebiscite could not be taken throughout the entire country. The primary assemblies did not meet in the department of Corse, nor in that part of the department of Nord occupied by the enemy ; nor in the rural communes of La Vendée in which the insurrection held the upper hand. Gosuin, in his report of August 9th, stated that only 29 of the primary assemblies had met in La Vendée, while in Nord " a majority only " had met.

The same report also states that with the exception of Marseilles all the large cities had accepted the Constitution unanimously ; and that among the 40,000 communes of the Republic only one, that of Saint-Donan (Côtes-du-Nord), had demanded the re-establishment of the monarchy.

The statistics show that in six departments there was no opposition : Basses-Alpes, Isère, Meuse, Paris (40,990 for), Haute-Saône, Var. The departments in which there was the greatest opposition were Finistère (9,965 against), Morbihan, Côtes-du-Nord, Mont-Terrible (1,007 against, 1,592 for), Aveyron, Mont-Blanc, Doubs, Orne, Seine-Inférieure, Calvados, Manche, Mayenne, Rhône-et-Loire, Gironde.

Let us see in what manner this plebiscite was taken.

The decree of June 27th enacted that the vote should be given in the manner indicated by the Constitution itself ; that is to say, "by scrutiny or aloud, at the choice of each voter," and no primary assembly had the right to prescribe a uniform method of voting. Instructions sent out with the decree decided that the officials being elected in each assembly the secretary should read aloud the Act of Constitution. The reading accomplished, the president would put the matter to the vote, calling over the list of those citizens present. The *procès-verbal* would state the number of voters for and against.

These directions were not everywhere carried out.

Thus the primary assembly of Donjon (Allier) decided to vote by secret scrutiny (there were 122 for, 20 against, and 9 neither for nor against).

Other assemblies to the number of 297 accepted the Constitution without individual votes ; by acclamation, by a rush of enthusiasm. This was the case with nearly all the sections of Paris. Here, for instance, is how things went in the section of Maison-Commune :

"The President," says the *procès-verbal*, "announced that every citizen was free and must without fear express his desire respecting the Constitutional Act, and must inform the Assembly of anything he thought might be unfavourable to the happiness of the French people. Consequently, there being not a single protest, he put the acceptance to the vote, and it was unanimously adopted amid universal applause and cries of '*Vive la République !*' '*Vive la liberté !*'"

In the Arsenal section, the individual vote was taken only after a general acclamation :

“The reading of the Constitutional Act completed, the place resounded with repeated cries of ‘*Adopted!*’ and ‘*Vive la République!*’ and all rose to their feet to give their spontaneous assent to the Constitutional Act; but the President, having restored order . . . demanded the execution of the law. He put the acceptance to the vote, and called over the list of citizens present. The call-over completed and the figures given out, the number of voters was found to be 364, all of whom had voted for acceptance. This unequivocal unanimity excited fresh transports of enthusiasm, in which all of those present opened their hearts with that overflow of emotion which is more easily felt than expressed, even in fraternal embraces; the forerunners of a lasting happiness, since founded on a Constitution dictated by wisdom and based upon equality.”

There was also an enthusiastic acclamation in the section of Théâtre Français. In the section of 1792, in the quarter of Filles-Saint-Thomas, formerly so staunchly royalist, the same thing seems to have happened; the reading of the Constitutional Act was welcomed by cries of “*Vive la République!*” and the 1,291 citizens present accepted it “with the most perfect unanimity.”

Under these conditions could there have been a perfect liberty of ballot? Would these assemblies, so unanimous and enthusiastic, have tolerated any dissentient or even any secret vote? I find one example of intolerance in the *procès-verbal* of the primary assembly of Longny (Orne). Citizen Goislard, the mayor, allowed himself the remark that if the Constitution must be accepted it was “because a State without laws was an anarchy, and the way to stop anarchy was to accept the laws, whether good or bad.” He was hooted, threatened, driven out of the meeting. The Constitution was unanimously accepted by the 837 voters present.

Apparently acceptance was regarded as an act of

republican patriotism which imposed itself on every worthy citizen.

On the other hand, this employment of the *referendum* was not such a plebiscite as was seen more than once later on, when a reply to the question at issue was demanded by force, and almost brutally. The reply to this question, to judge by a large number of *procès-verbaux*, was given with a sincere and spontaneous enthusiasm by the republicans ; who, if they did not leave their adversaries sufficient liberty, at least voted for their own part as patriots and free men. In several cases they even sought to justify their reply. The decree of convocation did not forbid the primary assemblies to discuss the Constitution ; it did not definitely enjoin upon the citizens that they must answer simply by yes or no. Certain assemblies evidently thought themselves within their rights<sup>1</sup> in revising the work of the Convention. Thus, that of Sables-d'Olonne discussed the Constitution article by article, and only accepted it after having introduced numerous amendments.

### VIII.

The Constitution once proclaimed (August 10, 1793), it seemed that the Convention had nothing further to do but to dissolve, in conformity with Article 8 of the decree of June 27th, which was worded thus : "Immediately after the publication of the desire of the French people, the Convention will fix the coming period of the primary assemblies for the election of the deputies of the National Assembly and the formation of the constituted authorities."

<sup>1</sup> A Girondist even, Lanthenas, more a patriot than a party man, developed this point of view in a very interesting manner in a brochure entitled, *Motifs de faire du 10 août un jubilé fraternel*.

But since then Valenciennes had succumbed, and the coalised troops were marching upon Paris. If the Convention were to separate in this time of extreme danger it would risk seeing itself replaced by a less homogeneous assembly ; it would risk a rupture of the unity of the government in the middle of the crisis of national defence. On the other hand, if it were to postpone the application of the Constitution, what a disappointment throughout the country ! What would those say who had laid down their arms only for the sake of the Constitution ?

The Convention would seem to have played with France in order to increase its term of power. Civil war might issue from the discontent which this lack of faith would produce.

In this perplexity Delacroix (Eure-et-Loir) proposed (on August 11th) a measure which, while appearing to realise the promise given to the country, would procure a respite for the Convention.

“Our mission is fulfilled,” he said, “but you must destroy the calumnies which are being spread against you. The federalist administrators say that you wish to perpetuate yourselves. If the acceptance of the Constitution had not altered the method of election, we might be replaced immediately. But you must learn the extent of the population canton by canton.”

And he obtained the issue of a decree that each commune should prepare in the shortest possible time a statement of its effective population, and of the number of citizens having the right to vote. “These statements will be sent immediately to the district directories, who will pass them on to the departments together with their observations, both on the arrondissement prescribed by Article 23 of the Constitution for the election of a deputy to the Legislature, and on the distribution of the citizens in new primary assemblies, according to the terms of Article 12 of the Constitution. The



departmental directories will transmit directly, and as soon as possible, all these statements to the Committee of Division of the National Convention, adding to them their own observations." These operations, which were extremely complicated, would evidently have required several months ; so that while having the appearance of hastening the application of the Constitution, the Convention would in reality maintain the existing state of things until a time when they hoped the national defence would be in an assured state.

Gossuin, at the end of his report of August 9th, had already allowed it to be known that the Convention was not on the eve of separation. He stated that it was undertaking the "sacred engagement" of decreeing, before its "replacement," a uniform civil code, a system of national education, and, if possible, salutary laws explanatory of the basis of the Constitution. On the evening of August 11th, at the Jacobins, Robespierre drew a very sombre picture of the position of the Republic, definitely declaring that the Convention must not separate while the circumstances were so critical. He received the enthusiastic support of the delegates from the primary assemblies present at the meeting, who represented departmental opinion. One of these delegates demanded that the Convention should not separate until it had "decreed measures of public safety" ; another, that it should not separate "until the end of the war." The Jacobin Club seconded these views without opposition.

On August 12th the delegates from the primary assemblies repaired in a body to the Convention and there proposed various ultra-revolutionary measures which implied the postponement of the Constitution.

On returning to their departments, these delegates made their countrymen understand the impossibility of applying the Constitution in an invaded country

whose independence was in danger. There was a general revision of public opinion.

On August 28th, in the name of the Committee of Public Safety, Barère declared in the Convention "that moderatism, profiting by the relaxation of the police service, is cooling the spirit of the public, and surreptitiously provoking a counter-revolution; that the mere execution of constitutional laws made for times of peace would be useless in the midst of the conspiracies which hem us in." The Convention instructed the Committee of Public Safety to present its views on this subject, but the Committee proved to be in no hurry. It waited more than a month longer, and only when the defeat of the insurrection of Lyons was certain did it obtain the decree (October 10, 1793), "that the provisional government of France is revolutionary until the conclusion of peace." In this way the application of the Constitution of 1793 was indefinitely postponed.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT BEFORE THE 9TH OF *THERMIDOR*

- I. Definition of the Revolutionary Government.—II. The provisional Executive Council and the Executive Commissions.—III. The National Convention: its organisation and method of operation.—IV. The Committee of General Security. The Committee of General Defence. The Committee of Public Safety.—V. The representatives "on mission."—VI. The People's Clubs.—VII. The decree of the 14th of *Frimaire*, year II.—VIII. The Terror. The rule of the Press. The Revolutionary Tribunal. Terrorist laws.—IX. General character of the Revolutionary Government.

WE have seen what the Constitution of 1793 was: the projected, definitive institution of the democratic Republic. The circumstances of the war in which France was engaged did not allow the Constitution to be applied, and the democratic Republic, as long as it lasted, was governed by a conglomeration of institutions old and new, provisionally maintained or provisionally established. This provisional government is known as the Revolutionary Government. We are about to study its organisation; first of all in its first period; that is to say, down to the 9th of *Thermidor* of the year II.

#### I.

This expression, the *Revolutionary Government*, became official only from the time of the decree of

October 10, 1793, the first article of which enacted that "the provisional government of France is revolutionary until peace is established." But the state of things so denominated by this decree was already in existence or in process of formation; and to-day, in current phraseology, we have a right to give the name of Revolutionary Government to the Government which immediately succeeded that of Louis XVI, that is, on August 10, 1792; and which gradually developed itself until the 9th of *Thermidor*.

What, as a matter of fact, was the precise significance of this word "revolutionary" to a contemporary? Could one say of this method of government that it was revolutionary in the sense that it hastened the completion of the Revolution; that it applied more completely and more quickly the principles of 1789? No: this provisional condition of things was called revolutionary because it was contrary to Article 16 of the Declaration of Rights of 1789, which enacted that a society in which the separation of powers is not determined has no Constitution. The government was revolutionary, that is, abnormal, contrary to the principles of government, in that the legislative was confounded with the executive power. And at what date did this confusion begin? On August 10, 1792, when the Legislative Assembly took the government in hand by nominating the ministers. The Convention continued and aggravated this confusion by its accumulation of the legislative, executive, and judicial powers effected either openly or by indirect encroachments. The principle of the separation of powers was resumed only when the Constitution of the year III was put in force; that is to say, in *Brumaire* of the year IV. So the government of France was revolutionary from the suspension of Louis XVI, on August 10, 1792, down to the separation of the Convention, on the 4th of *Brumaire* of the year IV (October 26, 1795):

that is to say, during a period of more than three years.

During this period France was governed under a mutilated Constitution, that of 1791, which was adapted empirically from day to day according to circumstances. Everything was provisional ; everything changed according to the vicissitudes of civil or defensive war, according to the successive needs of national defence, according to opportunity ; without system and without plan. The moment came when the provisional method was announced as fated to last as long as the war ; this was when the decree of October 10, 1793, was passed. The time came when it organised itself ; when the famous decree of December 4, 1793 (14th of *Frimaire* of the year II) established a kind of provisional revolutionary Constitution. Then, after a good deal of groping, a state of things was arrived at which was best adapted to the abnormal circumstances which had transformed France into a vast military camp. This state of things continued, all the while undergoing yet further developments, for several months ; namely, until the time when our victories rendered it useless, and overthrew (on the 9th of *Thermidor*) the statesman in whom the Revolutionary Government had appeared as personified ; when this government disappeared little by little, piece by piece, without method and more or less at hazard, precisely as it had been formed.

## II.

The first organ of the Revolutionary Government was created on August 10, 1792, under the stress of the victorious popular insurrection ; and while decreeing universal suffrage, and provisionally suspending the King, the Legislative Assembly also decided, as we have

seen, to appoint the Ministry itself, while prohibiting a choice from among its own members. The Ministers were six in number, as were the members of the erst-while King's Council organised by the Constituent Assembly, and the new Council, known as the provisional Executive Council, was entrusted by the decree of August 15th "with all the executive powers and functions" which it would exercise not in the King's name, but the nation's. There would be no permanent president, just as under the former system of government and according to the law of April 27, 1791, there had been no Prime Minister. Each Minister would fulfil the duties of President of the Council week by week in turn. It was not stated in so many words, but it was implicitly understood, that the Council was a responsible Ministry, dependent upon the Legislative Assembly.

The provisional Executive Council held its first session on August 13, 1792, and its last on the 30th of *Germinal* of the year II (April 19, 1794). It then gave place to twelve Executive Commissions created by the decree of the 12th of the same month. The names of those who filled the six Ministries were as follows: 1. Ministry of Justice: from August 10, 1792, to the following October 9th, Danton; from October 9, 1792, to March 20, 1793, Garat; from March 20, 1793, until the suppression of the Council, Gohier. 2. Ministry of Marine: from August 10, 1792, to April 10, 1793, Monge; from April 10, 1793, to the suppression of the Council, Dalbarade. 3. Ministry of Foreign Affairs: from August 10, 1792, to June 21, 1793, Le Brun; from June 21, 1793, to April 2, 1794, Deforgues; from April 2, 1794, until the organisation of the Executive Commissions, Goujon (April 5th-8th), then Herman, who combined these functions with those of the Minister of the Interior (April 8th-10th); finally Buchot, from

April 10th to the suppression of the Council. 4. Ministry of the Interior: from August 10, 1792, to January 22, 1793, Roland; then the functions of the Minister of the Interior were undertaken by the Minister of Justice, Garat, who became Minister definitely on March 14, 1793; on August 20th he was replaced by Paré, who, on April 2, 1794, made way for Goujon and Herman.<sup>1</sup> 5. Ministry of War: From August 10, 1792, to the following October 3rd, Servan; from October 3, 1792, to February 4, 1793, Pache; from February 4, 1793, to the following April 1st, Beurnonville; from April 1 to 4, 1793, Le Brun; from April 4, 1793, until the suppression of the Council, Bouchotte. 6. Ministry of Public Taxes: from August 10, 1792, to June 13, 1793, Clavière; from June 13th to the suppression of the Council, Destournelles. As for the secretaryship, it was filled by Grouvelle until he was sent to Copenhagen as Minister for the Republic (July 8, 1793). He was replaced by J. H. Fauchet, to whom Desaugiers very soon succeeded.

This Ministry actually exercised the executive power, actually governed France, until January, 1793; that is, until the creation of the Committee of General Defence. It was thenceforth supervised in its action, and the initiative of action was no longer entirely in its own hands. From the time of the creation of the Committee of Public Safety (April 6, 1793) it was subordinate to this Committee, which, on the pretext of supervision, played, as we shall see, the part of a responsible Ministry, and gradually came to treat the Ministers as mere clerks. After the organisation of the Revolutionary Government, if each Minister continued to look after the affairs of his department with

<sup>1</sup> Concerning the provisional functions, at first simultaneous, and then successive, of Goujon and Herman, see the *Recueil des actes*, xii. pp. 349, 436, 461.

more or less independence, the provisional Executive Council found itself reduced almost absolutely, as the perusal of their register will show, to the functions of a tribunal.

In the period during which the Council was governing seriously, and was, in fact, the executive power of France, it was Danton who first of all exercised the preponderating influence, who was the actual director of the national defence, of diplomatic matters, and of politics generally. When he relinquished his power, in October, 1792, after having presided over the liberation of the invaded territory, and the defeat and the retreat of the Prussians, his influence in the Council to some extent passed to Roland, who occupied himself more especially with affairs of the interior, trying to make the Girondist policy predominate over the Montagnard, while Danton, through Le Brun, still prevailed in matters of diplomacy. When Roland was dismissed in January, 1793, the provisional Executive Council began to play a much less important part. For some time longer it retained the effective direction of diplomatic affairs, always under the influence of Danton. But from April, 1793, and onwards, Danton, as a member of the Committee of Public Safety, was himself, so long as he was on the Committee, that is to say, until July 10, 1793, the true Minister of Foreign Affairs. The authority of the Executive Council became altogether insignificant, then a minus quantity, and so remained until it was suppressed.

That the Council was thus annihilated was by no means because it lost its two most eminent members, Danton and Roland: it was because the Convention decided to govern by itself. The classic dogma of the separation of powers, ratified by the Constituent Assembly, had inspired the article of the decree of August 10th which ensured that ministers should not be chosen from among the members of the Legislative



Assembly. At the beginning of the Convention, there was a question of authorising Danton and Roland, both deputies, to combine the duties of legislators and ministers. On September 29, 1792, the Convention decreed "that ministers could not be chosen from among its members." Danton ceased to be more than a deputy, and Roland more than a minister.

If the Convention chose the executive power outside its limits, it was not only through respect for the authority of Montesquieu. A sort of political habit had been formed of considering a minister as an enemy and a stranger; also of regarding the position as inferior and almost humiliating. The King was gone; the cause of this state of things had vanished; but none the less the effect continued.

In truth, however, under the abnormal circumstances of the time, nobody but the Convention could govern France. Experience taught the Convention as much. From January, 1793, it lay hold of the executive power. Timidly at first, by means of its Committee of General Defence; then boldly, through its Committee of Public Safety. It allowed the Executive Council to subsist for some time out of respect for the doctrine of the separation of powers,<sup>1</sup> and even when it suppressed the Council it did not entirely disown this dogma, but still honoured it by a certain amount of official homage. For a long time, however, it had been actually combining the legislative power with the executive. It was by this combination that it succeeded in accomplishing its essential task: that of saving France from invasion; by it, too, it accomplished some part of its other task, the organisation of democracy.

It would therefore be erroneous to see in the en-

<sup>1</sup>On March 11, 1793, it rejected a motion of Danton's which he brought forward with the object of repealing the decree of September 29, 1792, and of rendering the functions of deputy and minister compatible.

feblement of the Executive Council the enfeeblement of the executive power. On the contrary, the weaker the Council grew, the stronger grew the executive power, by reason of its centralisation ; in fact the Convention allowed the Executive Council to fall into decrepitude for the purpose of invigorating the governmental machine. At first, in the time of Danton, it had represented a national force, namely, the victory of the popular insurrection of August 10th ; it was even discredited, in the eyes of the *bourgeois* Legislative Assembly, by the establishment of universal suffrage, the principal strength of the nation. When the National Convention was assembled, truly representative of the France of the day, all prestige and authority gradually passed over to the Convention, and the Council, directed by Roland in an anti-popular direction, became unpopular. The Convention, whether it would or no, had to grasp the sceptre of power.

Such were the origin and the vicissitudes of the earliest component of the revolutionary Government.

When the Convention suppressed it, on the 12th of *Germinal*, the reporter of the Committee of Public Safety, Carnot, said that it was done in order to fortify the executive power. "It is only," he said, "by binding the forces of the republic more and more closely by a nervous organisation and indissoluble ties that we can ensure its unity and prevent its force becoming the prey of enemies from without."

He summed up the new Government as follows :

"The six Ministers and the provisional Executive Council suppressed, and replaced by twelve Commissioners attached to the Committee of Public Safety, under the authority of the National Convention : there is the whole system.

"The Committee of Public Safety reserving the right of directing the government, proposing to the National Convention all major measures, pronouncing provisionally upon those which through lack

of time or the necessity of secrecy cannot be presented for discussion to the Assembly, referring the details to the various Commissioners, taking account each day of their labours, reforming illegal acts, defining their respective duties, centralising their operations the better to give them the necessary direction, homogeneity, and energy ; each of these Commissions executing the details of its department, and directing its different *bureaux* as the Committee of Public Safety directs the Commissions ; presenting the results of its labours each day to the Committee, denouncing abuses, proposing such reforms as they judge necessary, their views as to perfecting, accelerating, and simplifying such matters as concern them ; such is briefly a picture of the new organisation. . . .

“ The twelve Commissions which work under the Committee of Public Safety, replacing the six Ministries, undertake the whole system of the execution of the laws. Sufficiently parcelled out for their influence to be scarcely sensible, sufficiently united for their operations to be subjected to a single system, they seem to fulfil the purpose of a Government invested with all the necessary powers for doing good and incapable of doing harm.”

In reality the Commissioners were intended to be, and were, so many *bureaux* of the Committee of Public Safety.

Each Commission was composed of one or two “ commissaries ” with or without an “ associate.” The salary of the commissaries was 12,000 livres ; of the associates, 8,000.

Here is a list of the Executive Commissions, as established by the decree of the 12th of *Germinal*, with the names of the commissaries and of the associates nominated by the Convention on the 29th of the same month :

1. Commission of Civil Administration, Police and Tribunals : Herman, commissary ; Lanne, associate.
2. Commission of Public Instruction : Joseph Payan, commissary ; Jullien *fils*, associate.
3. Commission of Agriculture and the Arts : Brunet and Gateau, commissaries ; Lhulier, associate.
4. Commission of Commerce and Victualling : Johannot and Picquet, commissaries ; Potonnier, associate.

5. Commission of Public Works: Lecamus and Fleuriot, commissaries; Dupin, associate.
6. Commission of Public Assistance: Lerebours, commissary; Daillet, associate.
7. Commission of Transports, Posts, and Stages: Moreau and Lieuvain, commissaries; Mercier, associate.
8. Commission of National Revenues; Laumont.
9. Commission of the Organisation and Movements of the Armies: Pille, provisionally associate.
10. Commission of the Navy and Colonies: Dalbarade, commissary; David, associate.
11. Commission of Arms and Gunpowder: Capon and Bénézech.
12. Commission of External Relations: Buchot.<sup>1</sup>

These Commissions operated until the establishment of the Executive Directory, with variations in the *personnel* <sup>2</sup> which we cannot go into here.<sup>3</sup>

### III.

We may consider the National Convention itself as the second in date and the first in importance of the component parts of the Revolutionary Government; or rather as the centre of the government.

A revisional or constituent Assembly, the Convention was elected by universal suffrage in two stages, with unlimited powers. It sat from September 20, 1792, to *Brumaire* 4th of the year IV (October 26, 1795), first at the Tuileries, on the day of its constitution; then at the Salle de Manège, until May 9, 1793, in the hall which had previously been occupied by the Constituent

<sup>1</sup> For details of the duties of each Commission, see the decree of the 12th of *Germinal*, year II, in the *Recueil des actes du Comité de salut public*, xii. pp. 326-30.

<sup>2</sup> Before the 9th of *Thermidor* the Committee of Public Safety provisionally appointed the members of the Commissions.

<sup>3</sup> Here is the *personnel* of the Commissions at the beginning of the year III: (1) Aument, Mourre, provisionally. (2) Garat, Ginguéné, and Clément de Ris. (3) Berthollet and Lhéritier, junr., Tissot. (4) Johannot,

and the Legislative Assemblies, and finally in the Tuileries, in the Salle de Spectacle, or Salle des Machines, from May 10th until the end. It was to have been composed of 783 members : 749 deputies of departments, and 34 deputies from the colonies. Only 18 deputies from the colonies took their seats.

There were no by-elections to fill vacancies. The electoral assemblies chose substitutes (*suppléants*) to the number of 298. These were to be called upon to sit as vacancies occurred. These vacancies were very numerous ; death, resignation, and proscriptions, brought them up to about 120. When the surrounding Girondists were recalled to the Convention in the year III, they sat simultaneously with their substitutes. It would be a long and complicated task to mention all the alterations in the *personnel* of the Convention.

So many deputies were sent out on missions that the Convention was rarely complete. The occasions on which the greatest number of members were present were, the trial of Louis XVI (721 deputies voted in the matter of the penalty to be inflicted) ; the election of Robespierre to the presidency, on the 16th of *Prairial*, year II (485 present) ; the decree of accusation against Carrier, on the 3rd of *Frimaire*, year III (500 present). Usually the number of voters was not higher than 350, and once (on July 25, 1793) it fell to 186.

Certain of the members of the Convention had sat in the preceding Assemblies : 89 in the Constituent and 181 in the Legislative. The greater number of the newcomers had taken part in the departmental, municipal, or district administrations. Twenty-nine mem-

Picquet, Magin, Leguillier, Monneron, commissaries. (5) Lecamus, Rondelet ; Dupin. (6) Martique, Derniau ; Havet. (7) Moreau, Lieuvain ; Mercier (or Lemercier), Mathon. (8) Laumont, Vanieville ; Bochet. (9) Pille ; Boulay. (10) Dalbarade ; David. (11) Capon, Bénézech. (12) Miot.

bers belonged to the old nobility.<sup>1</sup> Bishops, curés, and Protestant ministers had seats in the assembly.<sup>2</sup>

The rules of the Convention were very nearly the same as those of the Legislative Assembly, which in turn were based on those of the Constituent Assembly. Their chief characteristics were as follows :

The *bureau* consisted of a president and six secretaries. There was no vice-president after the first fortnight, when Condorcet performed his duties. The president was elected for a fortnight (later for fifteen days), by a call-over of names. He could not be re-elected until an interval of at least a fortnight had elapsed. When the president was unable to be present, he was provisionally replaced by the most recent of such ex-presidents as were present in the hall. The secretaries were renewed by half their number every fortnight. A "Committee of Inspectors of the Hall "

<sup>1</sup> These 29 comprised : 1 prince of the blood, Louis-Philippe-Joseph duc d'Orléans ; 8 marquises : Yzarn de Valady, Rovère, d'Aoust, Villette, Soubrany, de Mailly (Marquis de Châteaurenaud), Condorcet, Brulart de Sillery ; 2 counts : Châteauneuf-Randon, Kersaint ; 1 vicomte : Barras ; 1 Prussian baron : Cloutz ; 16 untitled nobles : Lauze de Perret, de Gasparin, Doucet de Pontécoulant, Bonnet de Mautry, Casabianca, de Peyssard, de Mazade-Percin, de Montaut, de Houlière, de Calon, de Lavicomterie, de Séchelles, de Rochegude, Despinassy, de Saint-Fargeau, d'Aubermesnil.

<sup>2</sup> To wit : 16 constitutional bishops : Royer, Cazeneuve, Fauchet, Thibault, Hugué, Seguin, Marbos, Thomas Lindet, Saurine, Grégoire, Wandelaincourt, Villar, Lalande, Massieu, Sanadon, Gay-Vernon (Torné, Bishop of Cher, was elected but refused to sit) ; 10 episcopal vicars : Lakarnal, Moltedo, Chabot, Roux, Audrein, Goyre-Laplanche, Daunou, Monestier, Simond, Gomaire ; 27 priests or monks : Andréi, Colaud-Lasalçette, Châles, Drulhe, Ichon, Ysabeau, Villers, Fouché, Paganel, Monnel, Coupé, Gibergues, Guiter, Siéyès, Bailly, Bassal, Pocholle, Ruault, Musset, Le Bon, Delcasso, Roberjot, Lémane, Dupont, Poultier, Foussedoire, Claverye ; 10 Protestant ministers : Rabaut Saint-Étienne, Rabaut-Pomier, Bernard, Julien, Jay, Jeanbon Saint-André, Lombard-Lachaux, Lasource, Dentzel, Grimmer.

fulfilled the duties of our modern quæstors (whips). The Convention called its most distinguished members to the presidency in succession ; and as this succession of presidents gives a fair idea of the vicissitudes of the majority, it is as well to have this list of the presidents of the Convention under our eyes :

	1792.	Feb. 7	Bréard.
Sept. 20	Rühl, oldest of the members present.	Feb. 21	Dubois-Crancé.
Sept. 20	Petion, president-elect.	Mar. 7	Gensonné.
Sept. 21	Condorcet, vice-president.	Mar. 21	Jean de Bry.
Oct. 4	Delacroix.	April 4	Delmas.
Oct. 18	Guadet.	April 18	Lasource.
Nov. 1	Hérault de Séchelles.	May 2	Boyer-Fonfrède.
Nov. 15	Grégoire.	May 16	Isnard.
Nov. 29	Barère.	May 30	Mallarmé.
Dec. 13	Defermon.	June 13	Collot d'Herbois.
Dec. 27	Treilhard.	June 27	Thuriot.
		July 11	Jeanbon Saint-André.
		July 25	Danton.
		Aug. 8	Hérault de Séchelles.
		Aug. 22	Robespierre.
		Sept. 5	Billaud-Varenne.
		Sept. 19	Cambon.
	1793.		
Jan. 10	Vergniaud.		
Jan. 24	Rabaut Saint-Étienne.		

## YEAR II.

October 3	...	...	...	Charlier.
1 Brum. (October 22, 1793)	...	...	...	Moyse Bayle.
16 Brum. (November 6)	...	...	...	Laloy.
1 Frim. (November 21)...	...	...	...	Romme.
16 Frim. (December 6)...	...	...	...	Voulland.
1 Niv. (December 21) ...	...	...	...	Couthon.
16 Niv. (January 5, 1794)	...	...	...	David.
1 Pluv. (January 20) ...	...	...	...	Vadier.
16 Pluv. (February 4) ...	...	...	...	Dubarran.
1 Vent. (February 19) ...	...	...	...	Saint-Just.
16 Vent. (March 6) ...	...	...	...	Rühl.
1 Germ. (March 21) ...	...	...	...	Tallien.
16 Germ. (April 5) ...	...	...	...	Amar.
1 Flor. (April 20) ...	...	...	...	Robert Lindet.
16 Flor. (May 5) ...	...	...	...	Carnot.

224 BEFORE THE NINTH OF *THERMIDOR*

1 Prair. (May 20)	...	...	...	Prieur (Côte-d'Or).
16 Prair. (June 4)	...	...	...	Robespierre.
1 Mess. (June 19)	...	...	...	Élie Lacoste.
17 Mess. (July 5)...	...	...	...	Louis (Bas-Rhin).
1 Therm. (July 19)	...	...	...	Collot d'Herbois.
16 Therm. (August 3)	...	...	...	Merlin (Douai).
1 Fruct. (August 18)	...	...	...	Merlin (Thionville).
15 Fruct. (September 1)	...	...	...	Bernard (Saintes).

YEAR III.

1 Vend. (September 22, 1794)...	...	...	...	André Dumont.
16 Vend. (October 7)	...	...	...	Cambacérés.
1 Brum. (October 22)	...	...	...	Prieur (Marne).
16 Brum. (November 6)	...	...	...	Legendre (Paris).
4 Frim. (November 24)	...	...	...	Clauzel.
16 Frim. (December 6)	...	...	...	Reubell.
1 Niv. (December 21)	...	...	...	Bentabole.
17 Niv. (January 6, 1795)	...	...	...	Le Tourneur (La Manche).
1 Pluv. (January 20)	...	...	...	Rovère.
16 Pluv. (February 4)	...	...	...	Barras.
1 Vent. (February 19)	...	...	...	Bourdon (Oise).
16 Vent. (March 6)	...	...	...	Thibaudeau.
4 Germ. (March 24)	...	...	...	Pelet (Lozère).
16 Germ. (April 5)	...	...	...	Boissy d'Anglas.
1 Flor. (April 20)	...	...	...	Siéyès.
16 Flor. (May 5)...	...	...	...	Vernier.
7 Prair. (May 26)	...	...	...	Mathieu.
16 Prair. (June 4)	...	...	...	Lanjuinais.
1 Mess. (June 19)	...	...	...	Louvet. [lant.
16 Mess. (July 4)	...	...	...	Doulcet de Pontécou-
1 Therm. (July 19)	...	...	...	La Revellière-Lépeaux.
16 Therm. (August 3)	...	...	...	Daunou.
2 Fruct. (August 19)	...	...	...	M. J. Chénier.
16 Fruct. (September 2)	...	...	...	Berlier.

YEAR IV.

1 Vend. (September 23)	...	...	...	Baudin (Ardennes).
16 Vend. (October 8)	...	...	...	Génissieu.

The regulations did not provide for more than one session *per diem*; but the president could convoke the Assembly to an extraordinary session at night. As a



matter of fact, these night sessions were very frequent ; especially before May 31, 1793. The morning session, beginning at nine o'clock, according to the rules, commenced more often about ten o'clock, and lasted until four or five in the afternoon. The evening session would commence between eight and nine, and often lasted until far into the night. The rules enacted that in the morning session " the order of the day indicated the day before should be commenced at mid-day." In practice, the first part of the session (before noon) was usually given up to the reading of addresses and to unimportant affairs ; the second part (after noon) to the elaboration of decrees. There was thus, as they used to say, the " lesser order of the day " and the " chief order of the day " (*petit et grand*). But these rules and customs were often disregarded.

The resolutions of the Convention bore the name of *decrees*. Such of these decrees as did not bear upon the internal labours of the Assembly—such as were truly legislative decrees—had to be sent within three days to the Executive Council, which attached the seal of the State and promulgated them, when they became *laws*. The former rules had been full of detailed prescriptions intended to avoid any precipitancy in the voting of decrees. Thus, in the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies, no motion could be discussed the same day, except on declaration of urgency. The rules of the Convention did implicitly allow the discussion and adoption on the same day of motions which did not relate to legislation or to the Constitution. The only precautions against unreflecting haste were these : Each motion must be supported by at least four members ; " motions of priority, amendment, reference to committees, adjournment, &c., would have the preference over the principal motion, and could always suspend the discussion of the latter " ; " sub-amendments and subsequent amendments would

be put to the vote before the principal question"; "any member might demand the subdivision of a complicated question." In practice, the most important amendments, emanating from individual initiative, were not always supported by four members, nor subjected to these rules of discussion.

We have been speaking, according to the distinction established by the regulations, of motions which did not relate to legislation or the Constitution. In the case of motions dealing with legislative or constitutional matters the old regulations demanded three readings on different days. The rules of the Convention demanded only two readings. As the second reading could not be commenced until "after the motion should have been printed, distributed, and announced in the order of the day," it would seem that here was a substantial guarantee against lack of reflection and precipitancy. But as a matter of fact such laws as had for their object the progress of the Revolutionary Government were not regarded as coming under the head of "legislation." Thus decrees of the gravest kind, among them the "Terrorist" decrees, were passed in a single session. In the year II the haste became such that decrees were often discussed only after they had been passed. Thus, on the 26th of *Germinal*, year II, the Committee of Public Safety presented the plan of a decree bearing upon the repression of conspirators, the banishment of nobles, and the dismissal of the general police; a proposal which threatened to aggravate the Terror. The Convention applauded the proposal immediately, and proceeded to adopt it unanimously. The vote once decided, amendments were proposed, which were referred to the Committee of Public Safety, which was "instructed to present a new draft." This new draft was adopted on the 27th. On the 28th a new amendment was proposed, and accepted, and formed an additional decree which corrected the preceding one.

This precipitation, the result of circumstances, was further facilitated by a rule which enacted that except in electing officials of the Assembly all votes should be given by rising or remaining seated, and that there should only be a roll-call when the result was doubtful. As a matter of fact, the roll was called only on very important occasions : for example, when the Convention constituted itself a tribunal, as during the trial of Louis XVI, and the debates upon the impeachment of Marat and of Carrier.<sup>1</sup>

It must not be supposed, however, that because the decrees were passed precipitately, they were also drafted hastily. Following the examples of the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies, the Convention created permanent Committees, entrusted with the elaboration of its decisions. The members of these committees were selected from lists in which the name of each deputy was inscribed according to his speciality or his tasks. These Committees were, in theory, before the 9th of *Thermidor*, renewed by halves at variable periods ; the only exception was that of the Committee of Public Safety, which from September, 1793, was confirmed each month without change, excepting the arrest of Hérault de Séchelles, until *Thermidor* of the year II. The number of the Committees varied. In the year II there were 21, namely : (1) Committee of Archives ; (2) Committee of Public Safety ; (3) Committee of General Security ; (4) Committee of Decrees and collected *Procès-Verbaux* ; (5) Commission of Despatches ; (6) Central Commission (composed of a member of each Committee, it prepared the "order of the day" for each session and posted it the day before in the hall of the Convention) ; (7) Committee of Examination of Military Contracts, Clothing, and Maintenance ; (8) Com-

<sup>1</sup> The roll-call was also employed after the 9th of *Thermidor* in the nomination of members to the Committees of Public Safety and General Security.

mittee of Assignats and Moneys ; (9) Committee of Correspondence ; (10) Committee of Petitions ; (11) Committee of War ; (12) Committee of Finance, divided into two sections, for ordinary and extraordinary finances, direct and indirect taxation ; (13) Committee of Legislation ; (14) Committee of Inspectors of the Hall ; (15) Committee of Public Instruction ; (16) Committee of Public Assistance ; (17) Committee of Territorial Division of the Republic into departments, districts, cantons, and communes, and the distribution and nomination of the various administrations and of the judges ; (18) Committee of Liquidation and Examination of Accounts ; (19) Committee of Conveyances and Estates ; (20) Committee of Agriculture, Commerce, Bridges, and Highways, and Internal Navigation ; (21) Committee of Naval and Colonial Affairs.

Besides these Committees the Convention also appointed temporary Commissions for special purposes ; such as the Commission of Twelve, appointed May 18, 1793, and entrusted with the taking of all measures relating to the preservation of public tranquillity, and dissolved on the 31st ; the Commission of National Education, appointed July 6th, 1793, and instructed to present a plan of public instruction, and merged in the Committee of Public Instruction on the 16th of the first month of the year II. We may also regard as a temporary Commission the first Committee of Constitution, which was dissolved on February 16, 1793.

The Convention had these periodical and official organs : (1) The *Bulletin de la Convention*, edited by the Committee of Correspondence. This was a placard-journal, which contained the principal resolutions of the Convention, some of the proceedings of the Committees, news of the war, and addresses or letters from the people's clubs or the deputies on mission. (2) The *Procès-Verbal*, which contained an account of the sessions, edited by each secretary in turn. In order

to conform with the rules of the Convention, this *procès-verbal* never gives the names of speakers nor of the authors of proposals ; and it rarely gives an analysis of a speech. The debates are given in a dry summary. But only here can we find the authentic text of the resolutions of the Assembly. It reproduces also a host of addresses, petitions, &c., not to be found in other journals. It is one of the capital sources of the history not of the Convention alone, but of the democratic Republic. (3) The daily *Feuilleton*, which gave the text of the decrees issued during the day's session.

The Convention published nothing like the analytic or verbatim reports of the debates in the present Chambers, and none of the journals gave verbatim or shorthand reports. Already fairly perfect in England, shorthand in France was still in its infancy. Citizen Guiraut announced a method or methods which he called *tachygraphie*, and published, from January 1 to May 6, 1793, a journal entitled *Le Logotachygraphe*, which fulfilled but few of the promises of its prospectus. It contained, not stenography, but a summary of speeches. We are forced to content ourselves with the approximate reports contained in the journals, written from notes taken during the session. The best of these reports are those of the *Journal des débats et des décrets*, the *Moniteur*, and the *Républicain français*. They differ among themselves and are often contradictory ; one has to compare them with one another and with the *procès-verbal* to obtain a just idea of the general progress of the debates. Happily a large number of speakers were not given to impromptu speeches ; of whom some, like Robespierre, used to give the journalists the use of their manuscript speeches. Other speeches were printed by order of the Convention. By means of these sources we can follow the debates, but our knowledge of them, however patient and attentive we may be, remains decidedly imperfect. We can

be perfectly sure only of the outcome, not of the progress and the details of the discussions.

The rules of the Convention were full of ridiculous precautions to ensure that the liberty of the sessions, which were public, should not be hampered by any pressure from outside. These precautions were not entirely successful. The galleries were not without their influence upon the debates. It sometimes befell that uproarious petitioners appeared at the bar, or forced permission from the Assembly to defile through the hall during session. On several occasions the Convention was hemmed in or invaded by insurgents. At the outset there was some question of providing the Assembly with a guard taken from all departments. The Mountain managed to defeat the proposal. It is, however, an exaggeration to say that the Convention was enslaved or tyrannised over. Only in moments of uncontrollable popular feeling, at the time of a great national danger, did the people of Paris influence its decisions ; as a general thing the Convention could deliberate in freedom, even in affairs of the highest importance, such as the trial of Louis XVI, or matters concerning the Constitution. But we must recognise that its freedom was not unlimited, and that Paris more than once forced its hands.

#### IV.

Such were the organisation, the methods of work, and the general operation of the National Convention. Let us see what part it played in the Revolutionary Government, and by what manœuvres it succeeded in combining the exercise of the legislative and executive powers.

During the first months this revolutionary combination consisted chiefly in the fact that the Convention

gave orders direct to the provisional Executive Council. It did not at first organise any direct participation of its members in the executive power, except in the matter of the police.

The mission of its Committee of Public Security was to order the arrest of citizens suspected of conspiracy or complicity with royalists or foreign powers, and all those, generally, who might trouble the public peace. And the two parties, Girondist and Montagnard, disputed for the possession of a Committee armed with so formidable a power. At the time of the first nomination of the Committee, on October 17th, the majority belonged to the Montagnards, who were represented among others by Héroult de Séchelles, president: Basire, vice-president; Chabot, Montaut, Rovère, Ruamps, Ingrand, Bordas, Brival, Duquesnoy, Leyris, Audouin, Lavicomterie, Cavaignac, Bernard (Saintes), Tallien, and Drouet; while the Girondins counted only six or seven members out of the thirty who formed the Committee: Fauchet, Kervélégan, Couppé (Côtes-du-Nord), Manuel, Grangeneuve, and Duprat. At the renewal of half the Committee on January 9, 1793, the Gironde succeeded in getting thirteen of their number appointed, which gave them the majority. A few days later, however, profiting by the feeling aroused by the murder of Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau, the Mountain obtained a decree to the effect that the Committee of Public Security, which no longer enjoyed the confidence of the people, should be instantly renewed and reduced to twelve members; and this time the twelve members comprised eleven Montagnards: Basire, Lamarque, Chabot, Ruamps, Montaut, Tallien, Legendre (Paris), Bernard (Saintes), Rovère, Ingrand, and Duhem; the only Girondist being Lasource; elected first as a substitute, and replacing Jean de Bry, who was elected full member, but refused to sit.

On March 25th the Committee was enlarged by the

addition of six members : Osselin, Alquier, Maure, Camus, Garnier (Saintes), and Lecointe-Puyraveau, and in April six more were added : Méaulle, Drouet, Leyris, Cavaignac, Brival, and Lanot ; these filling the gaps caused by the absence of several members on mission. Henceforth the Committee of General Security remained the fortress of the Mountain ; which is doubtless why the Girondists, when they wished, in May, to commence an open conflict with the authorities of Paris, and to break their resistance, appointed a special commission, the Commission of Twelve ; which, invested with the same powers as the Committee of General Security, for the time being supplanted it, to the profit of the Girondists. The Committee of General Security, after a second renewal by help on June 16th, thenceforth consisted of eighteen members ; it now included : Basire, Chabot, Rovère, Ingrand, Alquier, Maure, Drouet, Brival, Lanot, André Dumont, Legendre (Paris), Amar, Bassal, Guffroy, Laignelot, Lavicomterie, Pinet, and Julien (Toulouse). Fresh vacancies having occurred, on August 13th six members were added : Dartigoeyte, Michaud (Doubs), Jay (Sainte-Foy), Dupay (Rhône-et-Loire), Moyse Bayle, and Bernard (Saintes), who had returned from his mission.

But the victorious Montagnards found that certain members of the Committee, of whom two had preserved their places since the beginning, had fallen away and were behaving suspiciously ; and at the request of Drouet and Maure the Convention (September 9th) decided to renew the Committee and to reduce it to nine members. The election took place on the 16th, but three of those whom the Montagnards had wished to eliminate, Chabot, Basire, and Julien, were re-elected with Lavicomterie, Guffroy, and Alquier ; three new members only were elected : Panis, Lejeune (Indre), and Garnier (Saintes). More energetic measures were then taken ; a decree of September 13th ordered that



all the Committees, except that of Public Safety, were to be renewed, and that the list of the candidates for each Committee would be presented by the Committee of Public Safety. The list of members destined to form the Committee of General Security was presented on the 14th ; a list comprising twelve names. This list the Convention adopted. The new members were Vadier, Panis, Le Bas, Boucher Saint-Sauveur, David, Guffroy, Lavicomterie, Amar, Rühl, Le Bon, Voulland and Moyse Bayle. On October 13th (the 22nd of the first month of the second year), four members were added to these : Dubarran, Laloy, Jagot, and Louis (Bas-Rhin). In *Brumaire*, Le Bon, Boucher, and Laloy left the Committee and Élie Lacoste entered it. Then the Committee of the year II was definitely constituted ; the Committee which, maintained unchanged until the 9th of *Thermidor*, shared authority with the Committee of Public Safety. We need only note that of its fourteen members two resigned : Panis towards the middle of *Nivôse*, and Guffroy in the latter half of *Ventôse*.

By a rule adopted during the month of *Brumaire*, the Committee divided France, for convenient supervision, into four divisions : the first containing thirty departments, the second thirty, the third twenty-six, the fourth being Paris ; each of these divisions was placed under the supervision of at least three members ; the first under Vadier, Voulland, and Moyse Bayle ; the second under Amar, Laloy, and Jagot ; the third under Dubarran, Louis, and Le Bas ; the fourth (Paris) under Lavicomterie, Panis, David, and Rühl. On the 20th of *Germinal* the Committee gave itself a complete organisation, increasing the number of its *bureaux*, clerks, and agents. We may judge of the importance of this organisation, which was really equivalent to a Ministry, by the fact that the list of annual salaries paid to the members and *employés* had now, according to a statement issued on the 18th of *Germinal* in the

year II, reached a sum total of 385,800 livres (over £15,000).

For general politics, for war and diplomacy, the system of government which the Legislative Assembly had evolved, so to speak, out of the Constitution of 1791, namely, a species of responsible Ministry selected outside the Assembly, had appeared sufficient enough at the outset, and the great military victories obtained, the expulsion of the Austro-Prussians, and the conquest of Belgium, gave rise to the belief that this form of government might be maintained. But by the end of 1792 the relations of France with England had altered; at the conclusion of the conquest of Belgium an English war seemed imminent. On January 1, 1793, a Girondist deputy, Kersaint by name, proposed to strengthen the hands of the Government by establishing a Committee of General Defence, consisting of deputies. Objections were raised by some that this Committee would result in a diminished responsibility on the part of the Ministers. Marat said "time must be given for reflection." Others, and among them Rabaut Saint-Étienne, put forward considerations of security and of necessity—that is to say, of opportunism; and we see that this first direct combination of the legislative and executive powers was not the result of a Montagnard theory, nor of any theory at all; but that circumstances alone suggested it.<sup>1</sup>

The Convention decided in the same session to collaborate with the Ministers. This was their decree :

"The Committees of War, Finance, the Colonies, the Marine, Diplomacy, Constitution, and Commerce will each name three of their members who shall meet in a particular place under the name of the

---

<sup>1</sup> The recent example of the Legislative Assembly also influenced the action of the Convention. The Legislative Assembly had appointed an Extraordinary Committee, the Committee of Twelve, which was in some respects a forerunner of the Committee of General Defence.

*Committee of General Defence.* This Committee will without interruption, and with the aid of the Ministers, occupy itself with such measures as the coming campaign and the present state of affairs demand, and when it shall require the right of speech in order to report its proceedings the president shall not have the power to refuse it."

This Committee was composed of a large majority of Girondists ; among others Brissot, Gensonné, Guadet, Boyer-Fonfrède, Kersaint. It also contained ex-members of the Constituent Assembly, then suspected of Girondism, such as Defermon, Siéyès, and Barère. Neither Danton nor Robespierre was in it, and only such of the Montagnard party were members as were independent and were attached neither to Danton nor to Robespierre, such as Lacombe Saint-Michel, Dubois-Crancé, Cambon, and Guyton-Morveau. From its first meeting (January 3rd) the Committee betrayed its political sympathies by naming Kersaint and Brissot as president and vice-president ; Petion (March 4th) and Guadet (March 19th) were the following presidents.

Composed of too many members, deliberating almost in public, suspected of sympathy with the unpopular policy of Roland, the Committee of General Defence was not successful in establishing united action in matters of government or matters diplomatic or military. Public opinion held it responsible for the checks suffered by Dumouriez. At the news of the rout at Aix-la-Chapelle the Committee demanded its own renewal, and further " that there should be created perpetually, in the Assembly itself, a Committee of Public Safety, and that it should be so organised as to avoid distrust and discord, and to establish free communication between the National Convention and the Executive Council." The proposition was decreed in theory. On March 22nd the Convention, on learning of the defeat at Neerwinden, instructed the Committee of General Defence to present on the morrow a scheme

of organisation for the Committee of Public Safety. Then, it seems, there was some hesitation. Did the name of Committee of Public Safety seem too alarming? The Convention waited three days, and then relinquished the name, but not the thing; on the 25th it decreed that the new Committee, like the old, should be called the Committee of General Defence. It was composed of twenty-five members. It was instructed "to prepare and propose all laws and measures necessary for the internal and external defence of the Republic." It was to call the Executive Council to its sessions at least twice a week. The Ministers were to give it weekly notice of all their general decisions. Two of its members were to be present every day at the sessions of the Convention, in order to answer questions. Thus the new Committee was really invested with part of the executive power.

The preceding Committee had been entirely Girondist. The new one, elected by the Convention at the suggestion of its *bureau*, was composed almost equally of Girondins and Montagnards. Danton, Robespierre, Fabre d'Églantine, Camille Desmoulins, Guyton-Morveau, Rühl, Bréard, and Prieur (Marne) sat with Petion, Gensonné, Barbaroux, Vergniaud, Buzot, Guadet, Isnard, and Lasource. With the exception of Brissot and Marat, the most distinguished members of Convention of all shades of opinion were these: Dubois-Crancé, Delmas, Barère, Jean de Bry, Cambacérès, Siéyès, Condorcet, Camus, and Quinette. It was like a large ministry, in which all shades of republicanism were represented; but in which the Girondists were in the majority. The *bureau* was composed of men whose politics were then undecided: Guyton-Morveau, president; Barère, vice-president; Bréard and Cambacérès, secretaries.

This Committee, as large as the other without possessing any more unity, deliberated, like the other,

in public ;<sup>1</sup> it did nothing—could do nothing. Events followed hastily, but it was almost powerless to participate in them.

After the treason of Dumouriez, the Committee itself proposed (April 4th), through Isnard, that it should be replaced by a “Commission of Execution,” and held its last meeting on April 5, 1793.

To this name, the “Commission of Execution,” which was too distinctly contrary to the principle of the separation of powers, the Convention preferred the name of “Committee of Public Safety,” which this time seemed more in conformity with the circumstances, at best extremely serious, and possibly desperate, into which the treason of Dumouriez had plunged the country. On April 6, 1793, the Convention decreed that there should be formed, by election by roll-call, a Committee of Public Safety, composed of nine members of Convention, which should deliberate *in camera*. Entrusted with “supervising and accelerating the execution of administrative matters confided to the Executive Council,” it could even “suspend the proceedings” of this Council. It was authorised, in urgent circumstances, to take measures of internal and external defence, and its orders were to be executed by the united Executive Council without delay.

In the plan proposed on April 4th the “Commission of Execution” would have been entrusted “with all the functions attributed to the united Executive Council.” The Convention, we see, drew back before these phrases, which expressly violated the famous principle ; but it did not recoil from the fact ; although there were still to be Ministers, the deputies instructed to supervise their action were in reality also entrusted with the government in all circumstances necessitating general measures of government, and the Ministers

<sup>1</sup> Barère stated that at the meetings of this committee there were always nearly two hundred members of Convention present.

were in future to be merely the agents of the decisions of this Committee of Deputies.

But while it was creating what was really a responsible Ministry in disguise, the Convention, by a concession to the habitual feeling of distrust of all executive power, was taking precautions against the possible tyranny of the Committee of Public Safety ; the purse-strings were placed out of its reach ; the national Treasury was made independent of the Committee, which had at its disposition for secret expenses only a hundred thousand livres. Again, the decree made no mention of a president of the Committee ; as though it feared lest such a presidency should, by unifying it, make it too powerful. Finally, the Committee was established only for a month.

On the same day, April 6, 1793, the Convention proceeded to call the roll for the nomination of the members of the Committee of Public Safety. They were elected in the following order : (1) Barère, by 360 votes ; (2) Delmas, by 347 ; (3) Bréard, by 325 ; (4) Cambon, by 278 ; (5) Danton, by 233 ; (6) Jean de Bry, by 227 ; (7) Guyton-Morveau, by 202 ; (8) Treilhard, by 160 ; (9) Delacroix, by 151. Jean de Bry refused to act for reasons of health, and Robert Lindet was elected in his place on April 7th.<sup>1</sup>

All the members of the Committee of Public Safety had been members of the Committee of General Defence, with the exception of Robert Lindet, who had always been a substitute.

All at the trial of Louis XVI had voted for death

<sup>1</sup> The deputies who obtained the largest number of votes after the 9 elected were : La Revellière-Lépeaux, 146 ; Lasource, 143 ; Isnard, 141 ; Robert Lindet, 122 ; Thuriot, 103 ; Dubois-Crancé, 96 ; Boyer-Fonfrède, 86 ; Merlin (Douai), 85 ; Cambacérès, 62. It was suggested that these should be substitutes ; the proposal was rejected, on the grounds that the Convention had not decreed that there should be substitutes.

and against delay, with the exception of Treilhard, who had voted for death after delay. We may fairly say that they belonged to the Montagnard party; but to the "opportunist" section of that party. None of them was under the influence of Robespierre; all were later to become his enemies. They were also, for the most part, ostensible adversaries of the Girondists; but many tokens lead one to believe that at heart they were in favour of an understanding with the wise men and patriots of the Gironde; with Vergniaud, with Condorcet. One might also say that the first Committee of Public Safety was in reality a Danton Ministry.

We have seen that this Committee was elected only for one month. The need of governmental stability was so pressing that the Convention re-elected it each month until July 10, 1793, when Danton was overthrown. Bréard was replaced on June 5th by Berlier, and Robert Lindet and Treilhard were replaced by Jeanbon Saint-André and Gasparin. There were various additions to the Committee; on May 30, 1793, Hérault de Séchelles, Ramel, Couthon, Saint-Just, and Mathieu were associated with the Committee provisionally for the purpose of drafting the Constitution; then, on the following June 5th, they were assimilated with the other members; and on June 22nd Mathieu, being sent "on mission," was replaced by Robert Lindet, elected for the second time.<sup>1</sup>

At its first meeting (April 7, 1793) the Committee nominated a president, Guyton-Morveau; a vice-president, Bréard; and secretaries, Barère and Lindet. In its later *procès-verbaux* there was no mention of

<sup>1</sup> On June 27th, Mallarmé was appointed to the committee, but only to submit a plan *de maximum*. On July 4th, Thomas Lindet, Duroy, and Francastel, who had been criticising the policy of the committee with regard to the Norman rebels, were also elected members. But this decree, passed in a moment of irritation, remained a dead letter.

a president, vice-president, nor of secretaries. The Committee enacted that there should be two sessions *per diem*; one at nine in the morning, the other at seven in the evening; and that no citizen should be admitted at these sessions.<sup>1</sup> It organised three *bureaux*: a *bureau* of correspondence with representatives "on mission"; a *bureau* of correspondence with the Ministers and generals; and a certain *bureau* "entrusted with the registration of addresses, petitions, and memoirs, general correspondence, complaints against the provisional Executive Council, and the distribution of all documents." Each *bureau* consisted of a chief and a clerk chosen outside the Committee. There was a general secretary, Pierre, afterwards replaced by Dracon Julien.

On April 10th the members of the Committee divided the work of the Committee as follows: Cambon, Guyton, and Lindet saw to correspondence, to matters of the interior, finance, subsistences, the distribution of work among the sections of the Committee, and the supervision of the *bureaux*; Delmas and Delacroix saw to matters concerning the war; Barère and Danton to foreign affairs, the choice and despatch of revolutionary agents to the armies and the interior; Treillard and Bréard to naval matters.

On June 13th the Committee replaced these four sections by six: (1) General correspondence: Cambon, Berlier, Saint-Just, Couthon; (2) Foreign Affairs: Barère, Danton, Hérault de Séchelles; (3) War: Gasparin, Delacroix, Delmas; (4) Marine: Guyton-Morveau, Jeanbon Saint-André; (5) Public taxes, the interior, and justice: Ramel and Mathieu; (6) two members were appointed in turn to hear the complaints of representatives and of citizens. It was enacted on June 17th that these various sections should meet

<sup>1</sup> The Committee sat first in the Hôtel d'Elbeuf, then in the Tuileries, Pavillon de l'Égalité.



separately every morning, from six "at the latest," to two o'clock. At two precisely each day the whole Committee was to assemble to deliberate on the reports of the sections, and at eight in the evening a second session would be held "to deal with matters of public safety."

On June 29th the preponderance of Danton was proved by the fact that he was instructed to follow the operations of the war with Delmas only, Gasparin and Delacroix being excused.

As for the relations of the Committee with the provisional Executive Council, each section had under its surveillance the Minister whose functions corresponded with its own. On June 15th the Committee enacted that each day, at one o'clock in the afternoon, the Council should meet and concert with the Committee "all measures proper to save the Republic." At this "General Committee" each Minister gave an account of his doings. Thus the Committee of Public Safety tried to subordinate the Executive Council, with a tendency more marked each day to make the Ministers no more than its head clerks.

At this time it also assumed executive power itself in so far as it gave direct orders to the civil and military agents. It sent secret agents into the departments to inquire into the state of the public mind and the economic situation. It sent commissaries to the armies. It supervised and directed the deputies "on mission," sent them general and particular instructions, and corresponded regularly with each of them. It assumed the effective direction of matters diplomatic.

In the eyes of France and of Europe, the Committee of Public Safety, directed by Danton, was already the real executive power of the French Republic.

If we reject the phrases intended to conceal the violation of the principle of separate powers, we see that from April 6, 1793, to the following 10th of July, there

existed, under the name of the Committee of Public Safety, a responsible Ministry.

The defeat of the diplomatic plans of the first Committee of Public Safety, the failure of its temporising policy with regard to the Federalist insurgents, and the breakdown of its military operations against the Vendéans, led to its fall. The question of confidence was brought forward, with reference to the monthly renewal of the Committee. On July 10, 1793, the Convention decided to reduce the Committee, which then consisted of sixteen members, to nine; and calling the roll of names on the same day, it excluded Danton from the new Committee, which was formed largely from the members of the old. Jeanbon Saint-André was nominated by 192 votes, Barère by 192, Gasparin by 178, Couthon by 176, Héroult de Séchelles by 175, Thuriot by 155, Prieur (Marne) by 142, Saint-Just by 126, Robert Lindet by 100. It would be interesting to know how many votes Danton obtained; the *procès-verbal* does not tell us. Gasparin resigned on account of ill-health on July 24th. On the 27th he was replaced by Robespierre. On August 14th Carnot and Prieur (Côte-d'Or) were added to the Committee; and on September 6th Billaud-Varenne, Collot d'Herbois, Danton, and Granet. Danton and Granet refused to sit. Thuriot resigned on the 20th. The second Committee of Public Safety was thus composed of twelve members after this date; and, renewed each month, it remained as it was until the 9th of *Thermidor*, with the exception of Héroult de Séchelles, who, guillotined on the 16th of *Germinal* of the year II, was not replaced.

Robespierre now played the chief part. The first Committee had been a Danton Cabinet; the second was, or rather gradually became, a Robespierre Ministry.

Its authority was singularly augmented almost imme-

diately, in that it obtained, on July 28th, the right "to issue writs of arrest and warrants against persons suspect or accused, and to order seals to be affixed." Experience had demonstrated the insufficiency of its original powers, as formulated by the decree of April 6th. The Executive Council had in vain been reduced to a subordinate position; it none the less preserved a kind of legal independence, of which more than one Minister made use on many occasions in such a way as to thwart the actions of the Committee and compromise the unity of its general policy and of the national defence. On August 1, 1793, Danton, although no longer a member of the Committee, proposed to remedy these inconveniences by putting an end to the fiction of the separation of powers, "to make the Committee of Public Safety a provisional Committee of Execution, of which the Ministers would be the chief subordinates," and to place fifty million francs at its disposal. The Convention rejected the first part of this motion; but by the decree of August 2nd it granted the Committee the desired fifty millions without imposing any restrictions or indications as to the employment of the fund; and from this time onwards we find the Committee increasing its effective force and its governmental authority, either by subsidising the journals and people's clubs, by paying a secret service, or commissaries, or couriers, or by immediately realising urgent measures of national or revolutionary defence.

The decree (October 10th) which in theory established the Revolutionary Government ratified the actual supremacy assumed by the Committee of Public Safety in its second article, which enacts "that the provisional Executive Council, the Ministers, the generals, and all constituted bodies, are placed under the supervision of the Committee of Public Safety, which will report upon them to the Convention within the week."

Moreover, Article 7 of this decree deprived the Executive Council of the right of nominating general officers ; the Convention would henceforth nominate them upon the representation of the Committee of Public Safety. On the 5th of *Frimaire*, year II, a decree subordinated the representatives on mission to the Committee ; they were " expected to conform precisely " to the orders of the Committee. The famous decree of the 14th of *Frimaire* once more ratified and regulated this preponderance of the Committee of Public Safety, with a further augmentation of its functions ; on the one hand it was given the right to dismiss officials, and on the other it was entrusted with the direction of the more important operations of diplomacy.

Concerning matters diplomatic, on the 20th of *Ventôse*, year II, the Committee made this statement :

"(1) The Committee will sign the letters of credit given to all envoys ; they will be countersigned by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. (2) The Committee will take the necessary steps for the special authorisations to be given to envoys. (3) The Committee will decide upon the fundamental points of the operations to be confided to envoys of the Republic ; the Minister of Foreign Affairs will give them their instructions, which will be submitted to the Committee. (4) The Committee will correspond directly with foreign Governments, when it shall judge it to be becoming to the dignity of the Republic."

On the 23rd of *Ventôse* of the year II the Committee received the right of replacing such functionaries as it dismissed :

"The Committee of Public Safety will dismiss, conformably with the law of the 14th of *Frimaire*, any functionary who shall fail to execute the decrees of the National Convention or the orders of the Committee, or who shall prove himself guilty of prevarication or negligence in the exercise of his functions ; it will cause him to be prosecuted according to the rigour of the law and will provisionally provide for his replacement."

From this time the exercise of the national sovereignty, as regards the appointment of officials,

was suspended in favour of the Committee of Public Safety, which (for example) dismissed and replaced the Mayor of Paris; and it is from the time of this decree of the 23rd of *Ventôse* that the government of the Committee appears actually dictatorial.

There was practically only one department in which the Committee of Public Safety did not exercise the authority of government alone: namely, the police department. There it shared its power with the Committee of General Security: this is why these two Committees are often called the *Committees of Government*. When any extremely serious measure had to be taken these two Committees acted in common. Thus the orders for the arrest of Danton, Camille Desmoulins, Delacroix, and Philippeaux were signed by the two united Committees. Sometimes the Committee of General Security alone took the initiative in matters which were actually measures of government; for example, it was responsible for sending the forty-one deputies before the revolutionary tribunal, and the arrest of the sixty-five others (on the accusation of Amar, October 3, 1793). In several matters of the greatest importance it was a member of the Committee of General Security who acted as spokesman for the two united Committees; as in the case of Chabot, Fabre d'Églantine, and others (spokesman, Amar, 26th *Ventôse*); in the case of the conspiracy of Baron de Batz (spokesman Élie Lacoste, 26th *Prairial*); and in the case of Catherine Théot (spokesman, Vadier, 27th of *Prairial*).

When, on the 12th of *Germinal*, the Executive Council was replaced by twelve Executive Commissioners, these Commissioners were expressly subordinate to the Committee of Public Safety (Article 17 of the decree), and the Committee regulated this subordination so that the members of these Commissions were really no more than its chief clerks, according to the

intention prematurely expressed by Danton on the preceding August 1st.

We have little precise information as to the internal organisation of the second Committee of Public Safety. But we know from a proposal presented on the 28th of *Germinal* in the year II by one of its *employés*, that before the creation of the Executive Commissions there were in the Committee at least three *bureaux*: (1) the *bureau* of correspondence with the representatives on mission; (2) the *bureau* of supervision of the execution of laws; (3) the *bureau* of *action*, which was regarded "as the centre of the Government."

By a decision of September 23, 1793, the Committee had enacted "that each of its members should be attached to a department of work," but without determining these departments. The minutes of the decisions of the Committee, which are often in the hand of one of the members of the Committee, and the signatures thereto appended,<sup>1</sup> give us a few approximate details bearing on the subject. We find others in the debates in the Convention and at the Jacobins and in the various sources of general political history.

Robespierre has left few written traces of his activity in the daily work of the Committee. Resolutions in his hand are rare, and refer to the police, or arrests, or orders of release. He hardly ever appends his signature except to resolutions of a general political

<sup>1</sup> It is often said that a law demanded that at least three signatures should be appended to the decisions of the Committee. I have not discovered any such law; and there are minutes bearing only one or two signatures. The despatches often end with the phrase: "Signed in the register," the names following of all the members of the Committee who were not "on mission." But these are not signatures. Further down is the note "True copy" (*Pour extrait conformé*), with signatures which do as a rule number three at least. The phrase "signed in the register" means nothing; the register more often than not is not signed, and many orders bearing this formula do not figure in the register.

nature, and to a few documents relating to the Navy. It is in virtue of other tokens, as we shall see, that he appears, to employ the language of our own day, as the president of a Ministry, a minister without portfolio. He interprets the general policy of the Government, and defends it, both in the Convention and at the Jacobins.

Saint-Just has left even fewer traces in writing or in the form of signatures. The only orders or resolutions in his hand deal with the Army, or are orders of imprisonment. But he intervenes in person in military operations, and contributes by his presence to the victories of the armies of the North and the Rhine.

Couthon is scarcely less sparing of his hand and his signature. He has no speciality; he meddles a little in everything, even in diplomacy.

Prieur of Côte-d'Or writes and signs copiously. He has left a number of orders, &c., dealing with armaments, artillery, and public instruction; and now and then with victualling and transport.

Prieur of La Marne has left us hardly any such traces. He was continually "on mission." So was Jeanbon Saint-André, but there are some documents in his hand dealing with the Navy. But he, during his long mission to Brest and in the maritime departments, was the real Minister of Marine of the French Republic.

Robert Lindet drafted and signed numerous orders dealing with maintenance in general; the maintenance of the Army and of the Navy, and victualling.

Barère drafted and signed most of the orders dealing with matters of diplomacy, and (from *Floréal* of the year II and onwards) with public instruction and the fine arts.

Hérault de Séchelles, in conjunction with Barère, busied himself with diplomatic affairs. But there are few traces of his work: his manuscript and signature are rare; and he was guillotined four months before

the fall of Robespierre. The Committee had regarded him with suspicion, and had ceased to deliberate in his presence, from the end of *Brumaire* of the year II.

Billaud-Varenne and Collot d'Herbois were entrusted with the correspondence of the Committee ; especially with the correspondence of the representatives " on mission " ; a heavy task. There are not many resolutions in their hands or signed by them.

Carnot, finally, drafted and signed a host of orders relating to the Army, and some also relating to the Navy. He saw to the nomination and dismissal of officers. He, in fact, in military matters, was the directing Minister ; especially in matters relating to the *personnel* of the Army.

Little by little each member of the Committee specialised still further ; and his colleagues took on trust, without discussion, most of the measures taken by him in his own department, when they did not affect politics in general.

To gain a clear understanding of the way in which the Committee was organised, we must consider to what point its members were united among themselves in matters of general politics. An opinion has gradually arisen that there were two types of person in the Committee ; firstly, the *workers*, such as Robert Lindet, Carnot, and Prieur (of Côte-d'Or), who, shut up in their *bureaux*, busied themselves over the national defences ; secondly, the *politicians*, Robespierre, Saint-Just, Couthon, Billaud-Varenne, Collot d'Herbois, who were directly or indirectly the authors of the Terrorist measures. The former would not be responsible for the actions of the latter. On the 3rd of *Germinal* in the year III, more than six months after the fall of Robespierre, Carnot, speaking from the tribune of the Convention, retrospectively distinguished between the *workers* and the *politicians*, and attributed to himself the *rôle* that posterity has left him ; namely, that of



a patriot who consented for a time to sit beside Robespierre, Couthon, and Saint-Just, in order to save France by his military ingenuity: not in order to partake in the fury of these “tyrants.”

At the time only three members of the old Committee of Public Safety were being proceeded against: Billaud-Varenne, Collot d’Herbois, and Barère; and one member, Vadier, of the Committee of General Security. But all the others felt themselves virtually arraigned; and in defending them defended themselves. Carnot spoke in favour of the accused, but in reality he was pleading his own cause, and he very skilfully extricated himself.

In this speech, referring to the individual responsibility of each member, Carnot spoke of their signatures in terms worth citing here:

“The signatures given by the members of the late Committee of Public Safety (I am speaking of signatures in support of the first of a group), were a formality, which was prescribed by law, but absolutely without significance to those who fulfilled it. On their part it was neither a sign of express agreement and support, nor a token of confidence and acquiescence. These signatures did not even bear the significance of the words “true copy,” for that would assume that the signatory had read and collated the document; which was not the case. They were and always had been simply evidence that the documents signed had been *seen*; evidence of a purely mechanical operation, proving merely that the reporter, that is, the first signatory of the minutes, had acquitted himself of the formality prescribed by submitting the document in question to the examination of the Committee.”

Carnot went on to say that he had in this way signed, without knowing it, some instructions relating to the popular commission of Orange, of whose existence he was ignorant until a much later date; and a letter to Joseph Le Bon, extending his powers, although he, Carnot, was “perpetually” demanding his recall. Three days later he also stated that he had unknowingly set his name at the foot of a writ for the arrest of two

of his own secretaries, and the eating-house keeper Gervais, at whose house he habitually dined. And why did it happen that members of the Committee signed documents they had not read? Because—if we are to credit Carnot—it was physically impossible to do otherwise, so great was the flow of business. He concluded thus :

“The fundamental responsibility once correctly placed, the greater part of the accusations directed against the prisoners (Billaud-Varenne, Collot d’Herbois, and Barère) disappears of itself ; the crimes remain at the doors of those who committed them ; the triumvirate whom you punished on the 10th of *Thermidor*.”

Such was Carnot’s justification ; and thus he explains the fact that his signature was to be seen at the foot of certain Terrorist resolutions. This theory of responsibility in the matter of signatures has been accepted by the great majority of historians ; it is classic. However, the examination of the papers of the Committee of Public Safety gives it the lie direct. Doubtless the official copies of the orders and resolutions of the Committee bear signatures which simply signify “certified a true copy,” or “seen by,” and which do not involve the responsibility of the signatories. No one properly informed was able then or later to bring these up against Carnot ; and like a lawyer he defends himself at a point where he was not attacked ; or rather he equivocates (if we have his exact words) by speaking of signatures which merely signified “certified copy” as *secondary* signatures.

The true responsibility, and Carnot knew it well, lay in having written or signed the *minutes* of the orders, whether the signature was *principal* or *secondary*—that of the author of the order, or appended in support of an order drafted by another. This was the delicate point, this was where he felt himself to be vulnerable, and, very pardonably, as he

was fighting to keep his head on his shoulders, he sought to put his audience off the scent by pleasant anecdotes, like the story of his eating-house keeper, whom he had arrested without knowing it.<sup>1</sup> Now, I have had in my hands the entire mass of the papers of the Committee of Public Safety, and, I believe, all the minutes of orders and resolutions which are in existence in the Archives; and I have not come upon a single order relating to general politics to which the signatures could have been appended unconsciously or negligently.

Let us take as an example one of the most famous of political and "Terrorist" measures: the order for the arrest of Danton, Desmoulins, Philippeaux, and Delacroix (10th of *Germinal*, the year II). Can we for a moment admit that Carnot and Prieur (of Côte-d'Or), who signed with their colleagues, did so inadvertently? They signed because they were agreed with Robespierre and Billaud-Varenne to destroy Danton and his friends. Only one of the members present failed to sign; namely, Robert Lindet; because he disapproved of the measure. All the rest, *workers* or *politicals*, were agreed upon this act of governmental policy. In fact there was a political solidarity between the members of the Committee.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I have searched in vain for this writ of arrest among the papers of the Committee, and as for the two secretaries, imprisoned on the strength of Carnot's signature, it is by no means certain that this signature was given unintentionally. The order is in the National Archives, and we learn from it that these two young men, having dined too well, had made a disturbance in a sectional Assembly and had there threatened the guillotine assistants. Carnot signed the order to arrest them, and one cannot blame him. He also said in his speech of the 6th *Germinal* that he had against his will signed and even drafted certain orders against which he had "laid on the desk beforehand a positive protest." I have not found any of these protests.

[This solidarity was doubtless to some degree due to an increasing fear. It was already beginning to look dangerous to oppose Robespierre.—TRANS.]

To resume : each member of the Committee had his department, in which he was practically master, and in which he enjoyed a certain amount of independence and personal responsibility. But the general policy was determined on at the general meetings, and for that the Committee as a whole was responsible.

The decree by which the twelve Executive Commissions were established subordinated them directly to the Committee of Public Safety, to which they had to give an account day by day of their operations and expenditure. "Every day, at ten o'clock in the evening," reads an enactment of the 3rd of *Floréal*, "a member, whether a commissary or assistant, of each of the twelve Commissions, will repair to the meeting-place of the Committee, there to give an account of the result of their operations, conformably with Article 18 of the decree." The Committee organised itself in sections in order to divide the work of supervising the Commissions ; certain members had under their supervision as many as three Commissions, according to Cambon, who cites Robert Lindet, "who was entrusted with the supervision of three or four departments, of considerable importance, among which were those of commerce and victualling." Certain sections were already organised before the establishment of the Commissions ; such as that of arms, that of war, and two or three others ; and in these no change was made. One of the new sections created in *Floréal* was that of public instruction, with Barère at its head ; in spite of his multifarious occupations he exhibited a prodigious activity in his new province.

One section of which much has been said is that of the general police. It was not organised for the supervision of a Commission, but for the execution of the measures with which the Committee of Public Safety had been entrusted by the decree of the 26th and 27th of *Germinal* concerning the general police.

Saint-Just, the reporter of this decree, was at first the director of this section ; and when on the 10th of *Floréal* he set out for the army of the North, Robespierre took his place until the 12th of *Messidor*.

“Four decades<sup>1</sup> after Robespierre had left the Committee, Couthon replaced him in this work. . . . Upon the request of the Committee of General Security, at the end of *Messidor*, the Committee of Public Safety considered the question of uniting the *bureau* of general police in its entirety, with its papers and its clerks, to the Committee of General Security ; and finally did so.”

Such are the principal characteristics of the organisation and the method of operation of the Committee of Public Safety by means of which the Convention governed France until the 9th of *Thermidor*.<sup>2</sup>

## V.

The principal agents of the central power in the Revolutionary Government were the *representatives on mission*, known at first as *commissaries of the Convention*, who little by little came, for a time, to play the parts of prefects or intendants.

To administer the departments or direct the armies by certain of its members was a thing the Convention did not decide to do suddenly, nor openly either ; its respect for the principle of the separation of powers made it hesitate some time before obeying the injunctions of circumstance.

Before this the Constituent Assembly had afforded the example of legislators who assured themselves of the execution of their own decrees. After Louis' flight, while forced, during the interim, to exercise the execu-

<sup>1</sup> In the republican calendar, a decade was ten days.—[TRANS.]

<sup>2</sup> All the decisions and orders of the Committee will be found in my *Recueil des actes du Comité de Salut Public*, vols. i. to xii., which is in course of publication.

tive power, the Assembly sent some of its members (in accordance with a decree of June 22, 1791) into the frontier departments, in the quality of commissaries whose duty it was to swear the armies by the new oath, and to "decide, with the help of the administrative bodies and the commanders of the troops, on the measures they consider necessary to the maintenance of public order and the safety of the State, and to make all requisitions necessary for this object." The same day the Assembly sent to Varennes three commissaries instructed to bring the King back to Paris, with powers "to give orders to the National Guards and the troops of the line, to give orders to administrative bodies and municipalities, and generally to do and command to be done all that may be necessary to the execution of their mission."

These despatches of commissaries ceased when Louis had been placed on the throne. But the Legislative Assembly, in its struggle against the executive power, was led to encroach on the privileges of this power. On February 15th, 1792, it sent four of its members into the department of Oise to re-establish order there. On July 31st following it instructed three others to organise the camp at Soissons. On August 9th, "finding that the despatch of the commissaries to Soissons had been extremely advantageous," it sent nine commissaries to the armies of the North, the Centre, and the Rhine. After the suspension of Louis XVI it sent twelve to the armies, with the power to suspend and replace officers of all ranks and officials of all kinds. It then appointed many others, and despatched them on many different missions; and, encroaching even on the judicial power, it instructed four of its members (on September 17, 1792) to supervise the criminal trial relating to the theft of the Garde-Meuble.

The Convention was breaking fresh ground in this matter. As if to make it plainly obvious that it was

only continuing an already existing institution, it retained in office the commissaries appointed by the Legislative Assembly until the fulfilment of their missions. It then began to send forth, according to its needs, some of its own members ; to the armies, in order to supervise the generals, or into various departments for special objects. These first missions appeared to be exceptional measures taken under exceptional circumstances. But the circumstances were prolonged ; the war lasted ; it became disastrous ; and the first reverses of Dumouriez' army led the Convention to make such missions a general thing, and to extend them throughout the country. On March 9th, 1793, it decreed the despatch of two of its members into each department, not only to execute the levy of 300,000 men, decreed on February 24th, but also to demand reports from all the constituted authorities, to take all measures that seemed to them necessary to the re-establishment of order, to suspend at need, and imprison, suspected officials, to requisition armed forces, to verify the state of "subsistences," to inquire into the causes of the supposed dearth, and the non-circulation of grain ; in a word, they were invested with unlimited powers.<sup>1</sup> The decree of April 30th following gave the institution of missionary representatives a regular organisation.

In this matter the necessities of military defence inspired an expedient which resulted in a provisional remedy of the anarchical faults of the Constitution of 1791, which decentralised the government to excess, and under which the central power had not a single executive or supervising agent in the departments. This agent, executive and supervising, was created, as we see, by circumstances ; he was the missionary representative, the commissary. We see him forcing the

<sup>1</sup> A list of these missionary representatives will be found in my *Recueil des actes du Comité de Salut Public*, vol. ii.

local elective administrations into the political paths of the central government. Despatched in the first place and especially to enforce the levy of 300,000 men, he remains in the department after the levy has been achieved, and performs or endeavours to perform the duties of a prefect or intendant.

The elective departmental administrations did not witness this attempt at centralisation without anger. It seemed to them that they were being placed under the yoke of Paris. When the Girondists, the enemies of Parisian preponderance, were smitten by the Parisian insurrection of May 31, 1793, many of the departmental administrations threw off the yoke of the "representatives on mission," with all the greater ease in that a number of these representatives had returned to Paris in May; and they organised the great insurrection which is known both as the Federalist and as the Girondist insurrection.

When the departmental insurrection had been overcome, the National Convention, at first on the occasion of the great levy (August 23rd), then on various fortuitous occasions, established new missions in nearly all the departments; not by a single decree, but gradually; and these missions had the same powers as before (August—September, 1793).

Finally, on the 9th of *Nivôse*, year II, there was a great general mission for the establishment of the Revolutionary Government, with a mandate bidding it purge the constituted authorities.<sup>1</sup>

All the armies, from the beginning to the end of the Convention, were accompanied by missionary representatives, who did not confine themselves to seeing that the generals carried out the plans and orders of the central executive power, and to recalling and provisionally appointing these generals; they often actually commanded them, and marched at their head

<sup>1</sup> *Recueil des actes*, ix. 744.



against the enemy ; and one of these representatives, Fabre (of l'Hérault), was killed in a fight with the Spaniards, on the 30th of *Frimaire*, year II.

Nearly half the members of the National Convention went "on mission" in this way in their turn, either to the armies or to the departments. Most of the members of the Committee of Public Safety did the same. The missions of Saint-Just and Carnot to the armies of the Rhine and the North resulted in decisive successes. The mission of Prieur (of Marne) in Brittany contributed to the defeat of the Vendéean insurrection. That of Jeanbon Saint-André to Brest, the longest of all, was the very mainspring of the naval operations against the English.

The departmental missions did not last as long as the missions to the armies, which were uninterrupted. From the beginning of *Floréal* of the year II the majority of the representatives were recalled from the departments, and the Revolutionary Government thenceforth relied on *national agents*.

As for the period during which the representatives "on mission" acted as prefects or intendants (March, 1793, to May, 1794), the departmental and other elective administrations were severely subordinated to them during and after the Federalist insurrection. On July 17th, 1793, the Convention declared that the orders of the representatives were "provisional laws," and on August 16th following it decreed that "such administrators as suspend the execution of the orders of the representatives of the people shall be punished by ten years in irons." In fact, once Federalism was vanquished, the obedience of the administrations became, if not perfect, at any rate sufficient.

Unable to undertake the task single-handed, the commissaries had at first agents who acted as assistants or deputies. To these they delegated their powers ; but there were abuses ; these agents sometimes set

themselves up as local tyrants. The decree of *Frimaire* the 14th of the year II forbade the representatives "on mission" to delegate their powers. There were still agents, but they were only commissioners, inspectors, or advisers whose help was required in explaining local affairs.

The principal task of the missionary deputies, after the defeat of Federalism, was to purge the constituted authorities. How did they set about this expurgation? The deputy Tréhouart wrote from Lorient, on October 25, 1793, that the general council of that commune had been denounced to him as having been in alliance with the Girondins. He then called a public meeting of the local people's clubs, proceeded to a public interrogatory of the members of the commune, dismissed them, and convoked the primary assemblies for the next day; these assemblies, to which few but the labourers of the port repaired, elected a "*sans-culotte*" municipality. Guimberteau wrote from Blois, on October 31st: "Yesterday I began the revolutionary expurgation of Blois. The *sans-culottes* assembled in the cathedral church. Through me they pronounced the dismissal of an aristocratic municipality, and replaced it then and there by a patriot administration."

At the outset the representatives had only to purge suspected administrations. By the decree of *Frimaire* the 14th they were enjoined to expurgate all civil authorities without exception, and a circular of the Committee of Public Safety instructed them to proceed to this purgation "by convoking the people in popular societies." As a rule the representative read out the list of functionaries before the assembly. If there were no protests they were maintained; otherwise they were immediately replaced. Who nominated them? The representative himself. But more often than not he read out a name which the local popular society had

whispered to him, and this name was accepted by acclamation.

It is a mistake to imagine the commissaries, even at the time when their powers were most extensive, as "proconsuls," terrified and terrorising, tyrannised over and tyrannising, cruel and trembling slaves of the Committee of Public Safety. To begin with, it is untrue that their approach excited fear and hatred. Such men as Carrier and Joseph Le Bon were exceptions. Although the representatives struck terror into the enemies of the Revolution, the accomplices of the Vendéans, and foreigners (and this terror was one of the means of national defence), the people regarded them with affection, called them and welcomed them as saviours. I am not speaking only of working men and peasants; the republican *bourgeoisie* saw in these ministers of the central power a defence against the excesses of the Revolutionary Committees and various local tyrannies.

Their correspondence shows them for the most part busy in repairing the iniquities of these tyrannies, which had sprung up here and there, more or less spontaneously, on the occasion and under the pretext of national defence. Thus the younger Robespierre and Maure, the former in Haute-Saône, the latter in Yonne, gained blessings by restoring liberty to the poor peasants who were incarcerated on account of their religion. The proofs of the joy expressed at their arrival are numerous. Michaud writes from Châteauroux, on the 3rd of *Pluviôse* of the year II :

"I arrived here yesterday at seven in the evening. I was awaited with impatience. All the constituted authorities were eager to come to me and to testify to their submission to the decrees of the National Convention, and to the confidence they felt in the indefatigable zeal the Convention has hitherto shown for the public welfare. The people seemed to me to be of the same mind. On their hearing of my arrival cries of '*Vive la Convention!*' '*Vive la Montagne!*' resounded through all the streets, and public benedictions accompanied me to the inn where I alighted."

In the same way Vernerey, on the 6th of *Floréal*, felicitates himself on the enthusiastic and touching welcome offered him in Allier, and Garnier (of Saintes) writes from Rochefort, on the 23rd of *Prairial*, that he was "received in this city like a saviour."

So the missionary representatives did not figure in the people's eyes so fearsomely as has been said. We must also avoid regarding them as the trembling slaves of the Committee of Public Safety; and, on the other hand, if they were really at one period perambulating prefects, the Committee did not obtain from them the passive, fearful, and rigid obedience that Napoleon finally obtained from his prefects. Colleagues and equals of the members of the Committee, they resigned themselves ill (or at least, some of them did) to the *rôle* of subordinate agents. It often happened that they suspended, for local reasons, the execution of the orders of the Committee. The decrees of the 5th and 14th of *Frimaire* forbade this disobedience. Thereafter they showed themselves more docile; yet some of them continued to disobey, in an important affair, and one of general interest. The Committee of Public Safety was formally opposed to "dechristianisation"; but they forwarded it none the less, engulfed in the popular movement against the priests.

They raised revolutionary taxes from the rich. On the 16th and 18th of *Frimaire* the Convention annulled all these taxes and forbade them in the future. But more than one representative still raised them all the same.

Many abused the right of requisition and apprehension. A decree was necessary (*Pluviôse* the 24th) to forbid the exercise of this right without the previous consent of the Committee of Public Safety.

There were some of so independent a humour that although imperatively recalled they did not return. The Convention was forced to decree, on the 10th of *Prairial*,

that it would consider as dismissed all representatives who did not instantly obey the order of recall.

However, the representatives keenly desired, in executing the orders of the central power, to ensure that unity of administration so indispensable under the circumstances of national defence. If they did not obey more exactly, more quickly, more rigidly, it was because they were still steeped in habits of the *ancien régime*; habits of deliberation and diversity of action. The distance, the lack of rapid means of communication—the aerial telegraph was not in action except from *Thermidor* of the year II, and at the outset only for exceptional communications with the army of the North—the bad state of the channels of communication: all this meant that a representative on mission had often to wait a fortnight before receiving a reply from the Committee of Public Safety on some delicate and urgent local question, demanding a derogation from the general rule. He then took it on himself, from a sense of patriotism, to deal with the question himself; to act without orders, or contrary to orders. When it was possible to await the reply of the Committee, this reply was slow in coming or did not arrive at all. How many letters there are from representatives demanding, imploring a prompt reply, on the margins of which I have read these words: “Dismissed without decision!” The Committee left the representative to solve the problems as best he could, and held itself free to blame him if he came to grief. In the same way, under the *ancien régime*, a minister would refrain from replying to an intendant, in order to force him to take a difficult decision alone, without sharing in the responsibility. The representatives with the armies were happier; Carnot replied to them quickly, lucidly solving difficulties, and pointing out exactly what there was to be done. There were representatives in the departments to whom the Committee

sent no letters. These threatened to return to Paris, if the Committee persisted in its silence ; the Committee maintained its silence.

Its *bureaux*, its papers, were badly arranged. It had not even a precise list of the representatives on mission, and we know better where such and such a representative was to be found at a certain date than did Billaud-Varenne and Collot d'Herbois, who had charge of the correspondence. It also came to pass that the Committee would recall a representative, would send him orders as if he were still maintained in his mission, and would then be surprised that he still remained at his post.<sup>1</sup>

The general condition of things was such that there were sometimes false representatives on mission ; they ventured into several departments in which they were guilty of peculation and caused much annoyance. Thus in *Ventôse* of the year II, a certain Étienne Thiry, native of Sedan and twenty-four years of age, acted as representative, with powers forged in the name of Couthon and Barère, in the province of Haut-Rhin. Arrested by the representative Duroy, he was given up to the Revolutionary Tribunal and guillotined.

It must not be concluded, from what we have seen of the doings of the representatives in the departments, that all was disorder and inchoate confusion. There was disorder certainly, by comparison with the present state of things ; and confusion, in comparison with the administrative unity of the present day. But compared with the chaotic and fantastic anarchy of the *ancien régime*, and the legal anarchy of the constitutional monarchy, there was at this time, between 1793 and 1794, a serious improvement in the direction of governmental and administrative unity, and of centrali-

<sup>1</sup> We must note here that the Committee of Public Safety sometimes sent agents to second the representatives, and also to keep a watch upon them ; as, for example, Jullien the younger.

sation. Never before had there been such an impression of a concerted and general progress. This Government, in spite of the irregularities I have mentioned, obtained a far fuller, swifter, and more uniform obedience than royalty had ever done, even in its most powerful days. It was not that its agents were better or more rationally chosen ; it was that France was now a nation, and desired unity ; it was because since the end of the year 1793 there had been a strong tide of republicanism in France, and this republicanism was of the Montagnard type, that is to say, unitarian ; which had triumphed over the Girondist movement, which was anti-Parisian and Federalist. Centralisation was implanted in men's minds before it reached the *bureaux* and the administration. At the same time it was only beginning ; it was preparing for its triumphs, and its excesses.

The commissioned representatives were the first instruments of this increasing centralisation, and, as we have seen, the first prefects. But the decree of the 14th of *Frimaire* had prepared for the establishment of other agents of the central power ; the national agents in the districts and communes. When these agents had been installed by the commissaries themselves, in *Floréal* of the year II, the latter were nearly all recalled, and the national agents succeeded them in the execution of the orders of the central power.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Committee of Public Safety had keenly felt the advantage of substituting permanent agents with limited powers for the omnipotent representatives on mission. It stated, in the Convention, through the medium of Carnot (12th of *Germinal*, year II) : "The great evil is that more often than not the arrival of a representative of the people, instead of stimulating the public officials, seems to paralyse them at a blow ; each one thinks himself excused from all action in the presence of an authority who can decide on all matters ; consequently all is referred to the newcomer. He is overwhelmed with insidious questions and little difficulties ; malevolence surrounds him, cupidity

## VI.

The Revolutionary Government was not executed only by the representatives "on mission," but also by the groups of elective or popular origin ; at first by those which had been established or organised by the Constituent Assembly ; departmental, district, and municipal administrations ; and later by other groups, more or less spontaneous in their formation, which were gradually introduced into the governmental machine, in which they finally formed the two flywheels : namely, the popular societies (people's clubs) and the Revolutionary Committees.

The departmental assemblies, as we have seen, had rather hindered than assisted the Revolutionary Government. When their Federalist sedition had been overcome, they were practically annihilated by the limitation of their functions to matters of secondary importance (by the decree of *Frimaire* the 14th). The districts, which had hitherto played a negligible part, now became the medium of government. The whole political and administrative life of the provinces was concentrated in what were the only truly living administrative groups : in the communes, which had effected the Revolution, maintained it, and developed it. It was by the communes that the Revolutionary Government lived and had its being ; by them the idea of a democratic republic was popularised. Their organisation we know ; better than their actual *rôle*. For the moment I will confine

besieges him, hypocrisy circumvents him, calumny denounces him to this Assembly, and many of your members, who have merited your confidence, and have done nothing to lose it, return astonished to find themselves on their arrival surrounded by disadvantageous conditions, and obliged to justify themselves for matters which, analysed as to their motives, are often only the actions of a just resolution and a great devotion " (*Moniteur*, ix. 115, 116).



myself to emphasising the importance of this *rôle*, repeating that the communes were the chief supports of the Revolutionary Government, as they had been the makers of the new France ; of the nation, in short. Now the people's clubs and the Revolutionary Committees were two of the organs of municipal life. Let us consider what place they held in the state of things we are studying.

The popular or Jacobin societies were the old Friends of the Constitution—formerly *bourgeois*, now democratic, Montagnard, and *sans-culottes* ; ardent supporters of equality and unity. Very few of these societies had been Girondist. The Government so contrived that the Federalist element was completely eradicated. A circular of the Committee of Public Safety (*Pluviôse* the 16th of the year II) instructed them to purgate themselves, and the decree of the 27th of *Germinal* excluded ex-nobles and foreigners. They became the shrine, pure and ardent, of democracy.

Founded with a view to popular instruction, for discussion rather than for action, circumstances led them into political action, and to take a hand in administration. As early as September, 1793, the Jacobins of Arles appointed themselves the municipality of the city. The representatives "on mission," as we have seen, worked with other people's clubs at the task of purgation. The decree of the 14th of *Frimaire* made the Jacobins the electors and purgators of officials throughout all France. In the circular of the 16th of *Pluviôse*, in which the Committee instructed the societies to undertake the work of purging officialdom, it also informed them that the Convention called them "to a community of cares, a partaking of efforts, in order that the edifice of the Revolutionary Government might be based on unshakable foundations." It requested them to appoint worthy officials, and added : "You

are the nursery in which the Republic will seek them."

The strength of the people's clubs was so great that even while it leaned on them for support the Government feared them. It tried to subordinate the Jacobins to itself, first by influencing the mother-society through Robespierre, who diverted it from its Hébertist enterprises, and who, later on, absorbed its activities in dissertations from the tribune against the English Government. The Committee granted pecuniary subventions, not only to the Jacobins in Paris, but to various provincial societies. At almost the very moment of granting them, or rather of recognising their power to sift officialdom, it attempted, by means of a circular, to divert their zeal to the task of extracting saltpetre. But the central power manœuvred in vain ; it was impossible to keep the clubs entirely in hand. They, on the contrary, opposed the moderate religious policy of the Government, and, sweeping the representatives on mission with them, continued the dechristianisation of the provinces against the orders of the central power.

They were, in fact, by no means the flywheels of the Revolutionary Government, but rather the governor. They did not oppose the great national and democratic movement by the whims of local opinion ; on the contrary, they unified the movement, and established in the general mind the passion for centralisation of which I have lately spoken. After all, all things being considered, it was the Jacobin clubs that maintained the unity of the country and saved it.

Another component of communal life, the Revolutionary Committees, tended to the same end by other means ; but this was a component of factitious origin. While the Jacobin clubs had issued spontaneously from the situation of France and the character of the French, the Committees were the result of a law of the Con-

vention. On March 21, 1793, it was decreed that in each commune or section of a commune there should be elected a Committee of twelve members (neither ex-nobles nor ecclesiastics), instructed to receive the declarations of foreigners in general, and especially to assure itself of the civic reliability of foreigners born in the countries with which the Republic was at war. These were called Committees of Surveillance. Those of Paris styled themselves Revolutionary Committees. From April to September, 1793, this institution transformed itself. Certain Committees, above all in Paris, assumed general powers of police supervision, not over foreigners only, but all citizens. There were also, spontaneously formed in the cities and in the departments, so-called Committees of Public Safety, of which some worked side by side with the Committees of Surveillance, while others replaced them or assimilated them. Various decrees and enactments suppressed, maintained, or re-established these Committees. Those which survived received, by the decree of September 5, 1793, a daily indemnity for each of their members. Finally the law of September 17th, ratifying the existence of all the Committees then existing, enacted that "the Committees of Surveillance established after the decree of the preceding March 21st, or those which have been substituted for them, either by the orders of the representatives of the people sent on missions to the armies or into the departments, or by virtue of particular decrees of the National Convention, are instructed to prepare, each in its arrondissement, a list of suspected persons, and to issue writs against them and to cause their papers to be sealed." These Committees could requisition the armed forces, and in general were thenceforth known as Revolutionary Committees.

To understand what enormous powers were conferred on them, and how few citizens could flatter themselves that they were free from their supervision, it is

necessary to read Article 2 of the law of September 17th :

“The following are reputed suspected persons : (1) those who, by their conduct, their relations with others, their conversation or writings, have shown themselves partisans of tyranny or federalism, and enemies of liberty ; (2) those who cannot justify, in the manner prescribed by the decree of March 21st, their means of existence and the performance of their civic duties ; (3) those who have been refused certificates of citizenship ; (4) public functionaries dismissed or suspended from the exercise of their duties by the National Convention or its commissaries, and not reinstated, especially those who have been or who should be dismissed in virtue of the decree of August 14th ; (5) those of the ex-nobles, husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, sons or daughters, brothers or sisters, and emigration agents, who have not constantly manifested their attachment to the Revolution ; (6) those who have emigrated in the interval between July 1, 1789, and the publication of the decree of March 30–April 8, 1792, whether they have returned to France by the date fixed by the decree or earlier.”

The Committees of Surveillance abused these powers and imprisoned citizens without motives. The Convention decreed, on October 18, 1793, that the Committees should be obliged to indicate their motives in writing, and that the Committee of General Security would adjudicate in the last resort. But the Committees of Paris protested, and the Convention revoked its decree, at the request of Robespierre, on the 3rd of *Brumaire* (year II). Robespierre's object was to weaken the authority of the Commune of Paris by provisionally allowing the Revolutionary Committees all their power ; as in Paris they were in direct correspondence with the central power. The decree of the 14th of *Frimaire* entrusted the application of the revolutionary laws “to the Committees of Surveillance, or Revolutionary Committees,” concurrently with the municipalities. But in order to avoid any local or personal tyranny, it was decided that the presidents and secretaries should be

renewed every fortnight. Moreover, the abuses committed against individual liberty having become altogether too scandalous, the Convention, once more changing its mind, definitely imposed on the Committees (*Frimaire* the 17th) the obligation of justifying their writs of arrest. They also had to give an account every ten days to the district and to the Committee of General Security.

In practice, from the 14th of *Frimaire* onwards they were no longer as a general thing elected by the people; the representatives of the people, or sometimes even the Committee of Public Safety, appointed the members.<sup>1</sup>

The surveillance of the Revolutionary Committees enveloped all France, as it were, in a fine-meshed net, in which anti-revolutionists and conspirators of all kinds were taken and rendered powerless. Refractory priests, foreign agents, emigration agents, Girondists and Federalists, were singularly embarrassed in their enterprises against the Republic or against the Mountain by these vigilant bodies, who intercepted all communications, day and night, verified passports and cards of citizenship, and, at the least suspicion, threw the inhabitants or the passers-by into prison. That the Vendéean insurrection and the foreign invasion were kept apart, that the sedition of the royalists was unable to spread sufficiently to assist the Austrian, English, and Spanish armies, was partly due to the Revolutionary Committees. But the result was not attained without injustice and tyranny, and, in the net thrown across France, more than the enemies of the country were caught.

It must not be supposed that the Revolutionary Committees were composed solely of good Republicans. The law stated that each Committee must consist of twelve members, and that at all deliberations at least

<sup>1</sup> Thus on *Floréal* 29th the Committee of Public Safety itself appointed the new Revolutionary Committee of Bordeaux.

seven must be present. In the small rural communes, in which the formation of the municipality had already absorbed almost all the capable inhabitants, how should twelve, or even seven more be found who were sincere and enlightened republicans? <sup>1</sup> This unrealisable condition of twelve or seven members enabled many enemies of the Revolution to sit on these Committees, usually disguised as demagogues; there to persecute as moderates the truer patriots, and to maintain themselves in safety, in an inaccessible retreat, in which they had the further advantage of being able to injure the Republic by their excesses.

Even those who entered the Committees with the most upright intentions found themselves exposed to the madness of omnipotence. The Committee of Public Safety had told them, in an explanatory circular of the 14th of *Frimaire*:

“Action, which issues from the heart of the Convention, culminates in you; you are like the hands of the body politic of which the Convention is the head, and of which we are the eyes; it is through you that the national will strikes as soon as its decision is taken. You are the levers it moves to overcome resistance. You are like those terrible instruments of warfare which, placed in advance by the general, await only the electric communication of fire to scatter terror and death.”

They took these metaphors seriously,<sup>2</sup> forgot the wise

<sup>1</sup> The commissary Bentabole wrote from Nogent-le-Rotrou to the Committee of Public Safety, on the 24th of *Pluviôse* of the year II: “There are a number of communes in which it is almost impossible to find material for the municipal officers and the notables; how could a Committee of Surveillance of twelve persons be formed there?” Ingrand writes from Poitiers, on the 10th of *Floréal*: “The small population of these country communes, the relationship existing between many of their inhabitants, and the almost total absence of educated men capable of exercising public functions, puts the greatest difficulty in the way of forming Committees of Surveillance.”

<sup>2</sup> The Committee of Public Safety was not given to metaphors except when the emphatic Billaud-Varenne held the pen; he was probably the writer of these circulars.

counsels of the Committee of Public Safety, and often abused their powers.<sup>1</sup>

Here are a few facts which support these assertions, drawn from the correspondence with the deputies on mission.

From Guéret, Vernerey wrote to the Committee of Public Safety, on the 11th of *Ventôse*:

“What has given me pain . . . has been to see that among the multitude of arrests made in conformity with the law of September 17th, individual passions and personal hatreds have almost everywhere come into play. In many villages (of Creuse and Allier) the curés, for example, through their influence, were placed at the head of the Committees of Surveillance, and because in 1792 a few citizens, especially women, had been unable to attend Mass, the clergy had much pleasure of revenging themselves by throwing them into prison.”

This is one example out of many others<sup>2</sup> of the anti-revolutionary influences which found their way into the Committees. Other Committees abused their authority by extending it to matters altogether outside its province.

Thus on the 30th of *Nivôse* Maure denounced the Committee of Coulommiers, which, by a circular dated the 9th of *Frimaire* and sent to the other Committees of the Rozoy district, invited them to proceed to violent methods of dechristianisation, to close the churches,

<sup>1</sup> “Uphold with dignity the trust of national vengeance ; but never shake the smouldering brands of personal hatreds. Be large enough for the eye of your enemy to fail to discover in your conduct a single blemish.”

<sup>2</sup> Thus Frémanger, representative in Manche and Calvaches, writes on *Germinal* 24th : “One of the surest means (counter-revolutionary) was to influence Committees, which, as many in number as the communes, left a very great latitude to the passions, to intrigue, to arbitrary conduct, and which in very many cantons have unhappily served only too well the personal hatred and malevolent desires of the enemies of the public weal ”

to force the vicars and curés to surrender their letters of priesthood, and to send the recalcitrant before the Revolutionary Tribunal.

Sometimes the violence of the Committees went as far as murder. Rovère wrote from Beaucaire on the 12th of *Frimaire*:

“At Alais three members of the Committee, incessantly exaggerating their patriotism, have just inhumanly assassinated a patriot whom they had taxed to the extent of 500 livres; they treacherously murdered him after supping at his house; in the house of one of the assassins, who used to denounce everyone, there was found 30,000 livres in coin, 24,000 in assignats for oil and corn: all gained at the expense of timid folk who did not dare to be compromised by his denunciations. At Saint-Esprit the same extortions had been practised. The criminal tribunal will soon bring these monsters to justice, who are profaning and desecrating the sacred name of their native land.”

Some their omnipotence led to dishonesty. I am not speaking here of some of the members of the Revolutionary Committees of Paris who were condemned for embezzlement; they were condemned to death by their political enemies, under the Thermidorian reaction, and to be sure that they were really guilty we should require the documentary particulars of their trials. But we see by a letter of Paganel's (*Nivôse* the 23rd) that the Committee of Moissac made exactions that absolutely amounted to brigandage.

Assassinations and thefts were exceptional crimes and severely punished. But ignorance and injustice were anything but exceptional; especially in the country. Commissary Bo writes from Cahors on the 24th of *Ventôse*:

“The rural Committees of Surveillance do more to hamper the progress of the revolutionary laws than to assist in their execution. Consequently I have not insisted on establishing them in communes which did not possess the material for them. Very often this machinery, so imperfect and so complicated, only furnishes occasions for the exercise of personal vengeance.”



Many representatives demanded that there should be only one Committee in each canton.<sup>1</sup> The majority of the commissaries had no love for them, and they purged them in vain ; in vain they looked to find in them docile and intelligent auxiliaries.

But from these few traits we must not form a picture in the style of Taine, and, by an abusive generalisation, conclude that all the Revolutionary Committees acted unjustly or ignorantly. On the whole, they were of enormous service to the national defence, preventing the conjunction of the enemies within with the enemies without. They were the most active, and perhaps the most violent agents of the Terror. But if they contributed to the national defence, they also injured the republican ideal by the impressions they left on the memories of contemporaries. They made the Revolution unpopular with posterity, and if perhaps they saved it at the time, they compromised its future.

## VII.

These various institutions, which formed the Revolutionary Government, were finally, since the war dragged on, united in one body, and adapted better to the peculiar circumstances. With this object the famous decree on the 14th of *Frimaire* of year II was passed (December 4, 1793), by which the various laws of which we have spoken were co-ordinated, amended, and erected into a kind of Constitution for the time of war.

This amendment lay principally in this innovation : by this decree the central power at last obtained the suppression of the chief anarchical fault of the Constitution of 1791. The procurator-general-syndics of

<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, in Lozère there was only one to each canton, and they were composed of functionaries. But in other departments it seems that there were Committees in almost every commune.

the departments were abolished ; and in the districts and communes the procurator-syndic and elective procurator were replaced by a national agent representing the central power, who was nominated by the Convention. These agents inherited the functions which the representatives on mission were already actually exercising, but they did not really obtain this inheritance, as far as one portion of France was concerned, until the month of *Floréal* in the year II ; that is to say, when the majority of the representatives had been recalled from the departments.

The administrative and political life of the country was transferred by the new law to the commune, where as a matter of fact it was already to be found. The departmental assemblies saw their functions reduced almost entirely to matters of taxation and the maintenance of highways. The district served as intermediary between the central power and the commune.

We see that the Revolutionary Government was tending more and more towards centralisation.

The decree of the 14th of *Frimaire* declared that “ the only centre of impulsion of the Government is the National Convention.” As for the agents to whom the Convention, reserving the function of “ impulsion,” confided the supervision of constituted bodies and public functionaries entrusted with the execution of the laws and all governmental measures, these were the two existing Committees, of which one had been in existence for eight and one for thirteen months and a half, which were invested by the Convention with the revolutionary authority. The Committee of Public Safety was entrusted with the duty of supervision in the interests “ of the measures of government and of the public safety, conformably with the decree of the 19th of *Vendémiaire* (October 10th) ” ; the Commune of General Security was entrusted with a like duty “ in the interests of all that relates to persons and to the general security

and that of the interior, conformably with the decree of September 17, 1793." The national district agents had to correspond simultaneously with both Committees, and report to them every ten days ; a Revolutionary Committee had to correspond on the one hand with the Committee of General Security and on the other with the district in whose jurisdiction it was situated. This dualism might have inconveniences, but the authors of the decree of the 14th of *Frimaire* were obliged to cope with a state of things already in existence, and to do the best they could with it. In all important matters that necessitated the co-operation of the two Committees, the latter, as we have seen already, deliberated together ; and although there was a time, in the month of *Floréal*, when the Committee of Public Safety encroached on the functions of the Committee of General Security by the creation of a bureau of police, the matter was put right after protest, and the bureau was suppressed in *Messidor*.

The decree of the 14th *Frimaire* had as its essential and avowed object the assurance of national unity ; and although it failed to establish it at the very source of government itself, we have seen that it did at least effect a real subordination of the local authorities to the central power. It comprised other centralising measures, one of which was extremely important ; that which related to the publication and execution of the laws.

Under the old condition of things the laws were not the same for the whole of France, or when they were considered applicable to the whole kingdom, they were not everywhere applied ; and where they were executed it was done slowly, with differences of interpretation, irregularities, disobedience and contradiction of every kind. From 1790 onwards the whole nation was under the same laws. But the former habits had not all disappeared. The central power did not hasten to execute

the laws ; even the most urgent. Thus, the law of August 15, 1793, ordering requisitions from the departments for the provisioning of Paris (and the very existence of the Revolutionary Government depended upon the rapidity with which Paris could be provisioned)—this important law had not reached Beauvais as late as August 19th. Arrived at their destination, the laws were not always published. Dumont and Le Bon, writing on August 19th, state that the law of July 26th, inflicting the death penalty on monopolists, remained “buried in the registry of the municipality” of Amiens.

There was no single official organ for the publication of the laws ; they were published separately, each in a quarto pamphlet, or in the collection of Baudoin, or that of the Louvre, or in the Bulletin of the Convention. None of these collections gave all the laws. The *procès-verbal* of the Convention gave nearly all ; but it was not printed until long afterwards, and had very little circulation. As for the *Feuilleton*, it was intended only for deputies.

The decree of the 14th of Frimaire enjoined the creation of a *Bulletin of Laws*, which should be sent day by day, by post, to all constituted authorities and all public functionaries. The law would be in force twenty-four hours after the arrival of the *Bulletin*, and severe penalties were imposed upon the authorities if they failed to publish it and put it into execution immediately. Confiscation of goods, deprivation of civic rights, five years in irons : these were the penalties by which the Convention sought to ensure the prompt and uniform execution of the laws.

Did these terrible threats immediately remedy the inherent and slothful habits inherited from the days of the monarchy? No ; even the decree of *Frimaire* the 14th, urgent as it was, was not promulgated by the Executive Council until four days later, and as for the *Bulletin des*

*Lois*, the first number did not appear until seven months later<sup>1</sup>—the 22nd of *Prairial*, year II. The representatives on mission continually complained of the delay in despatch, publication, and execution of the laws, while they themselves do not seem to have put themselves out in order to amend the application of the decree of the 14th of *Frimaire*.

After the passing of this decree, however, when once this charter of the Revolutionary Government was known to all France—and it would seem, from the correspondence of the representatives, that by the end of *Nivôse* in the year II it was known almost everywhere—there was a greater rapidity and uniformity in the application of the laws, and, as we have seen, a serious progress in favour of centralisation.

The decree of the 14th of *Frimaire* did not immovably settle the elements and the form of the Revolutionary Government. Circumstances brought about a still more powerful centralisation. We have seen that in the month of *Ventôse* the Committee of Public Safety was granted the right to replace, provisionally, such elected officials as it dismissed; and that in *Germinal* the Executive Council was suppressed by a decree replacing it by Executive Commissions under the authority of the Committee. It was therefore after the month of *Floréal* that the Revolutionary Government found itself most powerful; it was then that the utmost degree of centralisation compatible with the customs of the country was established.

### VIII.

The Revolutionary Government as a whole is often called the *Government of the Terror*. The phrase, *the*

<sup>1</sup> This delay was partly due to difficulties in ensuring a sufficient supply of paper.

*Terror*, is also applied to the period when this Government existed in its fullest force ; or some, to go farther back, make the period of the Terror commence on August 10, 1792. By the Terror we also understand a system of politics which seems to be discernible in the democratic republic.

But we have seen that there was nothing systematic in the creation of the Revolutionary Government. Nearly all the facts hitherto related go to prove that this Government was not the application of any system or any preconceived idea, but that it formed itself empirically, from day to day, out of the elements imposed on it by the successive necessities of the national defences of a people at war with Europe ; a people in arms for the defence of its existence, in a country which resembled a vast military camp. The Revolutionary Government was an expedient of warfare, and it was always given out that it must come to an end with the war.<sup>1</sup>

But if there was no Terrorist *system*, there was certainly a Terrorist *rule*. At what date did it commence? The Revolution struck terror into its enemies from the very beginning ; from the time of the taking of the Bastille, which provoked the first emigration. Yet it strove to govern by law and liberty until August 10, 1792. Then, the resisting forces of the past having formed an alliance, having brought about a civil war and a war of invasion, so that the nation found itself attacked in the van and in the rear, and felt the peril

<sup>1</sup> Marie-Joseph Chénier, on the 27th of *Ventôse* in the year IV, stated at the tribune of the Council of Five Hundred, in order to prove that the Terror was not a system : "A monarchy fourteen centuries old, suddenly transformed into a republic : a war against half Europe ; a vast civil war in the interior of the country : it must be allowed that these trifling circumstances might well justify certain temporary measures which would be abandoned in the tranquillity of a happier time" (*Moniteur*, xxviii. 22).

of destruction ; then the Revolution put away and suspended the principles of '89, and turned against its enemies the violent weapons of the days of old, the weapons with which it found itself attacked. The Terror consisted in the suspension of the principles of '89 ; and the suspension became complete when the peril was at its height ; above all when Paris most keenly felt the nearness of the peril, and suffered from it most ; that is, in August and September, 1793.

For at this time, although the Convention was beginning to get the upper hand against the rebels of La Vendée, and to a great extent had triumphed over the Federalist insurrection, France was invaded in the North, in Alsace, and in the Pyrenees. The city of Lyons had revolted. Toulon delivered herself to the English on August 28th. Paris was as wildly excited as she had been a year before, on the eve of the massacres of September ; and with this patriotic excitement was mingled the fear of famine.

It was at this time that the word *Terror* was usually employed to denote a method of government. A deputation, composed of the commissaries of the forty-eight sections and of members of the Jacobin Club, went to the Convention on September 5th, and said : "Legislators, place the Terror on the orders of the day." During the same session Barère, speaking in the name of the Committee of Public Safety, appropriated this formula, saying :

"Everything seemed to announce a rising in Paris. Intercepted letters announced the efforts made by foreign agents and the

---

\* As early as August 12, 1793, when the envoys of the primary assemblies repaired to the Convention to demand the arrest of all suspected persons, Danton cried : "The deputies of the primary assemblies come to initiate in our midst the weapon of the Terror against our internal enemies. Let us respond to their wishes. No, no truce for any traitor !" (*Moniteur*, xvii. 387.)

aristocracy to produce an incessant disturbance in what they call the great city. Ah well, they shall have it, this disturbance, but they shall have it organised, regularised, by a revolutionary army which will finally accomplish this grand phrase, which we owe to the Commune of Paris: *Place the Terror on the orders of the day!*

The Convention applauded; and in the policy of the Government, and in political speeches especially, the Terror was truly "on the orders of the day" for many days to come.

The origin of the Terror properly so-called, of the *official* Terror, is this: In August and September, 1793, the Parisians went in fear of the famine; they attributed the famine to enemies within and without, and demanded that these enemies should be checked by means of the Terror. The Government assumed a Terrorist label; not by preference, not systematically, but to reassure the Parisians, and to maintain itself in Paris without danger of a rising. In practice it tried to make a humane and moderate policy prevail; but often by violent words. It granted the Commune the creation of a revolutionary army instructed to ensure the provisioning of Paris by force. In reality it provisioned Paris by expedients which had nothing violent about them, and as soon as the situation had improved a decree suppressed the revolutionary army (*Germinal* the 7th, year II), which, by spreading a useless terror, had hampered the provisioning of the city rather than aided it.

Five days earlier (the 2nd of *Germinal*), in order clearly to show that it repudiated the Terror even as a provisional system, the Convention decreed (on the occasion of the Hébertist "conspiracy") that it placed "justice and probity on the order of the day." It wished France to feel, and Europe to see, that if it employed means so contrary to the principles of the Revolution it was because circumstances forced it to do so.



These means, which we may truly call Terrorist, I have indicated in part while relating the formation of the chief components of the Revolutionary Government. The following are the principal laws which suspended the exercise of the public liberties ; notably the liberty of the press and individual liberties.

The liberty of the press, during the whole Revolution, was, as it were, a political dogma imposed on the French by the example of the United States. The Declaration of Rights of 1789 proclaimed this liberty, and it was complete in France during the whole period of the constitutional monarchy. Under the democratic Republic the principle was still proclaimed ; there was no legislation dealing with the press and hardly any individual laws dealing with journals. The press was subjected to common law, aggravated only by particular measures against individuals, journals, or journalists. Among these particular measures we may note the revolutionary suppression of royalist journals by the Commune of Paris after August 10th, and the destruction of the presses of Gorsas and Brissot in March and May, 1793. These were the principal measures of common law which little by little destroyed the liberty of the press :

On December 4th, on the motion of Buzot, the Convention decreed the death penalty against " whoever should propose or attempt to establish in France royalty or any other power injurious to the sovereignty of the people." On the 16th the same penalty was decreed against " whosoever should propose or attempt to break the unity of the French Republic or to detach from it any integral portion in order to unite it to a foreign territory." On March 18, 1793, death was decreed against " whosoever should propose an agrarian law or any other law subversive of territorial, commercial, or industrial property." On March 29th death or six years in fetters (accordingly as the culprit had or had

not received provocation) was decreed against "whoever should provoke by their writings either murder or the violation of property." On the same day death was also decreed against "whosoever should be convicted of having composed or printed works or writings which might provoke the dissolution of the national representation, the re-establishment of royalty, or of any other power injurious to the sovereignty of the people," and severe penalties were decreed against the senders, distributors, or carriers of such writings.<sup>1</sup>

It follows that during the period anterior to May 31, 1793, there was absolutely no liberty for royalist or socialist writers. But the press was not entirely enslaved: the Girondins and the Montagnards were free to quarrel.

From the end of May to the 9th of *Thermidor* the Girondist journalists were reduced to silence by the fact that whoever preached the Girondist policy was delivered to the Revolutionary Court as a conspirator, and the law of September 17, 1793, dealing with suspected persons, was passed especially with an eye to "writings." Only men of Montagnard politics were free to express themselves. When a rupture occurred in the Montagnard party, at the end of 1793, there was a Robespierre press, a Danton press, a Hébert press, and all quarrelled freely. But after the execution of Hébert and Danton (*Germinal* of the year II) there were no more Hébertist or Dantonist journals. The press, then truly enslaved, was entirely governmental. The Committee of Public Safety subsidised and inspired the principal journals.<sup>2</sup>

This is the only one of these laws which seems to point especially to the periodical press.

<sup>2</sup> From September, 1793, to *Thermidor*, year II, the Committee of Public Safety had an official journal, *La Feuille du salut public*, which, from the 14th of *Germinal*, took the title of *Journal de la République* (see my *Études et leçons*, 1st series, pp. 229-234).

No direct opposition was possible, and from *Germinal* to *Thermidor* it was only by the choice of news and the manner of presenting it that a few journalists were able to make some attempt at indicating a policy other than that of the Government. One of these few journals which tried indirectly to oppose the personal policy of Robespierre was, curiously enough, a journal founded by the Committee of Public Safety, for the use of the armies : *La Soirée du Camp*. Carnot edited it ; and had the ingenuity to present matters therein in a manner calculated to create very gradually among the soldiers an anti-Robespierrist frame of mind.

Not only the liberty of writing was limited and then abolished by the Terrorist laws. Liberty of speech can scarcely be said to have existed after the execution of Danton (*Germinal*, year II). In the clubs and other meeting-places those who spoke could support only the policy of the Government, under penalty of being treated as suspected persons. Even in the Convention there was no longer liberty of speech, nor even liberty of vote. This Assembly, which made Europe tremble, now trembled itself before Robespierre and the two Committees. The decrees presented by the Committee of Public Safety were almost all accepted in *Floréal*, *Messidor*, and *Thermidor*, unanimously and without discussion. As for liberty of thought, we shall see, in treating of the current religious policy, what oppression it endured under the Terror.

Among the various attacks upon individual liberty was one which arose from the aggravation of the laws against *émigrés*, necessitated by the armed co-operation of the majority with the enemy.

What precisely was an *émigré*?

An *émigré* was a Frenchman or Frenchwoman of more than fourteen years of age who, having quitted France since July 1, 1789, had not returned during the term defined by the decree of March 30, 1792, and

sanctioned the following April 8th ; which term expired on May 9, 1792 ; or a Frenchman who since then had absented himself from France without legal authorisation (which authorisation was scarcely ever granted except to manufacturers, tradesmen, and merchants).

The law of March 28, 1793, declared the *émigrés* banished in perpetuity from French territory, and punished them with death in case of infraction. Those who were taken with arms in their hands or convicted of having served against France were to be put to death within twenty-four hours, on the declaration of a military commission. Other returned *émigrés* would be brought before the criminal tribunal of the department in which they were last domiciled when in France, and, on the testimony of two witnesses to their identity, condemned to death, "or to deportation in the case of a woman between twenty-one and fourteen years of age."

*Émigrés* were declared *civilly dead*. Their goods were absorbed by the State ; but the results of this civil death could not be unfavourable to the State, which acquired the inheritance falling to *émigrés* in the direct or collateral line during fifty years "and during the said time co-heritors could not plead the natural death of the said *émigrés*." The law of the 17th of *Frimaire* ordered even the sequestration of the goods of the parents of *émigrés*.

This legislation deserved the appellation of "Terrorist," especially as it was applied to persons who had not actually emigrated. It fell to the lot of the municipalities to draw up lists of the *émigrés* ; and they contented themselves, as a general thing, with the testimony and denunciation of two persons ; but it often came to pass, through ignorance or a thirst for vengeance, that men were denounced as *émigrés* who had quitted France in conformity with the laws ; or those who were merely absent from their commune, or those even who had not left it. The departments had to

collect and distribute the lists. Persons therein inscribed had one month to demand the erasure of their names. Many did not know that their names were so inscribed. Those who learned that their names were inscribed had to furnish themselves with a certificate of residence signed by eight or nine citizens as the case might be. It was very difficult to obtain these signatures, because the law punished the accomplices of *émigrés* with the same penalties as those inflicted on the *émigrés* themselves. Thus the application of the laws against the *émigrés* alarmed and persecuted a host of people who were not *émigrés*, and, contrary to the intention of the legislators, aggravated the Terror.

Individual liberty suffered other infringements, no less grave. Provisional courts (*tribunaux d'exception*) were re-established; contrary to the principles of the Declaration of Rights, but always with a view to safeguarding the national independence, and not from political fanaticism. The bad news received from the army in Belgium provoked tumultuous disturbances in Paris on March 9 and 10, 1793. Many sections demanded the establishment of a Revolutionary Court, and on the 10th, on a motion of Danton's, the Convention decreed:

“That there should be established in Paris a criminal tribunal extraordinary; which would deal with all counter-revolutionary undertakings, and all attempts upon the liberty, equality, unity, and indivisibility of the Republic, the internal and external safety of the State, and all conspiracies tending to re-establish royalty, or to establish any other authority injurious to liberty, equality, and the sovereignty of the people.”

This tribunal was formed of a jury, a public accuser, and two assistants, all nominated by the Convention. Its judgments were executed without appeal and without recourse to a Court of Cassation. It was officially

appointed the *Revolutionary Tribunal*, in the decree of October 29, 1793.

The Revolutionary Tribunal fulfilled its office ; it terrorised the royalists, the refractory priests who conspired with the Vendéans and the invaders, and all agents of the counter-revolution ; and in this way it ensured the success of the national defence. But, little by little, it became the instrument of personal ambition and personal revenge. Robespierre made use of it to condemn his personal adversaries, whether Hébertist or Dantonist, as agents of the foreign faction or as royalists. The institution of the Revolutionary Tribunal, once in this manner abused, injured the cause of the Revolution after having done it the most signal service ; having chastised the country's veritable enemies, it sent its best friends and servants to destruction. Historically we may say that it worked both good and evil ; and we must judge it, not as a whole, but by periods and according to its actions.

When the dictatorship of the Committee of Public Safety evolved into the dictatorship of Robespierre, the Revolutionary Tribunal was modified, in the direction of a greater severity, by the famous law of the 22nd of *Prairial*, which was drafted by Robespierre and presented by Couthon. The accused were deprived of their counsel ; the hearing of evidence was suppressed ; material proofs gave way to moral ; and henceforth only one penalty was proclaimed : death ; and the jury was completed by the collaboration of Robespierrist fanatics.

The effects of this law may be judged from the fact that before the 22nd of *Prairial* there had been, in thirteen months, about 1,220 death sentences pronounced by the Revolutionary Tribunal ; and that after that date 1,376 persons were condemned to death in the space of seven weeks. Many of the condemned were guilty, having actually conspired with the invaders.

But innocent men perished also, and in the haste of "amalgamated" judgments—judgment by the batch—frightful mistakes occurred. In short, after that fatal date there was a butchery of innocent and guilty worthy of the rule of the kings, worthy of the Inquisition; a slaughter which the state of the national defence, by that time assured, leaves absolutely without excuse in the eyes of the historian.

For these judicial measures, which lasted from *Prairial* to *Thermidor* of the year II, how far was the Government responsible?

A law of the 23rd of *Ventôse* enacted that there should be appointed "six popular commissions, to judge promptly the enemies of the Revolution detained in the prisons." This decree was only partly carried into execution. On the 24th and 25th of *Floréal*, the Committee of Public Safety appointed two popular commissions for Paris.<sup>1</sup> It appears that only one of these functioned, that which sat at the Museum. We cannot say that it "judged"; it confined itself to dividing the prisoners into three classes: 1, those to be set at liberty (and they numbered 1 in 80); 2, those who were to be deported; 3, those to be sent before the Revolutionary Tribunal. The two Committees of Public Safety and of General Security united then passed a resolution of approval, signed the lists, and thus assumed the final responsibility. Doubtless signatures were given without examination, or obtained by surprise. As for individual responsibility: no list, save one of the 2nd of *Thermidor*, bears the signature of Robespierre; he was living half-retired, and rarely came to the sittings of the Committee of Public Safety.

There were also revolutionary tribunals in the provinces. Various criminal tribunals were provisionally

<sup>1</sup> By a resolution of the 3rd of *Prairial* the Committee authorised these Commissions to issue warrants of arrest when fresh culprits were discovered during the examination of any affair.

transformed into revolutionary tribunals by the orders of the representatives on mission. Other orders created revolutionary Commissions, stationary or perambulant. All these Commissions were suppressed by the Committee of Public Safety on the 3rd of *Floréal*. The Committee then made exceptions to this general measure, and maintained or re-established several Commissions : for example, those of Bordeaux and Noirmontier.<sup>1</sup> On the 21st of *Floréal*, on the proposition of Robespierre, it established, in application of the law of the 23rd of *Ventôse*, a popular Commission at Orange with wider functions than that of Paris. It was actually entrusted with the "judgment" of the enemies of the Revolution in the departments of Bouches-du-Rhône and Vaucluse ; it sacrificed 332 victims.<sup>2</sup>

I have already enumerated some of the Terrorist laws which these tribunals were ordered to apply. There were others which referred to certain classes of people : for example, priests and ex-nobles. Of laws directed against the priests I shall speak under the heading of Religious Policy. As for the nobles, the Convention hesitated a long time before taking direct and general measures against the abolished caste. But many noble officers were denounced, which denunciations the troops systematically defied, and on September 25, 1793, in the name of the Committee of Public Safety, Barère said at the tribune :

"All men who belonged to the class of the nobility are suspected ; they are initiated traitors. . . . The Committee thinks you ought not to recall the existence of an abolished caste by making special laws referring to one class of men ; it considers that all suspected persons in general ought to be expelled from the armies. What it has done in

---

<sup>1</sup> Sometimes the Committee allowed the representatives on mission to decide whether a Commission should be maintained ; as in the case of that of Laval.

<sup>2</sup> The order and instructions are in Robespierre's handwriting.



this respect had to be of a nature that might seem suspicious, in order to succeed ; you yourselves have authorised this by giving them all power to exclude suspected persons from the armies ; but the Committee has had to proceed with circumspection, in the case of both the squadron at sea, which is partly commanded by nobles, and the armies on land, in which the nobles are the depositaries of the plans of campaign ; it has been necessary to sound them secretly, to know which were those who were betraying us, which were inclined to betray us, and which we might temporarily rely upon : in order not to cause a sudden disorganisation.”<sup>1</sup>

It was on the 27th of *Germinal*, year II, that the Convention decided to enact special measures against the nobles. It did not exclude them from all means of employment (how could it, when so many nobles were sitting among its members?) but it assigned them certain places of residence.

“No ex-noble, no foreigner of any country with which the Republic is at war, may live in Paris, nor in fortified places, nor in the maritime cities, during the war. Any noble or foreigner in the above-mentioned case who shall be found in such place within ten days, is outlawed.”

These measures were not applied to noble members of the Convention, they were not even applied to all other nobles ; for the Committee of Public Safety received, by the same decree, the right to make exceptions, and it made many. But the arbitrary manner in which the law was applied made it still more tyrannical.

I have already spoken of the laws of the 23rd of *Ventôse* and the 22nd of *Prairial*. In order fully to understand what the Terror was, we must read the articles of these laws which define crimes and proclaim penalties.

<sup>1</sup> Such was the force of opinion against the noble officers that it was believed that there was a law excluding them from the Army. The representatives on mission Richaud and Ehrmann were even so convinced of the existence of this law that on October 7, 1793, they asked the Committee how it should be applied.

*Law of the 23rd of Ventôse, year II:*

“Those are declared traitors to their country, and will be punished as such, who shall be convicted of having in any manner whatsoever favoured in the Republic any scheme for the corruption of citizens, the overthrow of powers, or the debauchment of the public spirit, or of having caused disturbances with the design of preventing the arrival of commodities in Paris; of having given asylum to *émigrés*; and those also who shall have attempted to disturb or change the form of the Republican Government.

“The National Convention being invested by the French people with the national authority, whosoever usurps its power, whosoever disturbs its security or tarnishes its dignity, directly or indirectly, is an enemy of the people and shall be punished by death.

“Resistance to the Revolutionary and Republican Government, of which the National Convention is the centre, is an attempt against the public liberty; whosoever has been guilty of discrediting, destroying, or impeding it or shall have attempted the same by any means whatever, shall be punished by death.”

*Law of the 22nd of Prairial, year II:*

“The enemies of the people are those who seek to destroy the public liberty, whether by force or by guile.

“Those are reputed enemies of the people who shall have incited to the re-establishment of royalty, who shall have sought to discredit or dissolve the National Convention and the Revolutionary and Republican Government of which it is the centre;

“Those who shall have betrayed the Republic in the command of places or armies or in any other military capacity, exchanged intelligence with the enemies of the Republic, or sought to diminish or derange the service or provisioning of the armies;

“Those who shall have sought to prevent or impede the provisioning of Paris, or to cause dearth in the Republic;

“Those who shall have seconded the schemes of the enemies of France, whether by favouring the retreat and the safety of the conspirators and of the aristocracy, or by persecuting and calumniating patriotism, or by corrupting the emissaries and representatives of the people, or by abusing the principles of the Revolution, or the laws or measures of government, by false and perfidious applications;

“Those who shall have deceived the people, or the representatives of the people, by inciting them to courses contrary to the interests of liberty;

“Those who shall have sought to bring about discouragement in order to favour the undertakings of the tyrants leagued against the Republic ;

“Those who shall have spread false news in order to divide or arouse the people ;

“Those who shall have sought to lead public opinion astray, and to prevent the instruction of the people, to deprave public manners and corrupt the public conscience, to sap the energy and the purity of revolutionary and republican principles, or to arrest their progress, whether by counter-revolutionary or insidious writings, or by machinations of any other kind ;

“The dishonest contractors who compromise the safety of the Republic and those who waste the public wealth, other than those comprised in the provisions of the law of the 7th of *Frimaire* ;<sup>1</sup>

“Those who, being entrusted with public functions, abuse them in order to serve the enemies of the Revolution, or to molest patriots or to oppress the people ;

“Finally, all those designated by the preceding laws relating to the punishment of conspirators and counter-revolutionists, and who, by whatsoever means, and under whatever appearances, shall have attempted the liberty, unity, or security of the Republic, or shall have striven to impede its consolidation.”

Against these “enemies of the people”<sup>2</sup> one sole penalty is pronounced : that of death.

When the Revolutionary Government was at its apogee liberty of whatever kind was a thing of the past. The least opposition exposed a citizen, even a woman, to the scaffold. Of course these laws were not and could not have been applied in all their rigour ; else would the French have perished in tens of thousands. But the hundreds who were guillotined in virtue of these laws sufficed as an example. No one dared now to thwart the national defence. This result, it may be legitimate, was not the only one ; the opponents

<sup>1</sup> This law prescribes the form of procedure against those accused of malversations in the ward, administration, or sale of goods belonging to the State.

<sup>2</sup> Carnot had also, in his own way, defined the “enemies of the people” in his report of *Germinal* the 12th, year II (*Moniteur*, xx. 114).

of Robespierre's personal policy were equally reduced to silence and inaction. Until the period when the military victories suppressed the *raison d'être* of the dictatorship, there was a general and absolute suppression of will and courage.

Such was the Terror, the effect and means of the Revolutionary Government.

## IX.

In this chronological summary, I have given many instances to show that the Revolutionary Government was not the application of any system.

The leaders of this Government have been stigmatised as renegades from the principles of 1789, and they did indeed often violate the principle of individual liberty ; they shed blood ; they persecuted the French ; they stifled the liberty of the press ; they established a tyrannical dictatorship ; finally they arrived, democrats as they were, at the suppression of nearly all the popular elections. But they only resigned themselves to these violent measures when forced by events, and to ensure the final triumph of the principles of 1789, on whose suppression monarchical Europe was bent. Obligated to make war in order to keep free, obliged to be soldiers in order to remain citizens, they organised a military discipline, and this Revolutionary Government was the reverse of their dreams and ideals. It had seemed to them that they could only conquer the *ancien régime* by using its weapons. This victory once achieved, they had every intention, as they were continually announcing, of doing just the contrary of what they performed in the year II ; that is to say, of organising the Democratic Republic on a basis of liberty, equality, and fraternity. The most violent

among them agreed in presenting the Terrorist rule as a provisional expedient.<sup>1</sup>

None the less, we must confess that this phrase, "a provisional expedient," does not give an absolutely exact and complete idea of this undertaking. It happened that certain measures, entirely fortuitous and empirical, such as declaring all means of subsistence to be in common for the purposes of the national defence, by creating, for the time, collectivist cities of a kind, excited or awoke socialistic theories which later on found expression. On the other hand, certain elements of the Revolutionary Government, at the time when they were decreed, seemed of a kind to enter later on into the society of the future, and the measures taken in view of the success of the armies against the civil enemy were often spoken of as proper to a definite mental revolution. It was in proposing one of these provisional measures that Saint-Just said, on the 23rd of *Germinal*:

"You must create a city, a State; that is, citizens who shall be friends; brothers, and kindly disposed one to another: you must re-establish civil confidence; you must make it understood that the Revolutionary Government does not signify war or a state of conquest, but the passage from evil to good, from corruption to probity, from bad precepts to good."

The cult of a Supreme Being was not merely an expedient of national defence, but also an attempt to establish one of the fundamental essentials of the future State. At the same time schemes for a national educa-

<sup>1</sup> Carnot well expressed the thoughts of the Committee of Public Safety in this respect, when he stated, with reference to the creation of Executive Commissions (*Germinal* the 12th, year II): "Such is the revolutionary agency which your Committee proposes shall exist until a solid peace imposed on the enemies of the Republic shall allow you insensibly to slacken the girths which crime, faction, and the last convulsions of the aristocracy still force you to retain constricted."

tion were being elaborated, which ended in tangible results and in foundations ; so that we must think of the revolutionists of the year II as preparing to build the future State, while fighting Europe at the same time : to use the language of the time, with a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other.<sup>1</sup> But the hand that held the trowel was only able to begin the work of construction ; and these beginnings were often intermingled with the provisional institutions founded on account of the war, and intermingled in such a manner that it is not always easy to distinguish what these men considered provisional and what they meant to be permanent.

All were not agreed as to the period when it would be necessary to emerge from the revolutionary state. Danton and his friends had wished to relax the bonds of the Terror before Europe had been vanquished, but they were broken. But even those who wished the Revolutionary Government to last as long as the war, and who rejected, out of policy, the idea of a committee of clemency, felt the horror of the hideous character which the brutal zeal of ignorant fanatics was engraving upon the face of the Republic. Saint-Just said on the 23rd of *Ventôse*: "A haggard eye, a moustache, a dull, gloomy, stilted, disingenuous style of writing : does all the merit of patriotism lie in these?" He demanded that justice and probity should be "put on the order of the day of the Republic,"<sup>2</sup> and on the 2nd of *Germinal* Barère persuaded the Convention to decree this very formula.

At last the latent danger of this dictatorship of the

<sup>1</sup> They thought in this way to imitate the Americans. Lezay-Marnésia wrote in the year III: "How grand are the Americans, who, the sword in one hand and the trowel in the other, built while they were still fighting!" (*Qu'est ce que la Constitution de 1793?*).

<sup>2</sup> This phrase, so often used about this period, may be translated by "to include in the general orders."—[TRANS.]

national defence was frequently pointed out by Robespierre. At the very moment when everything was being organised with a view to the military victories, the peril of these military victories was denounced. When Billaud-Varenne, on the 1st of *Floréal*, had it decreed "that, supported by the virtues of the French people, the Convention would ensure the triumph of the democratic Republic and would pitilessly punish its enemies," it was not a vain declamation. He wished to oppose "the virtues of the French people" to militarism, which he called *stratocracy*, and he wished to divert the nation from its taste for war for war's sake, saying in round terms that a warlike people would become enslaved. The precautions taken against the ambition of the generals entered into the Revolutionary Government as component elements, their purpose being to prepare it for the realisation of the idea of normal government which was at once made possible and compromised by the success of the armies.

This government according to circumstance, created empirically for the immediate present, without system and without plan, in some parts plainly bears the mark of preoccupations concerning the future; and although entirely provisional, it contains the germs, the beginnings, of institutions; contains also points of departure for new or resuscitated theories; contains, in some degree, the France of the future.

## CHAPTER VII

### ROYALISM BEFORE THE 9TH OF *THERMIDOR*

- I. Royalism in France at the outset of the Republic.—II. Royalism in the insurgent districts: La Vendée, Lyons, Toulon. Attitude of the Comte de Provence.—III. Royalism in the non-insurgent provinces.

IN explaining the foundation and operation of the institutions, whether provisional or permanent, by which the National Convention endeavoured (before the 9th of *Thermidor*) to organise the Democratic Republic, I have already given some idea of the interplay of parties and opinions during this period. It is now time to enlarge this idea by presenting, not the most moving and most celebrated, but the most certain and essential factors of the evolution and conflict of parties and opinions from the time the Republic was established until the fall of Robespierre.

#### I.

Let us first of all consider the royalist party, which was, so to speak, the representation and the coalition of the resisting forces of the past. The attitude of the various republican parties depended almost entirely upon the attitude, the successes, and defeats of this royalist party; or rather it was especially over the question of the best way of fighting royalism that the



republican party split up into several parts, which were to be distinguished less by their principles than by their strategic and tactical methods of attack upon the retrograde efforts of the enemies of the Revolution.

We have seen how easily France accepted the establishment of the Revolution. Does this mean that after the end of September, 1792, royalist opinions were a thing of the past, or that all the royalists had emigrated? No ; but royalists of every shade, constitutionalists as well as absolutists, felt conquered by the victory of Valmy.

They were silent because they had no arguments left which could prevail, in the mind of the people, against the Republic which was saving the country from invasion ; and also because the people would not have tolerated any manifestation in favour of the King either in Paris or the provinces. There were no more royalist journals after August 10th. Royalism no longer showed itself. In the four months from September to December, 1792, it opposed the Republic only vaguely, almost imperceptibly. Thus, in respect of the decree which abolished royalty, a rumour was circulated in the departments that this decree was by no means valid, because on the day it was rendered a large number of deputies had not yet taken their places. On November 18th, Basire, at the Jacobins, denounced a play entitled "The Terrible Tribunal" (*le Tribunal redoutable*). "This piece," he said, "is a continuous epigram directed against the doings of August 10th. A king was brought on the stage who was very like Louis the Last, and an attempt was made to excite the pity of the spectators in his favour." But Basire did not say that any one had cried *Vive le roi!* nor that the piece had provoked any demonstration whatever against the Republic.

On December 4th the Convention decreed (as we have already seen, but the fact may well be repeated)

“ that whosoever should propose or attempt to establish royalty in France, or any other power injurious to the sovereignty of the people, under whatever denomination, should be punished by death.”

Does the voting of this decree indicate that there was then a royalist peril : that the royalists were again lifting up their heads? No, indeed : victorious and triumphant, the Republic was then even more unassailable than on the morrow of its establishment. This decree, passed on the motion of Buzot, is to be regarded simply as a manœuvre of the Girondists, who were accusing the Montagnards of wishing to place Philippe-Égalité on the throne. The Montagnards, after having defended their friend, ended by proscribing him (on June 2, 1793), and, accusing the Girondists in turn, proscribed them as accomplices of the same Philippe-Égalité. In reality neither the Montagnards nor the Girondists made any attempt at this period to establish an Orléanist monarchy. For the rest, this decree had the result that people of royalist opinion had no longer any legal means of expressing themselves. But the trial of Louis XVI, which was still proceeding (from December 3, 1792, to January 21, 1793), was such an insult to royalist opinion that it would have been stranger if, after being thus stricken, it had not exhibited some kind of reaction. In any case, the manner in which France comported herself during the trial and upon the news of the King's execution gives many indications of the relative strength of the two opposing principles, monarchical and republican.

If monarchical opinion had still been popular in the country, the law would have threatened death to the royalists in vain ; there would have been, in one region at least, an explosion of sorrow and anger, a recourse to arms, deep-seated sedition, an outbreak of civil war. Nothing of the kind occurred, and we see plainly that although there were still royalists in France there was no longer a royalist party.

At the outset let us observe that in the Convention at this time there was not a single royalist to be seen, and those of its members who rallied to the King's cause later appeared republicans then, and it is highly probable that they all felt and believed themselves to be republicans.

The first question put was this : *Is Louis guilty of conspiring against the public liberty and attempting the general security of the State?* There were members of the Convention who declined to vote, or who were absent. Those who voted, unanimously voted in the affirmative.

It was only regarding the penalty and the manner of pronouncing and applying it that there was any division.

Thus 283 members voted that their judgment should be submitted to the ratification of the people ; 424 voted in a contrary sense. Were the 283 royalists in disguise, who, believing the people to be royalist, hoped to save Louis in order to save the monarchy? Read their speeches ; you will not be able to find therein any such hope or belief ; and many of them afterwards voted for death. What was their private thought? To awaken, by an appeal to the people, the opinion and the passions of the departments, in order to oppose them to the opinion and the passions of Paris. The appeal to the people in the trial of Louis XVI was only one of the episodes of departmental politics, of anti-Parisian and Federalist politics if you will ; but also republican and Girondist.

And the 334 who voted for detention or conditional death, as against the 387 who voted for death : was their vote an act of royalism? Did they wish to save Louis in order to save the monarchy? Was this the idea of the 310 who voted for delay, as against the 380 who voted against it? There were those who, having voted against death, also voted against delay. Neither

in the speeches nor in the actions of those who voted against death and in favour of delay can we discover any indications from which we might infer that their vote was inspired by any other sentiment than that of the interests of the Republic. It was as a matter of political tactics that the Mountain and the Gironde accused one another then and afterwards of wishing to restore the throne in favour of either the younger or the elder branch. Nothing justifies our saying that there was a single royalist in the Convention during the months of December, 1792, and January, 1793.

What was the attitude of the people during this process?

Attempts were made to move France to pity. Pamphlets in favour of Louis were distributed throughout the army in Belgium; the same thing was done in Alsace and in Lorraine. But neither the Army nor the people seemed to be affected.<sup>1</sup>

In Paris a royalist pamphlet was circulated entitled *Bréviaire des dames parisiennes*; but apparently without success.

It was by means of *chansons*, which at that time had more influence than newspapers, that the royalists contrived here and there to excite some pity. According to Peltier, a royalist street-ballad "was distributed in Paris by the thousand, and sung there publicly, on the very day when the King's defence was delivered"; which proves, by the way, that during the King's trial royalists still enjoyed a certain amount of liberty. Entitled "Louis XVI to the French," with the epigraph:

<sup>1</sup> From a letter from Mallarmé (a representative on mission) dated *Floréal* the 10th, year II, we learn that the people's club of Longwy wrote a letter to the Comte de Provence, in which they expressed the hope that Louis XVI would emerge from the Temple and remount the throne. But when was this letter written? During or before the trial? Mallarmé does not say.

*Popule meus, quid feci tibi?* this ballad, sung to the air *Pauvre Jacques*, commenced as follows :

“O people mine, to you what have I done?  
Justice I loved, and virtuous worth ;  
Your welfare was my wish, my only one ;  
And now to death you drag me forth.”<sup>1</sup>

This ballad circulated widely in the departments, notably in La Vendée and among the armies. It was not without results. One of the representatives with the army of the North, Beffroy, wrote on June 27th to the Committee of Public Safety, that at Laon the soldiers of the 7th Regiment of Chasseurs “sang the sorrowful ballad of Louis XVI loudly in all the public places, and also a song of thanksgiving for the peace of Condé, which it was believed had been arranged ; and they declared loudly that they must have a King.” It will be noticed that this royalist manifestation on the part of a few soldiers did not take place until much later than the time of which we have been speaking ; when reverses had for a while diminished the prestige of the Republic. In any case, the efforts of the royalists as regards the King’s trial ended in the singing of a ballad in a few localities.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “*O mon peuple, que vous ai-je donc fait ?  
J’aimais la vertu, la justice,  
Votre bonheur fut mon unique objet ;  
Et vous me traînez au supplice.*”

The complete text of this ballad is in *La Révolution française*, xvii. 89.

<sup>2</sup> It also resulted in the striking of pieces of money with the marks of the constitutional monarchy. M. Gabriel Séailles possesses a piece of two sols bearing on one side the profile of Louis XVI with these words: LOUIS XVI, KING OF THE FRENCH ; on the other, the fasces surmounted by a Phrygian bonnet, and this inscription : THE NATION, THE LAW, THE KING. 1793. 5 DE LA LIB. Curiously enough this piece is marked with a D, which is the mark of the mint of Lyons. It was thus struck in a State mint.

The truth is that Louis XVI had become unpopular since the secret documents which proved his treason were found in the Tuileries, divulged by the journals, and read aloud in the people's clubs. His attitude at his trial, his denials, his lies, pardonable, no doubt, but evident, had prevented the people in general from pitying one in whom they no longer saw any but an enemy of the nation.

The journals inform us of the impression produced in Paris by the execution of the King on January 21, 1793. A few cries for mercy were heard as he left the Temple. Then, on the passage of the escort, silence. Around the scaffold, while the King mounted it, silence. When his head had fallen there were cries of "*Vive la nation!*" "*Vive la République!*" At the end of the former Pont de Louis XVI there was dancing. In the evening the theatres were open, and were filled. It seems that at the outset there was some disturbance; but that after the death of Louis XVI, once it was an accomplished fact, Paris appeared to be reassured and joyful. On the whole, Paris was quiet. "The people," said a contemporary, "behaved with a calm majesty which would have done honour to the best days of the Roman Republic."

Perhaps the people of Paris would have shown some pity if the impression of the crime committed by the royalists, who had assassinated Le Peletier on the preceding day, had not been so sharp and so recent. Le Peletier had voted for Louis' death. This assassination hardened men's hearts and inflamed republican feeling, not only in Paris, but in the provinces, where the news of the murder of a republican by the royalists and the news of the killing of the King by the republicans was received at the same time.

The sentence passed by the Convention was supported by public opinion in the provinces even more ardently than in Paris.

The departmental assemblies, only recently renewed, were steeped in the Girondist and Federalist feelings of which they were so soon to give such amazing proof. But they were so republican, so anti-royalist, that not one of them protested against the execution of Louis XVI. Many of them even felt impelled to congratulate the Convention publicly, and addresses of support are extant from twenty-eight : those of Haute-Marne, Haute-Saône, Sarthe, Loir-et-Cher, Jura, Gironde, Vendée, Basses-Alpes, Drôme, Doubs, Aude, Vosges, Manche, Mont-Blanc, Loiret, Isère, Landes, Nièvre, Bas-Rhin, Corrèze, Orne, Vienne, Gard, Meuse, Mayenne, Haute-Garonne, Eure, Bouches-du-Rhône.

One of these assemblies, that of Sarthe, qualifies its adherence. "The head of the tyrant has fallen," it says ; "when will Marat's fall?" But this qualification does not conceal any royalist afterthought. The administrators of Sarthe wish only to make it known that their republicanism is of a Girondist hue. The other departments supported the Convention unreservedly, without criticism of any kind whatever. Some supported it with enthusiasm ; for instance, Haute-Saône :

"Legislators, we are convinced that the Republic could be strengthened only by the death of the dethroned tyrant ; and we most definitely support your decree, which pronounced the sentence."

The department of Drôme stated :

"Citizen legislators, he exists no longer ; this political monster who was contaminating the land of liberty and philosophy. By ordering the republication of Milton's work relating to the condemnation of Charles the First, as it did on November 14th, the Council General of the department of Drôme had sanctioned your judgment beforehand ; the Directory felicitates itself on having foreseen your wise and courageous decree."

The addresses of adherence of the communes and the people's clubs were numerous and ardent. The

commune of Langres wrote, on January 24th: "The death of Louis Capet, while cutting the thread of all the conspiracies which had him for their object, will serve as a lesson to despots, as an example to the nations, and a warning to traitors." The commune of Sedan, which had been the focus of the monarchical conspiracy of La Fayette, wrote on February 5th:

"Citizen legislators, the Council General of the commune of Sedan felicitates you and thanks you for having removed the head of the last tyrant of France. After this great example given to all the nations, and this terrible lesson to all kings, this is what remains for you to do, and this is what the Council General of the commune of Sedan requests you to do: to establish a truly republican Constitution, and promptly to organise a system of public instruction."<sup>1</sup>

We have seen that the organised groups adhered *en masse* to the decision of the Convention.

And what was the attitude of the people at large, of scattered individuals?

There was perhaps here and there a little stupor, a certain amount of fear. Jean de Bry, a representative on mission, wrote on February 26th that on the northern frontiers men neither blamed nor praised; they were silent. But on the 13th he had written, with his colleague Cochon, that on the road from Paris to Calais "the people were superb."

At Paris, on February 25th, in a provision riot, which led to the pillage of the grocers' shops, cries were heard of "*Vive Louis XVII!*" But they found no echo, and seem to have been given by *agents-provocateurs*.

In Poitou, where there had for some time been a royalist propaganda, carried on by the priests and the nobles, not only the sorrowful ballad but also and

<sup>1</sup> Apparently only one municipality refused to second the judgment of the Convention: that of Coulommiers. It was denounced for this reason by the Jacobins of Coulommiers (*Moniteur*, xv. 615, reprint).



especially the testament of Louis XVI was circulated, printed on four small pages of letter paper.<sup>1</sup> Nothing was more calculated to impress sensitive minds than certain passages of this testament.

Far from leading to a recrudescence of royalism, the death of Louis XVI consolidated the republican spirit. It was then that the Republic appeared to become definitively founded. From what we can judge from the feeling among the peasantry, from the newspapers, from the letters of the missionary deputies, only when they learned that the Convention had guillotined the King did the majority of the peasantry understand that royalty no longer existed; that they were now under a republic. The treachery of the King had changed the sentiments of the cities; the downfall of the King, vanquished and killed in Paris by the republicans, discredited royalty in the country districts, showed it to be weak and impotent, and destroyed its prestige for ever. From that time forward the peasantry (except in two or three provinces) were no longer royalist.

## II.

Royalism was eclipsed or slumbered in France as long as the republican armies were victorious. During the period of brilliant conquests which lasted from November, 1792, to March, 1793, when Belgium and the left bank of the Rhine were occupied, republican opinion spread without contradiction. Such reverses as the defeat at Aix-la-Chapelle (March 9th), the defeat at Neerwinden (March 18th), the loss of Belgium, and the treachery of Dumouriez (April 1st), were events that allowed the royalists once more to raise their

<sup>1</sup> The original of this testament, dated December 25, 1792 (but published only after January 21st), is entirely in Louis' hand.

heads in certain districts, and to organise a terrible civil war : the war of La Vendée.

It is no part of my plan to chronicle this war<sup>1</sup>; but I must at least call attention to its importance. Nearly all Poitou and nearly all Anjou, with the exception of the cities, took arms against the Republic. Armies of peasants conducted a victorious campaign, and the numbers and courage of these improvised soldiers created a diversion which gave the English, the Austrians, and the Spaniards immense and unexpected help in their invasion of France. It is a classic saying, but a true one, that the Republic was stabbed in the back by La Vendée while the foreign armies and the *émigrés* attacked her in front. The Vendéean insurrection continued in increasing strength from April to November, 1793; it declined in strength when, in issuing from its own territory, it crossed the Loire, and advanced into Normandy, as far as Granville, in order to assist the English; repulsed before Granville, driven back to the south of the Loire, it was crushed at Mans and at Savenay (December 13 and 23, 1793); after which date there was no longer a great Vendéean army; but Poitou remained a prey to bands of armed peasants, against whom it was still necessary to send bodies of regular troops. Finally, through the efforts of Hoche, the external victories led up to the general pacification of La Vendée.

In Brittany also there were royalist disturbances, and beginnings of *chouannerie* here and there; but these were easily repressed at the time.

The Vendéean, Breton, and Angevin peasantry did not at first rise in support of royalty, but in support of their clergy and against military service. Strongly attached to their priests, they were opposed on general

<sup>1</sup> See the works of Savary, Célestin Port, and Chassin. The latter's are the latest and best: they appeared from 1890 to 1900, in three series forming ten volumes: *La Vendée et la Chouannerie*.

grounds to the application of the civil constitution of the clergy, and had attended the Masses of non-juring priests at farm-houses, in chapels, or in the forest. Since 1791 there had been serious discontent and discord, especially in the departments of Vendée and Maine-et-Loire. The law of February 24, 1793, which ordered a levy of 300,000 men, exasperated the peasant of these regions; not because he was a coward or slothful, but because he hated to leave his native soil. Between March 10th and 15th a rising took place, to cries of *Pas de milice! No enlistment!* and almost immediately there was a cry for their former priests. It was these priests who stirred the peasantry to anger, and presided over the first acts of civil warfare, and the first massacres of republicans. At first the Vendéean army called itself the "Christian Army," or the "Roman Catholic Army." At the outset there was no question of replacing the King, and the movement seemed wholly popular. The gamekeeper Stofflet, the hairdresser Gaston, and the wagon-maker Cathelineau were the chief of those who led the earlier bands. When the insurrection increased in power and seemed to have chances of success, the royalists tried to convert it to royalism, by the medium of such nobles as Bonchamps, Lescure, Larochejacquelin, and d'Elbée. La Vendée remained clerical and became royalist; its armies called themselves "Catholic and Royal," and acted in the name of "Louis XVII"; its generals declared, on May 11, 1793, that they had only taken up arms "to sustain the religion of their fathers and to ensure for their august and legitimate sovereign, Louis XVII, the glory and stability of his throne and his crown." <sup>1</sup>

To amalgamate the better with the Vendéean peasantry, the royalist gentlemen, up till that time for the most part Voltairian in their language, or

<sup>1</sup> Chassin, *La Vendée patriote*, i. 298.

indifferentists in matters of religion, affected an exalted piety, and, in order to obtain the support of the Roman Catholic Church in their attempt to restore the throne, made common cause with the refractory priests. It was because the King had promised to restore their former priests to the peasants of La Vendée and Brittany that they finally began to cry "*Vive le roi!*" Nearly all the royalist conspiracies which occurred in other parts of France (especially where such conspiracies manifested themselves by the sedition of the peasantry) were provoked by the discontent caused in the country districts by the various and successive measures taken by the Revolution to defend itself against the Roman Church. The testament of Louis XVI, in which that prince had shown himself still more a Christian than a King, set the fashion in the Royalist party of that hotch-potch of mystic effusions and political affirmations, that "clericalism" of programmes, proclamations, and public documents, that "religiosity," in short, which in 1789 would have appeared so extraordinary in the same men. Royalism, in short, tried to profit by the popularity of the non-juring priests, and relied upon the Pope in its attempt to re-establish the throne. It was from the beginning of the civil war that the Royalist party "clericalised" itself, as we should say to-day.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> To judge of the place and part reserved for religion in the political schemes of the royalists of 1793, one should read this passage from a book by Antoine de Ferrand, *Le Rétablissement de la Monarchie* (September, 1793): "Deviously at first, then openly, the vanities of a false philosophy have attacked the august verities of religion: religion, that prime foundation of all the social virtues; that beneficent chain of motives and duties; of which the first link, set in the heavens, is incessantly leading man back to his origin and his end; religion, which alone, by prescribing abnegation of self, can free the greatest talents from pride and the finest actions from self-esteem; which, while making an evangelical precept of the submission to authority, instructs the people to regard the failure or success of the Government as the

It also tried to turn to its advantage the anti-Parisian, Girondist, Federalist movement, which led to a new civil war, lasting from May to August, 1793. In this it succeeded. Although the leaders of the Girondist party in Paris and in the Convention refused alliance with the royalist party, they did not refuse to help them by parallel action. The Girondist insurrection in Normandy was of notable assistance to the royalist insurrection of Poitou. As for the subordinate local leaders of the Girondist party, they not only did not hesitate to form an alliance with the royalists; they even became royalists themselves. Thus the insurrection of Lyons was not royalist at first; but later the Girondists of Lyons had all the royalists on their side; and finally, when the Convention captured the town after a long siege, on October 9, 1793, the royalists were the masters and were directing the defence of the city. Toulon, in the beginning, appeared to be in revolt against the Mountain only. But on August 24, 1793, the insurrectionary government of Toulon proclaimed Louis XVII King of France; and Toulon was immediately delivered over to the English, who maintained its defence, in conjunction with the royalists, until the taking of the city by the republicans on December 19th. Marseilles was to have been delivered to the English by the royalists, and this conspiracy was about to culminate when General Carteaux entered the city and preserved it for the Republic (August 25, 1793). The insurrection of Lozère, provoked in the month of May, 1793, by the ex-deputy Charrier and the non-juring priests—an insurrection of the clergy and peasantry at the outset—became afterwards political and royalist; but having no fortified places at its disposal it was easily put down.

effects of the Divine vengeance or the Divine bounty, and thereby becomes the strongest support of sovereigns and the strongest bond of subjects."

These insurrections, contemporary with the invasion of France in the north, east, and south, and aiding the invading armies, were a great danger to the Republic. There was a moment, in August and September, 1793, when the royal flag floated over Lyons and Toulon in revolt ; there was a moment when the royal cause seemed on the point of triumphing, in the ruin and dismemberment of France. It was then that the republicans made a supreme effort by means of the Terror, and that effort was victorious.

Why?

Because these proclamations of Louis XVII, these white flags flying, these peasant insurrections, these two fortified cities in revolt—all these alarming manifestations were in no wise the result of a true retrogression of the country toward its former royalist convictions. What do we see at the root of each insurrection? In La Vendée, religion ; at Lyons and at Toulon the fear of a Parisian dictatorship. It was *afterwards* that these insurrections became converted to royalism, by the ingenious industry of the agents of the *émigrés*. Their royalist character was factitious and impermanent. The insurrections once put down by force, nothing or next to nothing of this royalism was left in Toulon or Lyons ; and in La Vendée, at each fresh outbreak, it was always religion and the worthy priests that the peasants intended to defend and maintain.

The insurgent royalist party manifested itself by actions rather than by programmes. The first thing to be done was to overthrow the Republic ; to attain which end it was essential to avoid all signs of internal dissension. Monarchists of all shades had emigrated : constitutional or absolute ; the two brothers of the King were by no means in agreement. The Comte d'Artois had emigrated in July, 1789, and condemned the whole Revolution. The Comte de Provence, *Monsieur*, accepted the first acts of the Revolution,

and would not perhaps have disapproved of a monarchy of the English type. Both were living at the Castle of Hamm, in Westphalia, when they learned of the execution of Louis XVI. Then, united by the sentiment of a common danger, they managed immediately to agree: to the profit of their absolutist and ultra-retrograde tendencies. The Comte de Provence from this time onward professed an absolutely counter-revolutionary policy, and this less out of an *émigré's* blindness than to ensure unity in the party of emigration. As a constitutional monarchist he would have had against him the army of the Prince of Condé: that is, the actual forces of his party. As an absolutist he was really the leader of the *émigrés*, among whom the constitutionalists were in the minority, but were as furiously inimical to the Revolution since the King's execution as were the absolutists; and convinced on the other hand that if the Republic were destroyed the Comte de Provence, whether regent or king, would finally succeed in making moderate ideas prevail in time of peace.

This is why the first royal document published after the death of Louis XVI was of so reactionary a character. This document was the "Declaration of the Regent of France," dated January 28, 1793, by which *Monsieur* assumed the regency during the minority of his nephew Louis XVII, now eight years of age and detained at the Temple, and nominated the Comte d'Artois lieutenant-general of the kingdom. He announced that his whole policy would aim at the liberation of Louis XVII, Marie-Antoinette, and Madame Elizabeth,

"and simultaneously at the re-establishment of the monarchy on the unchangeable foundations of its constitution,<sup>1</sup> the reformation of the abuses introduced into the public administration, the re-establishment

---

<sup>1</sup> He refers to the monarchy as it was *constituted* before 1789.

of the religion of our fathers in the purity of its cult and of the canonical discipline, the re-integration of the magistracy for the maintenance of public order and the dispensation of justice, the re-integration of the French of all orders in the exercise of their legitimate rights and the enjoyment of their invaded and usurped properties, the severe and exemplary punishment of crimes, and the re-establishment of the authority of the laws and of peace. . . ."

The re-establishment of the *ancien régime* with the Parliaments, the State religion, and the privileged orders : that was what the Regent was offering France ; and he threatened all those who had acquired national possessions with spoliation at least, and at the same time threatened the chastisement of all those who had taken part in the Revolution. Such, in very truth, was the wish of the *émigrés*; such was the demand even of those ex-parliamentarians who had been formerly so in love with the public liberties.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the Declaration of the Emigrated Peers of France, April 15, 1792, published at this time and reprinted in the *Développement des principes fondamentaux de la Monarchie*. Therein we read, on page 15 : ". . . Considering that the misfortunes afflicting France had their origin in the attack made upon the ancient Constitution of the kingdom as a result of December 27, 1788, which destroyed its cohesion, and the letters of convocation issued in January, 1789, which corrupted its prime elements, we are of opinion that it would be possible to dry up the source of these evils only by the most absolute return to the old order of things such as they were before the disastrous period which we must deplore ; except that the abuses should be corrected in a calmer, less tempestuous time ; while avoiding all appearance of a system that might tend to modify the foundations. . . ." A learned *émigré*, a future member of the Académie Française, Antoine de Ferrand, in his book *Le Rétablissement de la Monarchie*, published out of France in September, 1793 (see p. 308), declares that France cannot be a republic, even if the people so wish ; and cites in this respect the words of Cicero : *Nec ipse populus jam populus est, si sit injustus*. He will not even discuss the Constitution of 1791, and declares all accommodation to be impossible. He regrets, in a tone similar to that of Marat, that Louis XVI did not "have the chief ringleaders tried and executed" in June, 1789, at the beginning of



But this was what the French were almost unanimous in not desiring. The royal manifesto did enormous harm to the royal cause; it was a godsend to the republicans; it fulfilled their hopes to overflowing, and was worded so precisely as they would have worded it themselves that they took care to circulate it throughout the country by the medium of their journals. The mass of the nation turned with horror from a party which wished to re-establish the old slavery pure and simple.

### III.

Thus outside the insurgent regions royalism only showed itself occasionally and intermittently.

In Paris, after Dumouriez' treason, and in the general disorder of both home and foreign affairs, the police noticed not indeed royalist manifestations, but a kind of lukewarmness where the Republic was concerned. They believed that had they not feared the guillotine the women would have cried, "*Vive le roi!*" but they surprised no one actually shouting the words.

Doubtless there were now more royalists than before the armies were defeated; but royalism did not become popular. Read the debates of the Revolutionary Tribunal. Therein you will see that a Poitevin gentleman, Guyot des Maulans, was guillotined on April 6, 1793. He was an *émigré* who had secretly returned, after having borne arms against France. He was carrying on an intrigue near Paris when arrested. But the debates prove that he had not succeeded in obtaining a single disciple. Nicolas Lutier, once a grenadier of

things. "Twelve heads would have saved the State. In great political crises, as in those of the human body, there is often only one moment for the amputation which is to arrest the progress of gangrene; if it is allowed to pass, all is lost, for time never returns."

the King's Regiment, who was guillotined on the 10th, had accosted a group of working men at the corner of the Rue de la Huchette, and had spoken to them in favour of royalty; they would not listen to him. Bouché, a peripatetic dentist, condemned to death on April 27th, cried, "*Long live Louis XVII! Blast the Republic!*" He had carried on a royalist propaganda in the country districts about Orléans, but had not gained one recruit.

After these condemnations such isolated manifestations entirely ceased as far as Paris was concerned; and I can find no further traces of royalism in Paris until the 9th of *Thermidor* of the year II.

In the provinces, those insurrections which became converted to royalism—those of Poitou, Lyons, Marseilles, Toulon—did not spring, in so far as they were royalist, from the soul and soil of the nation; they came from without, from the *émigré* princes and the Pretender, who saw the propitious moment for striking a shrewd and audacious blow at invaded France. They succeeded so far as to fly their royal standards over the walls of Lyons and Toulon. But they gained no territory outside the centres of revolt in which they operated and to which they found themselves confined. The peasant would not go back to a state of monarchy. The royalists thought it a master-stroke to make use of the Girondist rising; but commingled and compromised with the Federalist movement, anti-national and disintegrating as it was, they suffered the fate of this movement, which was defeated by the centralising and integrating movement of France consolidating herself as a nation, under the auspices of Paris and opposed to the invaders.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The opposing parties still accused each other of royalist leanings, but without proof. In the theatre, where the spirit of the time could express itself without danger, by means of adaptations, or applications, as they were called, I find only that in September, 1793, the spectators

Were there any royalist manifestations in those departments which had not revolted, outside the centres of the royalist insurrection, which the Convention was able to overcome?

The deputies Lequinio and Lejeune wrote on August 28th that a detachment of the garrison of Valenciennes, while passing through Soissons at the time of the festival of August 10th, ridiculed the festival, "and did not blush to shout and spread the statement that the Duke of York was the only man to make France happy, and that he must be set on the throne." English silver was found in the pockets of these soldiers.

In September, 1793, "some officers, petty officers, and grenadiers of the 68th Regiment dared to proclaim Louis XVII in the streets of Maubeuge." Deputies Drouet and Bar had them arrested.

On September 22nd, near Perpignan, a section of the former Vermandois battalion cried, "*Vive le roi!*" and surrendered to the Spaniards.

For a moment royalism showed itself even among the volunteers of Paris. On the 27th of *Brumaire* (November 17, 1793) the representative Laplanche wrote from Coutances to the Committee of Public Safety :

"I invoke the utmost severity of the Convention against the 11th battalion of the first levy of Paris, of the Tuileries section ; to the detriment of the Republic it has just unfurled the standard of the most scandalous rebellion. Not content with having manifested the most uncitizenlike and most monarchical sentiments all along the route, not content with having sung such songs as '*O Richard! O mon roi!*' and with having spread broadcast their opinion in favour of the brigands of the Vendée, they dared, the traitors, to disobey openly the authority of their superiors, both civil and military, who ordered them

---

who applauded "*Pamela*" were denounced as royalists. But they did not shout "*Vive le roi!*" They were only "moderantists" (*Recueil des actes*, vi. 236).

to fly to the defence of the cause of Liberty ; they offered violence to their officers, and threatened to put the town of Carentan to fire and sword ; and this is the state of mind in which these undisciplined and aristocratic soldiers proceeded to Cherbourg ! In such hands lies the safety of a most important seaport. They are well seconded in their libetricide intentions by another Parisian battalion, that of the Halle-au-Blé (the Corn-market), which for some ten days has been spreading the same destructive principles in this city."

An inquiry proved these assertions to be exaggerated, but not that there were no royalist manifestations among the Parisian volunteers.

The policy of dechristianisation, by exciting the religious passions, in several places induced the peasants to call for another king, since under a king they could go to Mass.

Thus representative Lanot writes from Meymac (Corrèze) on the 28th of *Frimaire* of the year II :

" . . . On the 20th of *Frimaire*, on the memorable day chosen by patriots for the celebration of the Feast of Reason, at the moment when they were abandoning themselves in security to the sweet effusions of fraternity, the tocsin was heard, sounding in all directions ; and there were seen, coming down from the neighbouring hills, torrents of rebels armed with muskets, pikes, scythes mounted on poles, and other instruments of destruction. The assembled patriots of Meymac, astonished, wished to carry them messages of peace : they were attacked and massacred ; the greater number avoided death only by flight ; more than forty have been dangerously wounded ; and in the streets of this commune nothing is heard but the seditious cries of the rebel leaders, demanding the heads of the patriots. Their cries of death are followed by cries of ' *Vive la Religion !* ' ' *Vivent nos prêtres !* ' ' *Vive Louis XVII !* ' "

At Villequiers (Cher) in *Nivôse* of the year II (December, 1793) there was a riot directed against the local Jacobin Club, the cause of quarrel being the Mass. The insurgent peasants " said that the King left their churches, their priests, their chalices, and that his wars had never taken so many men as ours, that we were all no better than the scum of the nation, and that

man for man they preferred our predecessors." Here is the result of the inquiry, in sending which Lefiot wrote to the Committee of Public Safety of Bourges, on the 6th of *Nivôse*:

"You see by document No. 5 that the rabble joined the King's name to that of religion ; and from the nature of the speeches which are given in the letter I have just cited you will readily understand that the farmers who express themselves in this manner have been prompted and incited. The plan of rousing the countryside hereabouts is only part of that which started the war in the Vendée, and with all the pains we have taken up to the present we have not discovered any of the scoundrels who hold and pull the threads of the conspiracy."<sup>1</sup>

These elusive agents of the Bourbons were not alone in preaching royalism. There were also the emissaries of what was called the Duke of York's faction. We have seen that they had seduced the soldiers of the garrison of Valenciennes. They were also conspiring in the country districts. In September, 1793, the peasants of Charente were saying "that it was better to deal with the King of England than with any other." "They had been persuaded that the Convention could neither govern nor resist the external enemies of France."

Lanot wrote from Tulle, on the 23rd of *Nivôse*, year II :

"To be convinced that these departments have long been worked by fanatics and carefully disguised royalists, it is only necessary to remember that in the month of September a churchwarden of Uzerches, who had three sons on the frontiers, was executed for trying to provoke a rising in the countryside in favour of the Duke of York, and that this man, who died with the ferocious calm of fanaticism, was unwilling to say anything, except that one market-day he heard three strangers, dressed as farmers, speaking of the Duke of York, son of the King of England. This sorry illiterate employed in his seditious work the most refined language of seduction and that best calculated to succeed."

---

<sup>1</sup> Nearly all the data cited in these last pages will be found in the *Recueil des actes*.

No more was heard after this of the Duke of York's factions, whose plots among the peasants had failed.

This period of royalist recrudescence came to an end when the danger from without became less imminent. From the end of *Nivôse* of the year II and onwards—that is, from the moment the republican armies got the upper hand, when it was seen that the allied armies were powerless to destroy the Republic—the signs of royalism became rarer and rarer. I cannot discover that there were any in *Pluviôse* nor in *Ventôse* of the year II.

The deputy Vidalin wrote from Châlons-sur-Marne on the 3rd of *Germinal* that during the night an unknown hand had written *Vive le roi!*<sup>1</sup> on the wall of the municipal buildings. On the 6th, Cavaignac and Pinet, in a letter dated from Dax, denounced a royalist conspiracy in the Landes, the conspirators being in league with the Spaniards. On the 13th of *Floréal* Mallarmé (Briey) reported a *royalist oracle* in La Meuse. But these signs of royalism, insignificant as they were, disappeared in *Prairial* and *Messidor*, not to reappear till after the fall of Robespierre.

From the time of the acceptance of the Constitution of June 24, 1793, royalism failed conspicuously, and republican opinion was exalted and confirmed.

I will not speak of Paris, where it is notorious that republicanism was triumphant until the 9th of *Thermidor*.

We have seen that there were signs of royalism in the armies as late as *Frimaire* of the year II; but these few cries of *Vive le roi!* were drowned by the cheers of republicanism. Each army celebrated the acceptance of the Constitution by feasts at which republicanism was exultant. From *Frimaire*

<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to tell whether many such writings were not the result of a spirit of mischief or fatuous daring.—[TRANS.]

onwards there was never again the least sign of royalist feeling among the troops. Until the time of the Empire the armies were a stronghold of republicanism.

In the communes, from the month of August, 1793, enthusiasm for the Republic continued to increase, and manifested itself with peculiar force at the time of the general levy. Examples of this enthusiasm are countless. I will cite only this passage from a letter from the commissaries Musset and Charles Delacroix, who wrote to the Convention from Versailles on September 24th :

“Yesterday, at half-past nine in the morning, in the company of the two administrative bodies (district and departmental), and the Council General of the commune, escorted by 800 pikemen, preceded by military music, we repaired to the Place d’Armes. Then, having sung that hymn dear to all patriots, the hymn of the Marseillais, the address of the National Convention to the French People was read, together with the law concerning requisitions. One of us then made the proclamation of which a copy is annexed.

“These readings were accompanied by a thousand cries of ‘*Vive la République!*’ ‘*Vive la Convention nationale!*’ repeated incessantly by the 16th regiment of Chasseurs, drawn up on horseback on the Place, and the two companies of cavalry forming part of the thirty thousand men of the new levy. We advanced in turn towards these two companies, and expressed to them the patriotic sentiments which animated us, to which all hearts among these brave soldiers replied with ardour. The municipality and the administrative bodies then set out to make the same proclamations in the thirteen sections. At half-past ten the battalions re-assembled, and young people left the ranks and hastened eagerly to inscribe their names. The numbers of those enlisted under the requisition had mounted by night to 505 for Versailles; last night it reached 552.

“In the afternoon we met the Jacobin Society in the hall of the former Gardes du Corps, which we had prepared to receive it. We installed it there with due solemnity. Patriotic songs, speeches burning with the love of liberty, cries, a thousand times repeated, of ‘*Vive la République!*’ made the vaults ring, which until this day had only heard the haughty speeches of the despot and the base flatteries of his vile courtiers. The municipality came to fraternise with the society. It had brought a number of national cockades. At its invitation we distributed them among the citizenesses, who were present in great

numbers. They received them with a kind of religious respect, swearing the meanwhile, the mothers of families to inspire the love of liberty in their children, and the young girls to marry none but republicans.”<sup>1</sup>

It is evident that at that time, in the eyes of the people, the Republic represented the mother-country. A man styled himself “republican” as he formerly styled himself “patriot”; and the word “republican,” grown synonymous with “patriot,” took its place in current language.

It was also after the acceptance of the Constitution and at the time of the general levy that attacks upon the last vestiges of the monarchical past of France became bolder and more popular.

The representative Thirion writes from Flèche, September 24, 1793 :

“I have just had burned, in the public square, the heart of Henri IV and that of Marie de Médicis, which were still exposed to the idolatry of the people in the church of the college of this city. This impromptu ceremony was performed in the presence of several battalions of our armed forces and the constitutional authorities. I harangued the troops, then set fire to the pyre myself, with General Fabre-Fond, to the sound of redoubled shouts of ‘*Vive la République!*’ May tyrants and tyranny be destroyed for ever !”

Rühl writes from Châlons on October 7th :

“I have preached the hatred of tyrants, and to join example to precept, practice to theory, I have broken, in the presence of the constituted authorities and a large crowd of people, to the sound of repeated cries of ‘*Long live the Republic one and indivisible!*’ the shameful monument created by treacherous or priestly cunning, the better to serve the ambitious designs of the throne ; in a word, I have broken the holy phial on the pedestal of Louis the Sluggard, the fifteenth of this name . . . The holy phial no longer exists ; this sacred bauble of fools and this dangerous instrument in the hands of the satellites of despotism has disappeared. . . .”

---

<sup>1</sup> *Recueil des actes*, ch. vii. The whole correspondence of the representatives on mission must be read to gain a true idea of the progress of republicanism.



At Arras, on January 21, 1794, the Council General of the commune organised a popular festival in order to celebrate "the anniversary of the death of Capet under the nation's sword."

"In consequence," writes the member of Convention Laurent, "on this second day of *Pluviôse*, which corresponds with January 21st (old style), the joyful bell announced the solemnity of the day at seven o'clock in the morning. On the Place de la Liberté a shattered and tottering edifice was erected on which were placed the effigies of the allied despots who at this moment are uniting their perfidious efforts against French liberty. The effigy of Capet was there as well; such as he was after the nation's sword had fallen on his guilty head. The effigies of these monsters were all drooping, seeming to indicate that they were only awaiting the blow which should hurl them into the abyss. That of Capet was lying down, indicating that he had already been smitten. This structure being thus arranged, and the citizens being assembled in great numbers on the Place de la Liberté, the constituted authorities arrived, preceded by harmonious music, and after having taken a turn round the structure they ranked themselves at one of the sides of the Place. Immediately, the signal having been given, two pieces of cannon were fired. Four detachments of infantry issued at the same time from four streets at the four corners of the Place, and fired upon the structure. An instant later four detachments of cavalry appeared and fell upon it, sabre in hand. Promptly the heads and limbs of the tyrants were scattered, amid the acclamations of the people. Almost at the same time the avenging flames appeared and consumed the disgraced and filthy remains of this monstrous group. The keenest joy was then manifested; cries were heard of '*Vive la République!*' '*Vive la liberté!*' '*Vive la Convention nationale!*' '*Vive la Montagne!*' The joyful bell sounded anew. Dances were formed around the fire, and the citizens only left it to meet again in the Temple of Reason, there to pass the evening in the pleasures of fraternity and equality."<sup>1</sup>

At Montpellier, on the Place du Pérou, the statue of Louis XIV was demolished and a Temple of Reason raised in its place by public subscription.

It was with patriotic enthusiasm everywhere that the decrees were executed which ordered the efface-

*Re ceuil*, &c. The Convention published this letter in its *Bulletin*.

ment of *fleurs de lis*, coats of arms, and statues of "tyrants."

The French at this time, from December, 1793, to July, 1794, were unanimous in their hatred of royalty, in their wish to abolish all traces and memories of it, to exalt the Republic, and to love it with a religious passion.

To sum up: we may say that royalism in France concealed itself at the beginning of the first Republic, during the military successes of September, 1792, to December, 1793. After the reverses, and the treason of Dumouriez, it threw off the mask, and held the Republic at bay in the west, at Lyons, and at Toulon. It spread its doctrines here and there in other regions, always commingling with movements of another nature, religious or anti-Parisian, and without making serious progress with the mass of the population. Then, when the Republic had a second time repulsed invasion, royalism hid itself again, and remained in almost absolute eclipse until the 9th of *Thermidor*.

**The Grosvenor Press,**  
UNWIN BROTHERS, LIMITED,  
WORKING AND LONDON.







# Date Due

DEC 12 '58			
May 1959			
JUN 7 59			
SEP 9 61			
JUN 17 1958			
JUN 6 1972			

JAL LIBRARY FACILITY



72 751 6

Library Bureau Cat. No. 1137

UNIVERSITY OF CA RIVERSIDE LIBRARY



3 1210 01058 6285

